



Parent Handbook

About us

West Haven Preschool is a family-owned and operated nondenominational Christian learning environment. Our mission is to provide the right foundation for young minds and hearts to excel academically, socially, and emotionally.

Operations

West Haven Preschool will provide service for children 6 weeks old through pre-kindergarten aged. We will also offer before and after-school care, as well as for holidays and winter/summer break, for children through 5th grade. We are open Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., all twelve months of the year. We will close on the following holidays to allow our staff to enjoy some much needed time with their families: New Year's Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day (4th of July), Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day. West Haven also closes for 2 professional development days each year. If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, West Haven reserves the right to close on the Friday before or the Monday after. This decision will be made by the Director and parents will be notified no less than one full calendar week prior.

Attendance

In order to maintain proper staffing, we ask that you please notify the Director or Assistant Director if your child will be absent for more than one day.

Drop off and pick up

All parents must sign their child in on our center tablet and escort their child directly to class. Parents/Guardians should ensure the teacher has acknowledged their arrival before leaving the child in the classroom. Parents/Guardians must sign their child out at the end of the day as well. Anyone else picking up a child will be required to show identification and will not be permitted to leave with a child if they have not been listed on the "authorized pick up" list. This information must be updated in person or via the registered email address. In order to keep proper staffing and prevent class interruptions, drop off can not occur after 10:00 am unless we have been previously notified and a medical excuse is provided. In this event, drop off can be extended for an additional hour.

Our center closes promptly at 6:00 p.m. A \$5 per minute, per child, fee will be charged for late pick up after 6:00 p.m. (after 3:15 p.m. for GA Pre-k). This fee must be paid prior to the child returning. If a child is not picked up within 30 minutes of closure/dismissal, regardless of reason, the Columbia County Sheriff's Office will be contacted.

Initial _____

Tuition

All tuition is due in advance of services, by close of business each Friday (for the upcoming week of care). We accept checks or electronic drafts. Our preschool managing application will also offer the ability to pay by credit card through their app. We reserve the right to require a money order/cashier's check due to returned payments. Payments are late as of 6:30 a.m. on Monday and will incur a \$20 late payment fee. If payment has not been made by 6:30 a.m. on Tuesday, your child may not return to care. If tuition is not paid by 6:30 a.m. on Wednesday, children will be withdrawn from our center. Tuition is due for the full week regardless of attendance or closures, and all tuition fees are non-refundable. A 10% weekly sibling discount is offered to families with more than one child enrolled and will be applied to your oldest child's tuition (this does not apply for extended care, drop in rates, or summer camp).

Tuition rates will be evaluated at least twice yearly and are subject to increase. A minimum of a 30 day notice will be provided prior to any increase.

Records

All enrollment forms, emergency information, medical forms, immunization records, and feeding plans (if applicable) must be completed in their entirety and submitted a minimum of 72 hours prior to your child's first day of attendance. If a parent/guardian is unauthorized to pick up a child, West Haven requires copies of court documents (which will be kept in the child's file) and reserves the right to request updated copies as necessary. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to update all forms regularly as their situation changes.

Immunizations

At West Haven, we firmly believe that children should receive all of the recommended vaccines according to the published schedule by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Furthermore, State law requires that a certificate of immunization (Georgia Form 3231) be provided no later than 30 days after enrollment. Please ensure to provide a copy of this form to the director or assistant director. Children with expired immunization forms will not be able to return to care until these records have been made current. Should our center accept your child with a religious exemption form for immunization, we reserve the right to require a new form annually.

Enrollment

A non-refundable enrollment and curriculum fee of \$200 is due prior to enrollment. Enrollment fees cover August 1st - July 31st. The enrollment fee for new child enrollments in the months of May, June, or July will be prorated for the current school year. Unfortunately, specific dates for placement cannot be guaranteed if your child is on our waiting list for placement. Verbal agreements will not be made for placement and/or start dates.

Re-enrollment

Each year, a re-enrollment application, as well as a \$125 re-enrollment fee, will be required for each child planning to remain with West Haven for the upcoming school year. This application and fee will occur in May of each year. West Haven reserves the right to reject the re-enrollment application for any reason.

Transitions

We understand that transitions to a new classroom may be uncomfortable for parents, just as it is for the children. However, transitions are necessary. We will be mindful of your child's feelings and provide them with several days to visit their new classroom to become acclimated. Should additional preparation be needed in advance of your child's transition, a "transition prep" letter will be sent home letting you know what items need to be worked on prior to your child's transition. It is important to note that these items are non-negotiable for a smooth transition. Our goal is to provide the best possible experience for the child during this process and your partnership is invaluable.

Withdrawal

A two-week written notice must be submitted to the Director or Assistant Director if you choose to withdraw your child for any reason. Payment for two weeks of care will be accepted in lieu of a notice. A one week written notice will be accepted for active military families who receive orders to relocate.

Parent involvement

West Haven has an open-door policy. Parents are welcome and encouraged to visit our center at any time, we only ask that you please notify a staff member of your presence. Throughout the year, West Haven will have several opportunities for families to participate in activities and/or meals with their child(ren). We encourage you to attend these family activities.

Communication through our center's app will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences, as well as their current curriculum goals. Please ensure your contact information remains current in our app so that you will receive these updates from our teachers.

Transportation

School transportation: West Haven provides transportation to/from Baker Place Elementary. Children must be at the center no later than 7:30 a.m. to receive breakfast and buses will depart at 8:00 a.m. If your child will not be picked up from their school on any particular afternoon, please notify West Haven prior to 3:00 p.m. Failure to notify the center that your child will not be picked up will result in a \$5 convenience charge, per child, per day.

Field trips: In the event that a field trip is planned, you will be notified in writing and must sign a permission slip giving permission for your child to attend the scheduled trip. Children will only be transported on West Haven's child care buses, which are inspected yearly and insured. Parent involvement and attendance on our field trips is greatly appreciated and encouraged. West Haven will not provide field trips where water of more than 2 feet deep is present.

Weather/Fire/Emergencies

In the event of severe weather, or other emergencies such as loss of power, water, etc., local emergency personnel will be contacted for guidance. Should any emergency require the evacuation of our building or require the closing of our building, parents will be notified immediately via a “push” notification through our preschool managing application. Please ensure your cell phone number and email address remains current in the app. We will also post this information on our facebook page @WHavenPreschool. In the event of a fire, teachers will follow established emergency plans to evacuate the children as quickly and as safely as possible. Parents will be notified as soon as possible through our app. Emergency plans for all situations have been developed and are posted on our parent bulletin board in the lobby of our center.

Inclement weather and closings

West Haven will follow the same inclement weather closings as the Columbia County School District. Should the School District decide to close due to inclement weather, so will our center. We will list this information with the local news station, as well as post it on our Facebook Page.

Accident procedures

While we will make every effort to prevent injuries, accidents will occur. In this event, the teacher present during the accident is required to fill out an incident report indicating the nature of the accident. This report must be signed by a parent or guardian and will be kept on file at West Haven. If the accident only requires minor treatment (i.e. band-aid, cold rag, extra love), parents will not be notified until pick-up. We understand that parents have work obligations and West Haven wants to prevent calling with interruptions if it is not necessary. If additional first aid is needed or the accident is more serious, parents will be notified via telephone. In the event of an emergency that can not be handled by our staff, emergency services will be immediately contacted and if needed, your child will be transported to Doctors Hospital. West Haven will ensure that a parent or guardian is contacted and notified of all pertinent information.

Medication

We recommend that you administer medications prior to arriving or after leaving our center. To help with medication scheduling, you may consider asking your physician or health care provider for prescriptions with 12-hour dosages.

Any child requiring medication must have a current medication authorization on file. If medication is not prescribed and required to be used more than two weeks, a note from the child’s physician is required. Expired medication will not be given to a child under any circumstance. Furthermore, we will not administer pain medication or fever reducing medication. Parents will be notified immediately of any adverse reactions to medication.

Illness policy

West Haven will adhere to a strict illness policy in order to protect the health of all children and staff. Any child with a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher (checked with our digital ear thermometer), or any child exhibiting other contagious symptoms such as rash, diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat, etc. will be required to be picked up from our facility within 1 hour. In this event, the sick child will be made as comfortable as possible but will be excluded from all activities until your arrival.

Any child sent home from our facility can not return the following day and must be fever free or symptom free for 24 hours without the assistance of medication. Any parent who brings their child sick to school on a routine basis may be unenrolled from our center. It is important for sick children to stay home in order to get well and to limit the spread of any illness.

If your child has been diagnosed with a communicable illness, please notify West Haven immediately (via phone or email) so that we may post a notice on your child's respective classroom door. This notification is important so that other parents can monitor their child for any symptoms of that illness. Your child's personal information will never be listed on these notices and your child's health status will never be disclosed or discussed with any other parent. Any child diagnosed with a contagious illness must remain out of the center until they are symptom free (without the assistance of medication) for 24 hours.

Alcohol and tobacco free

West Haven Preschool is an alcohol, illegal substance, and tobacco-free facility. We are also a vape-free facility. The use of alcohol, illegal substances, tobacco products or vaping products will not be allowed in the center or on our property.

Child abuse/neglect

Every staff member at West Haven is mandated by state law to report any cases where there is reason to believe that a child has been neglected, exploited, deprived, sexually assaulted, or physically injured in any way by a parent, guardian, or care-taker. This information will be reported to the Columbia County Sheriff's Office and all staff members are required to cooperate fully with law enforcement should any investigation ensue.

Discipline policy

Corporal punishment is not allowed by anyone in our center or on our property. Corporal punishment includes but is not limited to spanking, biting, pinching, jerking, snatching, or "popping" of any body part.

West Haven staff will take the classroom management approach of redirection. Teachers will use positive reinforcement for good behavior and explain to children the behavior that is unacceptable. Should redirection fail to work, a child may be removed from a specific activity and asked to take a "cooling off period." This break is a short period of time where a child may be asked to sit by their cubby or sit with the teacher and discuss the situation and behavior. In the event that redirection or cooling off are not effective, the child will be asked to leave the classroom and placed with the Director or Assistant Director until the child is ready to return to the classroom. After a child takes a break or is removed from the classroom, they will be reminded once again of our expected behavior and then warmly welcomed back into the group setting. At no time will food or other care items be denied as punishment. West Haven reserves the right to contact a parent for immediate pick up in the event that our staff can not effectively calm a child.

Any incidents of aggression towards another child, staff members, or center property will be relayed to the parents via an "incident report." Having 3 or more incident reports within 30 days, or having continuous behavior problems with no improvement, may result in dismissal from the center. West Haven reserves the right to bypass these 3 incidents and move to immediate withdrawal, if needed.

Biting

Although common in young children, we understand that biting can be very frustrating. If a child at West Haven bites frequently, our teachers will utilize a more intensive approach to supervising that child and will keep an active log of the biting incidents. Parents will be notified if their child has been bitten; however, in order to protect the privacy of all our families, the identity of the biter will never be disclosed. West Haven will also notify the parents of the biter and speak with that child's parents to help find a solution. Our discipline policy above also applies to biting. We reserve the right to unenroll a biting child at any time in order to protect the remaining children in the classroom.

- A separate policy statement for biting/behavior must be signed upon enrollment.

Pacifiers

All pacifiers must be marked with your child's full name. Pacifier clips are not allowed and pacifiers may only be used in the infant and the 1 year old classes.

Infants

A completed infant feeding plan and acknowledgement of safe sleeping practices is required for each child in our infant room. The feeding plan must include specific amounts of food and beverages to be offered to your child, and the frequency of such offerings. All bottles (no glass) must be brought to the center already prepared and labeled with your child's full name and the current date. All jar foods or snacks must also be labeled with your child's name. Any unused portion of the bottle or jar food will be discarded after one hour of the beginning of the feed.

We currently stop parents at the door to their child's classroom. This is for the safety of all children in that classroom, as they primarily play on the floor.

Any infant or toddler requiring diapering will be changed every 2 hours (or sooner if needed). This diaper change will occur on a designated diapering station that has been disinfected and dried. Each child's hands, as well as the teacher's hands, must be washed after each diaper change. Parents are responsible for providing West Haven with disposable wipes and diapers for their child, as well as any needed diaper ointment.

Potty learning

Once a child shows signs of potty readiness, West Haven will work alongside the parents to continue the families potty learning process. Parents must provide the correct size pull-ups and at least three changes of clothing for any child in the potty learning process (shoes included). During this process, a child will be taken to the restroom approximately every 60 minutes and given the opportunity to potty. If an accident occurs, the child will be changed on the designated diapering station or in the classroom bathroom. Potty learning will not begin before our 2A classroom.

- A separate policy statement for potty learning must be signed upon enrollment.

Naps

Quiet time will be observed at West Haven from 12:00 p.m. until 2:00 p.m. Naptime mats with clean sheets will be provided by West Haven to each child in classrooms 1A through 4B. Parents may provide a blanket for their child to utilize during nap time. Our center will not withhold naps, or wake a child early. Likewise, children will not be forced to nap. All teachers will do their best to calm children and may even assist the napping process by rubbing the child's back or gently patting the child's back. Soothing music will be played in each classroom. After the first hour of nap, children who remain awake will be allowed to lay quietly with a toy or redirected to an area away from other children to read a book, draw, etc.

Safe sleeping practices for infants

West Haven operates on a safe sleep policy. All infants will have their own individual cribs and will be initially placed on their backs for sleeping. They may not have a blanket or any other soft item in their crib. Swaddling is not permitted; however, a parent may provide a wearable sleep sack to be worn during napping times, so long as the sack fits properly and does not slip up around the infant's face. Any child who falls asleep in any equipment, including their carrier upon arrival at the center, will be moved to their crib to sleep.

Outside play

West Haven offers four age-appropriate playground areas for our children to utilize. Each classroom will go outside at least twice daily, weather permitting. Please ensure your child is dressed in weather appropriate clothing, to include shoes. Clothing may get dirty during this play time. For the safety of your child, no open-toe shoes, flip flops, or other shoes without a strap on the back may be worn. We also prohibit jewelry of any kind (stud earrings are allowed).

Assessments

Beginning in 2024, our teachers will perform a child development assessment (evaluating average milestones) on each child at least once during the school year. Any concerns discovered during these assessments will be discussed with the parents directly.

What to bring

West Haven does not allow backpacks or bags of any kind. This is for the safety of all children as medication or other dangerous items may be inadvertently left in these bags. The only exceptions to this rule are if:

- Your child is in the infant room. A bottle bag may be brought to transport formula/breast milk daily. This bag will be kept in a locked cabinet during the day.
- Your child is in our pre-kindergarten class and the teachers are preparing them for carrying backpacks while in Kindergarten (a note will be sent home advising parents of this time).

We provide bibs and paint shirts but children will still find a way to get messy so please ensure your child has at least one full change of clothing (including underwear, socks, and shoes). For infants and toddlers, we ask that you please provide at least two changes of clothing. In all classrooms, changes of clothing should be placed in a zip-lock bag labeled with your child's name. Grocery bags are not allowed in the center.

In classrooms 1A through Pre-k, children may bring a small blanket (think beach towel size) for nap time to be kept in the child's cubby. These blankets should be taken home every Friday to be laundered at home. West Haven launders all crib sheets and mat sheets on site.

Personal belongings

West Haven does not allow outside items such as money, jewelry, candy, toys, etc. Please do not allow your child to bring them in the building, as we will have to remove them. It is distressing for children when these items have to be removed.

Security

Our entire facility, including the playgrounds, is outfitted with high definition security cameras. These cameras are regularly monitored and randomly reviewed by the director and assistant director. By choosing to enroll your child at West Haven, you acknowledge and consent to the use of these cameras.

West Haven keeps all exterior doors locked at all times. Prior to your start date with West Haven, each family will be provided a keyfob in order to gain access to the front door. This fob should never be given out. Furthermore, as uncomfortable as it may be, please do not hold the door for any other person, regardless of whether you are familiar with them or not. West Haven takes the safety of your child very seriously and parents may not be aware of any legal orders or custody issues occurring within other households, so please do not hold the door open.

Meals

West Haven will offer all children a breakfast snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack. For toddlers (1A/1B) that remain at the center after 5:00 p.m., a 2nd afternoon snack may be offered. All meals will be balanced and nutritious, and copies of the bi-weekly menu will be posted in the lobby. While we will encourage all children to try all foods, it will not be required or forced. Morning snacks will be served at 8:15 a.m. and children must arrive by 8:30am in order to be guaranteed a morning snack.

Lunch will be served between 11:00 a.m. and 11:45 a.m., and an afternoon snack will be served around 2:15 p.m. After-school students will be given a snack in the afternoon once they arrive at West Haven. We do not allow children to bring food to school for meals.

- A separate policy statement for medical/religious restrictions will be provided upon request. We reserve the right to require this information to be updated annually.

Birthdays

Birthdays are special days for children, and we understand you may want to celebrate these occasions with treats. If you'd like to provide food for the celebration, we ask that all food items be commercially packaged with ingredient statements in order to properly account for child food allergies. All food must be nut free as well. We encourage healthy snack options such as whole-grain items, vegetables with dip, or fresh fruit platters. Please be sure to provide enough food for every child in your child's classroom. And please, due to allergies and necessary scheduling needs, make arrangements with leadership prior to the special day.

Communication

West Haven utilizes a 3rd party app for daily logs and communication. It is the parent's responsibility to frequently check this app for messages, newsletters, etc. from the center. This is our main form of communication.

Religious Activity

At West Haven, we may plan activities and music based on Bible stories. We will also say a prayer before each meal and each snack. Our prayer will be (sung to the tune of Where is Thumbkin):

“God our Father, God our Father
We thank You, we thank You
For our many blessings, for our many blessing
Amen, Amen”

An additional activity can be provided for children whose parents do not want their children to participate.

Non-discrimination

West Haven's services are available without discrimination of sex, race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, or disability. Should your child have a disability, please discuss this with the center director before you enroll. We review each child's needs on a case-by-case basis, and make reasonable accommodations for any child who can safely participate in a group care environment.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand West Haven's parental policies and procedures. I understand that this handbook contains important information, policies, and guidelines related to my child's enrollment and participation in the program. I agree to abide by the policies and procedures outlined in the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to stay informed about any updates or changes that may occur.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Initial _____