

PARENT HANDBOOK 2023/2024



Dear Parents/Guardians:

Welcome to Alpha House Nursery, Pre-K & Kindergarten. Our goal is to provide a warm, safe and developmentally appropriate environment for every child.

The purpose of this booklet is to outline the program's policies and programs. We strive to work closely with parents in a partnership that will facilitate the transition between home and school. Daily communication and a sense of trust between parents and staff are vital ingredients for our program's success.

Alpha House Nursery, Pre-K & Kindergarten

at Holy Family University
9801 Frankford Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19114-2009

Alpha House Office: 215-632-3366 or 267-341-3486

Alpha House Office at Aquinas: 267-341-3620

Student Accounts: 267-341-3334

ALPHA HOUSE HOURS

Early Morning Drop-Off

Kindergarten

7:30-7:45 a.m.

Nursery/Pre-K

7:30-8:00 a.m.

Kindergarten – Full Day

Arrival 7:50 a.m.

Dismissal 2:20 p.m.

Full Day Nursery/Pre-K

Arrival 8:15 a.m.

Dismissal 2:45 p.m.

Morning Session Nursery & Pre-K

Arrival 8:15 a.m.

Dismissal 10:45 a.m.

Afternoon Session Nursery & Pre-K

Arrival 12:15 p.m.

Dismissal 2:45 p.m.

½ DAYS SPECIAL SCHEDULE-NO PM CLASSES

Kindergarten

Arrival 7:50am/Dismissal 11:15am

Nursery/Pre-K

Arrival 8:15am/Dismissal 11:30am

KIDS CLUB

at Holy Family University
9801 Frankford Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19114-2009

Mrs. Christine Humphries (Co-Director)
Mrs. Maribeth Kane (Co-Director)

kidsclub@holyfamily.edu

KIDS CLUB HOURS

2:30 – 6:00 P.M.

All students will remain with their teacher until Kids Club begins.

KIDS CLUB CLOSSES PROMPTLY AT 6:00 P.M.

There will be a late fee of \$1.00 per minute for any child picked-up after 6:00 p.m. If you are late more than two times, your child will not be allowed to attend Kids Club.

HISTORY OF ALPHA HOUSE

Alpha House is a Nursery, Pre-K & Kindergarten that was established in September 1975. Because of increased enrollment in September 1977, Alpha House was expanded to include a Kindergarten. Facilities for the expanded program were provided in larger quarters at the southeast corner of Grant & Frankford Avenues. In September 1979, a second morning Kindergarten class was made available to meet the needs of the community. Also, in September 1980, another Kindergarten session was added. In September 1984, Alpha House was relocated on the campus east of the library. A modular one-story building was erected. Today Alpha House has an enrollment of approximately 90 students in Nursery, Pre-K & Kindergarten. We have added full day Nursery and Pre-K classes to meet the needs of working parents as well as an after-school program which gives parents from Alpha House and Nazareth Academy Grade School a safe and nurturing environment for their children. Practicum and student teaching experiences are provided for students attending Holy Family University. Work study positions are also available for the University students.

In September of 2017, our kindergarten expanded to the newly renovated Aquinas building enabling us to increase enrollment and expand our programs to meet the ever-changing needs of our students.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Early Childhood Program at Alpha House is well defined and structured to include the academic, physical, spiritual, and organizational development of young children.

Our children learn by teacher guidance and through individual self-exploration. The development of a feeling of security and positive self-concept is an integral part of our program and is nurtured through the dedication, interest, motivation and personal qualities of the teachers.

Our children benefit from the resources provided by the Holy Family University and surrounding community.

We of Holy Family University, a Catholic institution, believe that the whole child should be developed.

We believe that children:

- Should be exposed to an atmosphere of love so that they will gain love of and respect for God and neighbor.
- Should accept and appreciate differences in others.
- Should be provided with a proper physical setting to allow exploration and discovery.
- Should be given opportunities for self-expression and auditory development.
- Should be given experiences that will enable them to function in our technologically challenging world.
- Should be provided with experiences to develop concepts in emergent literacy and number meaning.
- Should be given activities and materials that are developmentally appropriate.

PHILOSOPHY

Alpha House is a private catholic Nursery, Pre-K & Kindergarten on the campus of Holy Family University.

Mindful that children thrive in a loving and nurturing atmosphere, Alpha House strives to build an environment of family, faith and community.

Academically, the school provides a well-balanced program that addresses the needs of the whole child, both individually and as a group.

The curriculum at Alpha House is designed to include basic skills and their development within the content areas. The teachers recognize that each student progresses at different levels and adjust their lessons accordingly. Group instruction, individualized instruction, and cooperative learning are incorporated into our curriculum.

Realizing that each child is unique and that in today's society children come from diverse backgrounds and family structures, our faculty attempts to honor that diversity while at the same time celebrating that which binds our families together.

Alpha House administration and faculty are committed to creating an atmosphere conducive to the growth and development of the whole child, spiritually, emotionally and academically. With this in mind, Alpha House teachers dedicate themselves daily to the pursuit of excellence in all endeavors.

SECURITY

In an effort to secure the safety of the children, faculty and staff, we have implemented the following precautions:

- No one is permitted beyond the vestibule of the school unless accompanied by a staff member.
- Anyone entering the building must sign in.
- No one can be admitted to the school for a tour or any other reason without an appointment.

PARENT CONTRACTS

All families are expected to read the materials given during the orientation. Your compliance with the rules and guidelines of Alpha House Nursery, Pre-K and Kindergarten are extremely important. A contract, which covers tuition, lateness and medical policies, has been provided for you to sign and return to school **as soon as possible**. This contract will be kept on file with the teacher.

GUARDIANSHIP POLICIES

If there are any guardianship issues in your family, we must be made aware of them.

We must release the child to either parent unless we are advised otherwise in writing. For your child's safety, please discuss any concerns with us.

TUITION POLICY

Proof of payment is required before any child is permitted to attend Alpha House.

Paid in Full accounts – must obtain a receipt of payment in the Office of Student Accounts, HFH Room 202.

CashNet – must present proof of payment for a minimum of one payment plus the application fee.

TUITION FEE

2023/2024 SCHOOL YEAR

NURSERY

(3 year olds)

2 Day Session – Total \$1,976.00

Full Day Session – Total \$4,784.00

PRE-K

(4 year olds)

3 Day Session – Total \$2,288.00

Full Day Session – Total \$4,784.00

KINDERGARTEN

Full Day Session – Total \$4,888.00

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL LOGISTICS

Early Morning Drop-Off Procedure

The Kindergarten carline begins at 7:50 a.m. Drop off for morning care must be by 7:40 a.m. Nursery/Pre-K carline begins at 8:15 a.m. Drop off for morning care must be by 8:00 a.m.

Car Signs

On a large piece of cardboard (larger than 18 inches), please mark the child's first and last name and your child's teacher in thick, black marker. The teachers need to be able to read the sign with ease from a distance. If you do not have a car sign visible you may not pick your child up in the carline.

John Smith
Mrs. Logan

Arrival and Dismissal

As you pull up in front of school, please have car seats and seat belts unfastened, doors unlocked, and the child ready to exit. At dismissal we ask you to buckle your child into his/her seat and then move forward. We ask your patience as each child is securely buckled. Car seats for other children in the car need to be on the left side so that the school child entering or exiting the car does not have to climb over younger children. There is no parking allowed in front of school along the driveway during arrival and dismissal times. For arrivals, please keep your child in the car while waiting for the car line to move. At dismissal, please do not call to your child from the boardwalk. Your child's teacher will bring your child to you.

IMPORTANT:

WE ASK THAT YOU REFRAIN FROM BEING ON THE PHONE FOR ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL AND FOLLOW ALL THE RULES OF THE CARLINE.

Drivers

If someone other than the parent is going to be dropping off or picking up your child, a written note must be sent in or a phone call made to the school. We must know who the person is, the relationship they have with the child and a description of their vehicle, including the make and color of the car. We will not release your child to anyone except a known parent without prior notification. Please be sure they have a visible car sign.

Carpools are a convenient, cost-efficient and environmentally friendly way of transporting children to and from school. If your child is in a carpool, please send in a note with detailed driving arrangements.

Please do not park behind our building. The University employees cannot get out of their parking spots. Although parents are very cooperative, we would like to suggest that when you are in the carline that you do not block the section where the cars are parked.

Carline Rules

- 1. DO NOT PARK YOUR CAR ON GRANT AVENUE.** Due to the volume of traffic during dismissal from the high school, grade school and Alpha House there is a major traffic jam. No one can park on Grant Avenue and cross in the middle of the street.

2. If you arrive before the teachers come out, **Kindergarten** – wait to be directed by Security. **Nursery/Pre-K** - you may pull into the driveway **ONLY UP TO THE GREEN LIGHT POST.**
3. The cars that cannot fit in the driveway must line up on Grant Avenue on the same side as the school. **NO ONE CAN MAKE A LEFT TURN INTO THE DRIVEWAY** from Grant Avenue. You must make a right turn onto Ditman Street and come out at the light on Torresdale Avenue and proceed to the back of the carline.
4. **NO ONE** is permitted to make a U-turn on Grant Avenue. This has caused accidents in the past.
5. Do not cross your child on Grant Avenue. Please cross at the light on Torresdale Avenue.

PRIVACY/CONFIDENTIALITY

The privacy of each and every child and his/her family is treated with the utmost respect and confidentiality. The only persons permitted to see a child's records are the parents or legal guardian, school employees, and state licensing and Department of Education personnel. Information will not be given to others without parent or guardian consent. Parents or legal guardians have the right of full access to a child's records, the facility, and staff, by appointment.

- Parents have ready access to the files and records of their own children, but do not have access to information about any other child.
- Staff do not discuss personal information given by parents with other members of staff, except where it affects planning for the child's needs. Staff induction includes an awareness of the importance of confidentiality in the role of the key person.
- If staff talk to parents about any causes for concerns, e.g. unsociable behavior, this should be done out of hearing of the child(ren) in question, other children and their parents/guardians.
- In certain circumstances, where a child is considered to be at risk, information may be passed to the relevant authorities without parental consent.
- If you are volunteering inside the school, **you are not permitted to take pictures of the children.**

ATTENDANCE & LATENESS POLICIES

Attendance

If your child is going to be absent for more than 2 days, please call and inform us of the absence. Kindergarten children returning after an absence of even 1 day need a note on a 3x5 card. This is State law.

Lateness

Children need structure and a stable routine. Arriving late in the morning not only disrupts the teacher and other children, it causes embarrassment and anxiety for your child. Lateness in picking up your child also causes unnecessary worry for your child and is a disruption to your child's class and teacher. We understand that special circumstances arise during the day. If you are going to be late, you must telephone the school and sign the late book.

Early Pick-up

If for any reason (such as a doctor's appointment), you need to pick your child up from school early, we must have a written note to the teacher in advance so that your child will be packed up and ready when you arrive.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

At Alpha House nursery school, pre-k and kindergarten, we recognize that positive discipline teaches and encourages the healthy development of each child. Our teachers praise and call attention to appropriate behavior and act as Christian role models in order to influence and reinforce a child's behavior in a positive manner.

Our class groups have developmentally appropriate behavior management systems designed to encourage acceptable interactions among the children. Our overall objective is to train each child to use self-initiated thinking skills leading to monitoring their own self-control. This fosters the student in learning how to make socially acceptable decisions and choices later in life.

There are times a child will need a time of "self-reflection". This time offers the child an opportunity to regain his/her self-control and consider various options when interacting with others.

The use of corporal punishment or any physical discipline methods by Alpha House is strictly prohibited.

In order to provide a safe environment for all, students are not permitted to hit or otherwise endanger the physical well-being of other students or staff. Verbal threats and other inappropriate language will not be tolerated. Parents will be notified in person and in writing should these events occur.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE

In the event that an administrator, teacher and volunteer suspects that a child is being abused, abandoned or neglected, he/she must contact authorities immediately. Call the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (1-800-932-0313 or 9-1-1).

MEDICAL POLICY

Illness

This medical policy memo has been prepared with your child's safety in mind. Please read and adhere to these policies carefully since they will be strictly enforced.

24-Hour Fever-Free Rule-A normal temperature is 98.6° (37°C) when taken orally. If your child registers 100.4 orally, we consider that a fever.

If your child has been running a fever, your child cannot attend school. Your child must be fever-free for at least 24-hours before returning to school. If your child is sent home from school with a fever he/she cannot return the next day. If your child is sent home with a stomach virus they may not return to school the next day. They must be symptom free for 24-hours before they return to school. This is for the welfare of the other students as well as faculty and staff.

If your child has had antibiotics administered, the student should have received a minimum **of 24-hours of antibiotics and be fever-free without medication.**

Please do not send sick children to school. We **must** and **will** send sick children home. Please let the school know if your child has a communicable disease (chicken pox, pink-eye, the flu, etc.). If illness is of short duration, it is not necessary to call school. If your child is going to be out more than two school days, you must notify your child's teacher.

Teachers are **not** permitted to administer any type of medication unless a form is on file signed by the physician and parent/guardian. If your child needs any cold, flu, or headache medication, they are too sick to attend school.

If your child has any medical condition or allergy, this must be discussed with his/her teacher and listed on the medical form.

POLICIES regarding contagious illnesses such as the following:

Pink Eye (conjunctivitis), head lice or impetigo. A physician's note is required when returning to school.

Chicken Pox (Varicella), if your child has chicken pox, you must notify us since all cases must be reported to the City's Health Department.

Medical Forms

Due to the recent outbreak of measles, we must insist that immunization forms be returned to school by the **first day of school**. After that date, children without immunization forms will not be permitted to return to school until the school receives the record of immunization. Doctor forms must also be returned to school as soon as possible. Records will be checked by the visiting school nurse.

Allergies/Medications

Be sure to notify us if your child has an allergy. Please inform us if your child is on medication, if so proper forms will need to be completed.

Dental Forms

Dental forms must be returned to school by the 1st day of class.
(Kindergarten Only)

Emergency Procedures

When a child becomes sick or an accident occurs, we determine the severity of the situation and contact the parent/authorized person or arrange for transportation to the hospital. One staff member (Teacher/Director) should accompany the child to the hospital and take the child's folder. The teacher will stay with the child until the parent or alternative pick-up arrives. If parent

cannot be reached, we will contact a designated person on the child's emergency contact sheet.

Emergency Contacts

It is imperative to have two emergency contacts that drive other than parents/guardians. It is absolutely essential that the emergency contacts which you provide be available to pick up ill children, should the need arise, within 20-30 minutes. If your contacts change, please inform the school office and your child's teacher.

First Aid Policy

- All teachers and staff are CPR/First Aid Certified. The School Nurse is also called as needed.
- First Aid boxes are clearly marked in each classroom.
- First Aid boxes are replenished regularly.
- We only use supplies in sealed packages.
- We always use disposable gloves.
- We provide suitable bins for the disposal of soiled materials.
- In the case of a serious emergency, we will call an ambulance.
- We will inform parents immediately if an accident occurs.
- We hold permission slips in the teacher's files from all parents which includes the following information:
 - Child's name
 - Date of birth
 - Parent's names
 - Emergency contact details
 - Details of past and present medical conditions
 - Allergies

Consent signature of a parent to allow staff to make decisions regarding the child's welfare if the parents cannot be contacted.

Sunscreen/Bug Repellent Policy

Parents/guardians are responsible for applying such lotions to child(ren) prior to coming to school. The reason we do not apply these lotions is due to allergies and skin sensitivities.

Hand Washing Policy

We encourage children to wash their hands regularly, especially before handling food, after using the toilet, handling animals, plants and insects, or playing in messy or dirty areas, particularly outdoors.

Children/Adults must wash their hands:

- Before Snack
- After outdoor play, water/sand box
- Before Lunch
- After going to the bathroom
- After blowing nose

Procedures:

- Using liquid soap and running water,
- Rubbing hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds,
- Including back of hands, wrists, between fingers,
- Under fingernails, rinsing well;
- Dry hands with paper towel.

Practices:

- Hand washing is required by all staff, volunteers and children. Hand washing reduces the risk of transmission of infectious diseases to themselves and to others.

DRESS CODE

Dress to Play

Please be aware that the children will participate in outdoor play and art activities on a daily basis. Sneakers or tie shoes are best suited for the young child. Sandals and flip flops are not allowed.

General Clothing

Children must be able to pull pants down, handle skirts, leotards, belts and zippers appropriately. One-piece outfits are difficult to handle independently. Girls must wear leotards or biker shorts under dresses or please do not send them to school in a dress.

If your child is prone to bathroom accidents, please send a change of clothes in a plastic bag marked with your child's name to be kept in school for emergencies.

Hair

Extreme hairstyles and color are not permitted.

Outer Clothing

Please dress your child for the weather – coats, gloves, hats, rain jackets, etc. No umbrellas please. Children must be able to take off jacket/coats and hang them up on hangers. Children must also be able to put on outer clothing independently. Fancy buckles, cumbersome buttons, and complicated zippers are not recommended for children learning how to button and zipper. Outer clothing and other school bags **MUST BE MARKED** with your child's name. Snow boots must stay on in class or be manipulated by the child. Please tie shoes in double knots.

Gym Uniforms

The summer gym uniform consists of blue shorts and tee shirts with the Alpha House logo, white socks and sneakers. The winter gym uniform consists of blue sweatshirts and sweatpants with the Alpha House logo, white socks and sneakers. If your child does not come to school dressed in sneakers, he/she will not be permitted to participate in gym class.

IMPORTANT

All coats, sweaters, sweatshirts, school bags and lunch boxes must be labeled with your child's first and last name.

DAILY ROUTINES

Bathroom

Teachers are not permitted to go into the bathroom with the children. Therefore, children must be potty-trained and independent in the bathroom and be able to take care of their needs. Absolutely no diapers or pull-ups.

School Bags

NO ROLLING SCHOOL BAGS. THIS TYPE OF SCHOOL BAG IS A HAZARD TO SMALL CHILDREN.

Check and sanitize school bags daily. Please send children with empty school bags (except for important papers). **No toys, pencils, money, tissues, candy or gum in the school bags.** The child is responsible for packing and unpacking his or her school bag at school. We are trying to foster independence. You can help us by making your child responsible for their papers.

Names must be printed on the school bag. Make your child's school bag distinctive. Be original. A button, scarf, or ribbon tied to the school bag; a special design sewn or drawn onto the school bag are all wonderful ideas that personalize your child's belongings. Show your child his/her school bag. Tell him/her about it and what it is used for.

Name Tags

Children must wear a name tag until the end of October. Name tags help the teachers and staff learn the children's names.

FOR OUR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year and formal assessment reports will be sent home twice a year. The teachers at Alpha House strive to make your child's experience at Alpha House a positive one. This also means making your experience at Alpha House enjoyable. We encourage you to keep the lines of communication open. If you have a concern or question, please do not wait until conference time. Discuss it with your child's teacher when the problem arises. The teachers are generally available on a daily basis before and after school.

Class Lists

We will distribute a class list for your convenience. You may refer to it throughout the year.

School Directory

Alpha House publishes an annual directory of the families attending during the current school year. This directory aids in forming positive relationships with fellow parents in your child's school. A permission slip will be sent home for you to complete if you wish to be listed in the directory. Only those families listed in the directory will receive a copy of the directory.

Applications

Applications for the following school year will be **distributed in January. They will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis.** If your child is returning, it is necessary to complete an application and return it to school as soon as possible to ensure that your child has a spot for the next school year.

Parent/Teacher Communication

The best form of communication is via e-mail or a note. Please call after 3:15 p.m. or leave a message. The teacher will return your call ASAP. A teacher cannot be interrupted during school hours. We realize that communication between parents/guardians and teachers are very important.

Weather & Snow Day Policies

Children must be dressed properly for inclement weather. Hoods, raingear and all outer clothing **must** be marked with your child's full name. Children stand outside with their teacher at arrival and dismissal. Please keep in mind that the children walk to gym class in all types of weather and should be dressed appropriately.

Our **snow number is 3090.** We will always be closed when Nazareth Academy Grade School and all Public and Parochial schools are closed. If the University closes for weather, we must follow their decision. There may be times when, due to the young age of our children, we close for extreme weather conditions. We realize that closing school can be difficult for working parents. We make every effort to make our decision as early as possible.

Website

www.Holyfamily.edu/alphahouse



PARENT/GUARDIAN CONTRACT

We have read and agree to adhere to the following Alpha House Policies regarding:

1. General Policies
2. Lateness
3. Tuition
4. Medical Policies

Both parents or guardians must sign if applicable.

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONTRACT

CHILD NAME: _____

DATE: _____

MOTHER: _____

FATHER: _____

Or GUARDIAN: _____