



Harmony School

*PARENT
HANDBOOK
2024-2025*



Welcome to Harmony School!

You will find that this is a very special place for you and your child. Our community offers a diverse program focusing on the talents and needs of your child. This focus is both our hallmark and our strength, which has evolved over our 30-year history. Your interest and parental involvement are an integral part of continuing this tradition.

The board and staff welcome your comments, questions, suggestions, and concerns. We look forward to this new school year with you and your child.

Harmony Staff & Board



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Who We Are

Mission Statement

We create a warm and natural environment that encourages children to explore and develop their individual capabilities and to learn problem-solving and respect for others; all in a spirit of kindness that nurtures a sense of belonging in our community.

Educational Philosophy

Our program is designed based around how children learn and thrive. At Harmony School, we feel that each child's unique qualities should be nurtured. We view each child as an individual with needs and abilities that differ from other children. Every child has their own learning style, special talents, and unique gifts. We individualize instruction to address each child's needs. A child's need for movement, creativity, and hands-on experiences is reflected in our daily schedule and lesson planning.

Classroom Overview

Our Preschool program seeks to:

- give children the opportunity to explore the world around them.
- provide children with the classroom materials designed to strengthen their abilities in
 - fine and gross motor skills
 - practical life
 - language
 - math
 - scientific inquiry
 - music
 - art
 - social skills
- encourage independence.
- nourish each child's natural curiosity and enthusiasm.
- help develop respect and acceptance of others.
- keep each child's imagination and sense of wonder alive to foster their source of creativity and innovation.

Our Elementary programs seeks to:

- give children a firm command of writing, reading, mathematics, world cultures, scientific inquiry, and practical life skills.
- introduce children to music, art, and conservation with the hope that they will pursue these interests.
- nourish and encourage each child's natural curiosity and enthusiasm.
- enable children to research and gather information and present ideas to others.
- provide children with the ability to solve problems in a logical and sequential manner.
- help children to develop respect for themselves and others.
- enable children to find within themselves the acceptance and tolerance needed to live in today's world.

Harmony School's multi-age classroom fosters a nurturing environment where children are free to grow and evolve at their own pace while exploring their own strengths. This teaching approach helps students to develop the self-confidence to meet their own life challenges. It also helps them learn to respect and accept the strengths and weaknesses in others.



Board of Directors

A copy of all the current Board policies is kept in the school office for review. The Board meets once a month. Check the website for dates, locations, and times.

The 2024-2025 Board of Directors are:

- Betsy Kleinfelder - Board President
- Isaac Sheer - Treasurer
- Kim Kuhn - Secretary
- Rebecca Creel - At-large Member

Decision-making Categories

Staff Decisions	Staff/Parent Community Decisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Curriculum/Academics ● Daily Schedule ● Staff/Student facilitated activities ● Guest lecturers and performers ● Classroom parent volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supplemental Materials/Resources Acquisitions ● Extra-curricular off campus activities (e.g., music instruction, clubs) ● Extra-curricular social events and activities ● Grants/partnerships linked to curriculum and instruction
Board Decision with Staff Input	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff positions: Certified; Classified (with committee input) ● Site Development ● Budget ● Salaries ● Staff and Parent Evaluations 	



Enrollment

All students should arrive prior to 8:30 am.

Hours of Operation/Schedule

Preschool & Elementary 7:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Aftercare 2:30 PM - 5:45 PM*

Families will be charged a late pick-up fee per child*

Requirements for Enrollment

Children who have reached 2.5 years of age are eligible for enrollment when they show readiness. Potty training is NOT a prerequisite, but is required for continued enrollment. After initial inquiry, parent and child set up an appointment for a school meeting and tour. Upon enrollment and payment of initial fees, the parent receives school guidelines.

Although Harmony School strives to provide a learning program to fit the students' needs, we are not equipped with the necessary resources to adequately serve students who may fall into one or more of the following categories:

- students who display severe behavioral problems
- those requiring special education programs
- medically fragile children
- additional special needs as determined by the school staff

The following is our official enrollment policy:

1. Children are enrolled or placed on the waiting list for the year specified by the parents when Harmony School receives a completed application. All parents are required to meet with the Director along with their child before any spot is offered. If an in-person meeting cannot be accommodated, then a remote meeting may be offered at the discretion of the Director.
2. Children are accepted from the waiting list into the school based on the date the application is received by Harmony School. Harmony School does reserve the right to accept students out of sequence to maintain a balance of ages and physical needs or according to other criteria as may be set.
3. Siblings are given preference for enrollment purposes.
4. Notification of acceptance is made as soon as possible.
5. From time-to-time, a space becomes available during a school year.
6. Harmony School will then notify the next child on the waiting list.
7. When your child is accepted for enrollment in Harmony School, a \$100 registration will be due. The fee is non-refundable.
8. Contracts are continuous until a 30-day written notice is submitted.
9. The parent is responsible for keeping their contact information updated in Brightwheel.
10. Harmony School reserves the right to change its enrollment policy as needed without notice.



On the first day a child attends school, the office must have in each child's file:

- a signed contract
- a completed Brightwheel account for tuition management program & approved contacts
- a completed set of enrollment paperwork including:
 - SC Certification of Immunization
 - DSS Form 2900
 - Medical Authorization
 - Field Trip Form
 - Medical Consent and Emergency Information
 - Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

PLEASE NOTE: We are required to have each of these forms in our files to maintain our license to operate. State law prohibits students with incomplete files after 30 days to attend class until we have received their missing paperwork. We appreciate your cooperation.

Immunizations

As required by law, all school children must be immunized (or properly exempted) in order to attend school. Immunization records must be on file at the school by the first day of school.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Harmony School admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. We do not discriminate based on race, color, or national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and financial assistance programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

ELLs

Best practices are intended to support multilingual learners (MLs) in all classes, no matter their proficiency level. These strategies are expected to be used by all teachers within lessons, assignments, and assessments to support MLs and all learners. Best practices are strategies that educators can quickly implement within daily instruction, activities, and classroom assessments.

Photography/Video

Harmony School may post photos or videos of its students, classes, and events to showcase their programs on Brightwheel, social media, and marketing materials.

Confidentiality

Student and staff records, including allergy information, home address and emergency contacts, are maintained through the Brightwheel software. Access to this information is restricted to authorized school staff, DSS staff, and ABC monitoring staff.

Release of Liability

By enrolling, you agree to hold harmless Harmony School, its instructors, staff, and school board from any liabilities including accident, illnesses, injuries, or other occurrences that may be sustained or contracted by the students or their family while at Harmony School or off site for school purposes.



Parking & Driveway Use

To ensure the safety of our children and all members of the Harmony community, it is of utmost importance that we practice safety and courtesy while in the parking lots. All cars enter the school parking lot through the Covenant Road entrance. All cars exit through the Bethel Church Road exit. Please drive slowly and with care in the school parking lot. All preschool children should be escorted into their classroom by a parent through the playground entrance.



Harmony Community & Programs

Teachers/Staff

The Harmony School staff is highly trained and enthusiastic, providing the students with solid role models. The staff, teaching as much from example as from experience, instills in students the values of kindness and inclusion. This is essential for a child's sense of self and encourages confidence in their place in the world. Harmony School performs a full screening and background check on all full-time employees. Part-time employees may be hired on a provisional basis.

Curriculum

Harmony School incorporates a thought-provoking balance between the arts and academics, where the two overlap and join to provide innovative thinking while maintaining a sense of practicality. Class instructions are incorporated into theme-based curriculum, which fosters a conceptual understanding of a subject while encouraging critical thinking and problem-solving skills. By incorporating creative arts throughout the process of learning traditional subjects such as language arts, mathematics, science, and world cultures, learning for each student is expanded beyond the traditional.

Music Program

Music is heavily incorporated into the Preschool and Elementary curriculum. In addition, each winter and spring Harmony hosts a concert for families.

Art Program

Artistic expression is emphasized as a mode to share ideas. Each Spring Harmony Students put on an Art Show for their families.

Field Trips

Community integration and experiences are an important part of the Harmony School curriculum. Your child will therefore have the opportunity to participate in various field trips throughout the year and parents may be asked to chaperone. The Harmony School buses are converted vans that have 14 seats each.

Children should not be given extra money for treats or souvenirs unless instructed by the teachers. Children will be tracked using Brightwheel each time they board and exit the bus.

Birthday & Special Occasions

Your child's birthday is of course a very special day. Harmony School acknowledges each child's birthday with a "birthday circle." Please make arrangements with your child's teacher in advance if you wish to be a part of the Celebration of Life birthday celebration. Traditionally, parents create a poster for the birthday child to share that represents each year of the child's life. If you are planning a home birthday party, **please send invitations by email or Brightwheel rather than distributing them at school unless you plan to invite all children in the class.** This avoids potential hurt feelings. For the same reason, gifts and birthday cards should be distributed outside of school.

Harmony School acknowledges special holidays. The children learn about various celebrations, sing songs, complete art projects, and read stories about different cultural celebrations and traditions. Teachers greatly appreciate parent volunteers to help plan parties and celebrations.



School Policies

Appropriate Clothing

At Harmony School, children go outside in all kinds of weather. Please always consider this when your child is dressing for school. In general, sturdy clothes that can withstand outdoor games and nature walks are recommended. Also, we frequently use art materials, and despite our use of smocks and other protection, permanent stains are sometimes unavoidable. Therefore, please provide the children with casual school clothes that will not make them feel inhibited in their work and play. Athletic shoes (or closed-toe shoes) are recommended.

We believe that students and parents can choose apparel that demonstrates individuality maintaining the standards of appropriateness to ensure that the school environment is conducive to student learning.

Attendance

Daily attendance records are maintained in Brightwheel. **Parents are required to check their child in each morning and out each afternoon using the Brightwheel app.** Teachers record attendance throughout the day using Brightwheel.

Although there is no mandatory attendance policy for preschoolers, your child's first years in school are an important time in which they will begin to form behavior, attendance, and study habits that will last throughout their lifetime. It is very important that your child arrives at school on time every day. If you are planning to take your child out of class early or if you are planning a trip and your child will be missing several days of school, please let the teacher and the office know ahead of time.

For elementary students, we follow the South Carolina guidelines for promotion for compulsory aged children, which states that students absent for more than twenty days **regardless of excused or unexcused** run the risk of being ineligible for promotion. If a child reaches 10 absences, a conference will be requested with the parents and child to develop a remediation plan. If a child reaches 20 absences, it is protocol for the student to be reported to the South Carolina Department of Education for intervention.

Please use Brightwheel messenger to inform your child's teacher and the office of absences.

Authorization Pick-Up Policy

During pick-up all parents must scan their child out using the Brightwheel app. At the time of enrollment, all parents will complete their child's profile in Brightwheel and add approved pickups. The individuals (adults) who are listed on Brightwheel as an approved pickup have the authority to pick up your child at any time, without notice. Please inform the individual(s) who will be picking up your child that they will need to have downloaded the Brightwheel app and will need to scan the child out. Approved pickup persons can be added or deleted by you at any time.

Harmony School reserves the right to not release a child to any individual if we feel it is not safe. In the event that a parent or individual picking up a child arrives intoxicated, we will **NOT** release the child under any circumstance and the parents or emergency person(s) will be contacted to come and pick up the child.

Parents may not withhold parental privileges (i.e., picking up your child, access to school records, etc.) from one another without legal documentation. In cases of court ordered guardianship/non-custodial guardianship, the parent or legal guardian must provide the legal documents to Harmony School for us to be sure the proper



release is being followed. In the event that a non-custodial parent wrongfully tries to pick up a child without a court ordered permission, we will immediately call 911.

Technology Use

The purpose of the Harmony School network is to provide a communication tool and access to rich information resources for educational activities. Our goal is for children to learn how to utilize technology to increase learning and efficiency. We recognize that new information technologies pose many challenges and concerns including:

- Appropriateness of material not screened by educators
- Development of skills to analyze and evaluate resources
- Commercialization
- Safety of individual students and families
- Privacy
- Copyrights
- Security of Harmony School information
- Cost of maintaining systems

The use of Harmony School Smartboard, computers and the internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use may result in a cancellation of those privileges and other penalties.

Discipline Policy

We believe that discipline is a means of aiding children in identifying expected limits and boundaries as defined by our society. It is our goal to teach children techniques for developing and utilizing self-discipline by providing them with problem solving strategies. The following is a description of the discipline methods we use at Harmony School.

Time In

We want children to learn from their experiences. Time in is when a teacher takes a child aside to help him or her deconstruct a situation and explore more productive options on how to handle a situation. The goal is for a child to leave the discussion feeling empowered with possible solutions.

Praise

We want children to develop a good sense of self-esteem. We praise, hug, and compliment often for appropriate behavior. In some schools, misbehavior tends to be called to the attention of children much more often than appropriate behavior. At Harmony, we find it is more effective to give children feedback on what behavior is acceptable, in addition to what is not. Our teachers have been trained in the Nurtured Heart Approach. Children like to be praised and complimented, which in itself is motivation to behave appropriately.

Logical Consequences

Logical consequences is a method of disciplining children using the logical outcome of their misbehavior. For example, if a child refuses to clean up their work at school they will not be able to do the next activity until they clean up. If a child draws on the wall, he will have to assist in cleaning the wall. Logical consequences give children a sense of satisfaction in that they can often correct mistakes and make an unpleasant situation right again.



Group Conflict Resolution

In social situations children will invariably get into squabbles with their peers. We feel it is important to teach children how to solve problems on their own. Conflict solving sessions involve allowing each child to state their difficulty using “I” rather than “you” statements to avoid placing blame. The children then brainstorm solutions and finally choose one that they all can live with. Group conflict resolution teaches kids to listen to each other and compromise.

We have sayings we use repetitively with the children. Some of them are as follows:

- Use your words.
- Listen to their words.
- Is this a problem you need me to help you with or can you solve it on your own?
- You may not be able to control what other kids say or do to you, but you can control how you choose to respond.
- Use words that make the problem better, not worse.
- Try talking it out, walking away, or ignoring it. If that doesn't work, you can come to me for help.

Peace Nook

Peace Nook is used as a way to offer children the space they need to regain control, calm down, pull themselves together and think about their behavior. Peace Nook spaces are usually within the classroom, but slightly removed from other children to allow a child to regain composure without disturbing or disrupting classmates or continuing to attract attention to themselves in an inappropriate way. The child may rejoin the group whenever they feel ready and have regained their self-control.

Contracts

Some children behave inappropriately out of habit. They sometimes have gotten used to responding to conflicts in an unacceptable way. We may make a contract with a child that states rewards and consequences for desirable and undesirable behavior. Contracts help some children to remain acutely aware of their behavior so that they can break some old habits and rewards can provide motivation to succeed.

Restraint

In rare instances a child may need to be held securely by a teacher. We restrain children only if they are a physical threat to themselves, other children, or property or only if all other means of discipline have failed to be effective. The child held close to the teacher in a way that prevents the usage of arms and legs to inflict harm. The teacher talks or coos to the child in a gentle and soothing way until he/she regains self-control. Children that have allowed themselves to get to a point where restraint is necessary often need a long time to “decelerate.” They usually want to be left alone in order to process what transpired.

We never use corporal punishment. We feel it is humiliating and intimidating. Children will often correct their behavior because they fear reprisal, not because they learned right from wrong. When the source of that fear is removed (the punitive adult), the undesirable behavior often returns. In other words, kids learn not to get caught. The methods of discipline we subscribe to give children strategies to solve their problems by allowing them to think about their behavior, process the episode and brainstorm alternative solutions.

Harmony School has no tolerance for violence, threats, harassment, illegal drugs, or weapons. This includes a no tolerance of “play” violence as well. Toy guns or other toy weapons are not permitted. The Harmony School policy regarding dangerous weapons such as pocket knives, squirt guns, paintball guns and look-alike



weapons is as follows: First incident, confiscate the weapon, notify the parent and the student receives a written warning.

In situations where behaviors are displayed to a degree beyond what is typical, a parent- teacher conference will be held, and appropriate measures will be employed (e.g., referral to professional evaluation and support services.) If the child's needs are beyond the scope of what can be addressed at Harmony School, enrollment may be terminated.

Discipline Summary:

WE DO:

- Communicate to children using positive statements.
- Communicate with children on their level.
- Talk with children in a calm, quiet manner.
- Explain unacceptable behavior to children.
- Give attention to children for positive behavior.
- Praise and encourage the children.
- Reason with and set limits for the children.
- Apply rules consistently.
- Model appropriate behavior.
- Set up the classroom environment to prevent problems.
- Provide alternatives and redirect children to acceptable activity.
- Give children opportunities to make choices and solve problems.
- Help children talk out problems and think of solutions.
- Listen to children and respect the children's needs, desires and feelings.
- Provide appropriate words to help solve conflicts.
- Use storybooks and discussion to work through common conflicts.

WE DO NOT:

- Inflict corporal punishment in any manner upon a child. (Corporal punishment is defined as the use of physical force to the body as a discipline measure. Physical force to the body includes, but is not limited to, spanking, hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, pushing, pulling, or slapping.)
- Use any strategy that hurts, shames, or belittles a child.
- Use any strategy that threatens, intimidates, or forces a child.
- Use food as a form of reward or punishment.
- Use or withhold physical activity as a punishment.
- Shame or punish a child if a bathroom accident occurs.
- Embarrass any child in front of others.
- Compare children.
- Place children in a locked and/or dark room.
- Leave any child alone, unattended or without supervision.
- Allow discipline of a child by other children.
- Criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle a child's parents, families, or ethnic groups.

NOTE: If, at any point, there is an indication/suspicion that a child may have special needs, Harmony School will inform the child's family and recommend they make contact with a professional for assessment and assistance.



Nutrition Policy

- Harmony School is partnering with ABC Grow Healthy to promote your child's health and well-being through healthy nutrition. As part of this program, we agree:
- For children 2 years and older, only skim or 1% milk will be served
- No sugar sweetened beverages will be served
- Physical activity will not be used as punishment, nor will it be withheld as punishment.
- Children will participate in planned physical activity at least 2 times per day for at least 90 minutes. In the event of inclement weather, indoor activity time will be adjusted to ensure the equivalent amount of physical activity is achieved.
- Food will not be used as a reward or punishment.
- The teachers and staff will attend training on nutrition, promoting children's movement, and physical activity.
- Your child will have at least one opportunity per week to learn about nutrition.
- Ask you to dress your child in clothes and shoes that allow them to be physically active.

Snacks

Harmony provides a morning snack. If your child is enrolled in aftercare, please send healthy nutritious snacks for your child along with their lunch.

Lost & Found

Please label your child's clothing, water bottles, and bags. Lost & found items are placed in the office. Unclaimed items will be donated.



Safety Procedures

Fire Drills and Emergencies

The teachers will conduct monthly fire drills throughout the year. All children are led to the parking lot, roll call is taken for all classes, and the children are led back into their classes where the roll is taken again. In case of an actual fire, the children would be kept outside until released by the fire department or until picked up by a responsible party.

Harmony School staff are trained in Fire Drill and emergency procedures annually.

Harmony School maintains liability insurance coverage.

Evacuation

In the event that an emergency occurs at Harmony School and an “on site evacuation” is necessary due to events such as a tornado, chemical spill, etc. the Preschool children will be relocated to the Elementary Building. The children will remain under the care and supervision of the childcare staff until the dangerous conditions subside.

In the event that an emergency occurs at Harmony School and an “off-site evacuation” is necessary due to events such as brush fire, flash flood, etc., the children will be relocated to Brockman Elementary School by bus or staff vehicles. The children will remain at this alternative site under the care and supervision of our childcare staff while parents/guardians are contacted and arrange pickup for their child.

Harmony School staff are trained in evacuation procedures annually.

Inclement Weather Policy

We typically follow Richland School District One. However, notification will be made through Brightwheel of any closures. Should it be necessary to end a school day early due to weather or other natural disaster, we will make every effort to contact parents or emergency contacts through Brightwheel. Be sure to let your friends/relatives know you have listed them and again, make sure this information is up to date.

Illness

The health of all the children at Harmony School depends on each family acting responsibly.

Harmony does not care for ill students. Please consider these general guidelines:

- Keep your child home if he/she is experiencing diarrhea.
- Vomiting is frequently a symptom of oncoming illness; therefore, do not send your child to school for 24 hours after such an upset.
- A child should remain at home 24 hours after a fever, without help from a fever reducer.
- An extra day at home is good protection against a relapse and/or re-infection.

COVID-19

All students will have their temperatures taken upon arrival. Harmony School will continue to monitor COVID case numbers and guidance from the DHEC and CDC and will communicate any changes to school policy as circumstances dictate. When community spread is reported as high, all students and staff will be required to wear a disposable mask indoors.



Please notify us immediately if your child contracts anything that is contagious and also act promptly with medical care. We will provide information for dealing with contagious situations as the need arises. Harmony School follows DHEC's Child Care Exclusion List which outlines conditions that excludes a child from childcare until the condition is rectified. South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control Exclusion Policy, State Law 1976, Code Section 44-1-110, 44-1-140, and 44-29-10.

Injury or Illness at School

If a child becomes ill or is injured at school, every effort will be made to contact parents or your emergency contact. If, in our opinion, the child is too ill to be at school, it is the parent's responsibility to pick up the child as soon as possible. A first aid kit shall be available for the treatment of minor cuts and abrasions and shall be stored in a location inaccessible to children. Minor injuries will be reported in Brightwheel Incidents. In the event of an injury or illness too severe to warrant waiting for the parent (conditions listed below), we will contact 911.

Medical emergencies that would require immediate medical care by a healthcare professional include the conditions listed below:

- Loss of consciousness
- Semi consciousness
- Breathing difficulties
- Unequal pupils
- Seizure
- Neck or back injury
- Continuous clear drainage from nose/ears after a blow to the head
- Severe headache
- Stiff neck or neck pain when head is moved
- Hives that appear quickly
- Very sick child who seems to be getting worse quickly
- Repeated forceful vomiting
- Vomiting blood
- Severe abdominal pain that causes a child to double over
- Abdominal pain after a blow to the abdomen
- Possible broken bones
- Shock

Steps the school will follow in a medical emergency:

- Call 911 immediately upon recognizing signs and symptoms that require immediate medical attention.
- Call the child's parent/guardian immediately after calling 911 to inform them of the child's symptoms and where they will be transported for medical care.
- Provide first aid as trained in an approved First Aid training course until emergency personnel arrive.
- Take the child's emergency medical information form(s) to the hospital.

We will call 911 for an ambulance to take the child to Palmetto Health Richland's Children's ER, the nearest emergency room. If the parent has not arrived by the time the child is to be transported, office personnel will accompany the child to the hospital. **Please be sure that all current emergency and work contact information is on file in the school office.** Staff will remain with the child until parents arrive. Harmony School staff are trained in illness and medical emergency procedures annually.



Medication

If medication is required during school hours, Harmony office staff will dispense it and store it. Harmony School is not allowed to administer any form of medication, either prescription or over-the-counter, if there is not a medical authorization form on file. The medical authorization form is included in your enrollment packet and also available at the office.

Medications or medical procedures:

1. Written, signed, and dated parental consent is required prior to the administration of any prescription or over the counter medication or administration of special medical procedures:
 - All medications shall be used only for the child for whom the medication is labeled
 - Medications shall not be given more than the recommended dose
 - Prescribed special medical procedures ordered for a specific child shall be written, signed, and dated by physician or other legally authorized healthcare provider
2. Storage of Medications
 - All medications shall be kept in their original labeled containers and have child protective caps. The child's first and last name shall be on all medications
 - All medications shall be stored in a separate locked container under proper conditions of sanitation, temperature, light, and moisture; and Discontinued and expired medications shall not be used and shall be returned to the parent or disposed of in a safe manner
3. Medication log
 - For each medication that is administered by a staff person, a log shall be kept including the child's name, the name of the medication, dosage, date, time, and name of the person administering the medication. The information shall be logged immediately following the administration of the medication and a copy provided to the child's parent(s)/guardian(s)



Communications

Guidelines

- Every stakeholder in our school community has direct access to appropriate individuals for communication and problem solving.
- Concerns requiring decisions should be expressed to the individual responsible for making the decision. Only after an attempt to communicate individually, should the matter be taken to the next higher authority.
- Communication and trust are the cornerstones of an effective school. Respect the rights of all members of our school community by making use of appropriate opportunities and processes for communication.

Brightwheel or email is the best way to communicate with the office and teachers in non-emergency situations. Please avoid trying to discuss issues with the teachers during drop-off or pick-up, so that our teachers can remain focused on their supervision of the children.

Executive Director: Laura West (l.west@harmonyschoolsc.org)

Board of Directors:

- Betsy Kleinfelder (board4@harmonyschoolsc.org)
- Isaac Scheer (board8@harmonyschoolsc.org)
- Kim Kuhn (board6@harmonyschoolsc.org)
- Rebecca Creel (board9@harmonyschoolsc.org)

Questions or Concerns regarding:	Contact:
Class	Student's teacher
General questions	School office
Emergency	School office
School Policies & Additional Support	Director
Fundraising & School Mission	Board of Directors

Parent Communications

Information regarding important dates, community events, and student needs are sent regularly through Brightwheel and/or email. Many resources such as the school academic and activities calendars are available on our website HarmonySchoolSC.org. We do everything possible to make communication flow smoothly. However, we rely on parents to be proactive by checking their Brightwheel and email regularly.

Conferences

Teachers will meet with parents twice a year—once in the fall and once in the spring. At the first conference, the student’s pre-assessment results will be discussed in addition to goals for the student. These goals may be academic and social depending on the student’s strengths and challenges. We ask that parents come to the conference with ideas for goals, and then work with the teacher to make appropriate ones. Additionally, a parent or teacher may request a conference at any time.

Back to School Night

Parents are invited to a school-wide meeting where parents have an opportunity to meet the teachers, learn about helpful logistics, and ask questions.

School Newsletter

The school publishes a monthly newsletter about school-related activities, units, field trips, policies, special occasions, etc. The newsletter will be emailed monthly and added to the website.



Transitions

Harmony School has long implemented a variety of strategies to successfully transition children and families through life passages successfully and confidently.

The five key transitions are:

1. Transitions into a program;
2. Transitions while enrolled;
3. Transitions within the program day;
4. Family transitions outside a program; and
5. Transitions when leaving a program.

1. Transitions **INTO** our School.

a. Prospective family visits—families considering enrolling their children are invited to visit the School for an admission interview. During this meeting, families learn of our approach to teaching and learning (philosophy), see our learning environments, meet our teaching staff, have opportunities to have their questions answered, and receive feedback on their child’s readiness for our program. The goal of this visit is to make sure that our School is a “good fit” to prospective families.

b. Family orientation meeting— at the beginning of each school year, the Director leads a meeting for families where drop off, pickup, appointments, birthdays, lunch, Brightwheel, and other significant practices are covered to help families make decisions that will prepare their child for school each day. The goal of orientation is to help children and families feel confident in the ways that they support their child’s school experience.

c. Family data sheet—when a family chooses to enroll, we provide the parents with several forms to complete. One form is a “Family Information Sheet.” This document provides parents the opportunity to tell us all about their child and their family. From this sheet we learn about child interests, typical guidance approaches, family dynamics, etc. After this form is returned, the Director and teachers of the room read the form as a means of getting to know the child and family better. A copy is put into the student binder in the classroom and the original is placed in the child’s file in the office.

d. Parent handbook—upon enrollment parents are provided with a comprehensive Parent Handbook. This handbook clearly explains the School’s purposes, policies, and procedures. The purpose of the handbook is to help the parent transition into the culture of Harmony School with a clear understanding of how the school operates.

e. New family welcome—teachers warmly welcome new (and continuing) children into the classroom with a well prepared learning environment and warm interactions. Teachers help children who may be having a difficult time separating by speaking calmly to them, helping them get involved in activity, singing to them,



listening to them, looking at a family picture from home, having a routine where the parent delivering the child to the classroom teacher each morning with a message that the teacher will take care of the child until mommy or daddy return, etc.

f. New family info sharing—teachers share photos of the child throughout the day on the Brightwheel app and welcome parents to text throughout the day to see how their child is doing.

2. Transitions **WHILE** enrolled:

a. Transition schedule: As we find your child is ready to transition from one classroom to the next; the following steps take place.

- Parent/family is contacted for approval
- Team meetings between previous teachers and prospective teachers to discuss readiness and expectations of new rooms.
- The change is explained to the child the day before the change.

b. Mixed age classroom— children mix with younger and older students at various times throughout the day making friends with children from other classrooms. During those times, children are cared for by all the teachers on campus and build mentor/student relationships with them all. This mixed-age classroom helps our preschoolers develop relationships with their older peers thereby making moving from to our Older Classroom easier at the start of the new school year.

c. Community services and specialists—when children enrolled in our school have special learning needs necessitating the use of specialists, the specialists spend time at the school either working with children directly in the classroom or a vacant space. These professionals spend time in our classrooms observing and interacting with children. Because they get to know the children and the children become familiar with them, the children are comfortable with their visits.

3. Transitions **WITHIN** the program day.

a. Written daily routine—each of our classrooms follows the same daily routine. (Posted). This routine includes: free play, circle time, lunch, snack time, small/large group activities, and outdoor play time. Our activities transition at a predictable time each day. This allows children to easily transition from one activity to the next because they know the schedule and can predict what is coming next.

b. Notice of change of activity—prior to switching activities (ex. from child-choice play time to group time) teachers ring a bell to announce time to clean up and then sing the clean up song where the children join in. Students are encouraged to help their peers clean up after they finish their own task.

4. Family transitions **OUTSIDE** a program.

Connect parents to helpful services—our school works closely with DSS Child Care and other community resources. When a family is experiencing challenging times, we work to connect the parent with these important resources, so they can receive the support and assistance they need.



5. Transitions WHEN LEAVING our program.

a. Various reasons for leaving—children leave our school for a wide variety of reasons including military parents reassigned, parents graduating from college, transferring to another school, and our current students moving onto Kindergarten.

b. Kindergarten transitions: Many preschool students transition to our elementary program where our curriculum, policies, and procedures align. For students who move on to a different school, we have familiarized ourselves with the curriculum of the surrounding area to assure that our students will be successful wherever they go. We hold a Graduation Celebration for our preschoolers where they can celebrate the change framing the changes as exciting rather than scary.

Summary

The above mentioned practices are consistently implemented to help children and families to best handle the various transitions that they face as they enter our school, while enrolled in our school, and as they exit our school. Since one of our goals is to develop lifelong learners, we believe that helping children and families learn to successfully navigate transitions, while they are with us will help them learn the skills needed to handle transitions in their future.



Community Partnership

Parent Partnership

Harmony School parents have the opportunity and responsibility to provide an example of life-long learning to their children. Each parent's participation begins at home where children learn the importance of curiosity and discipline. Quality time is experienced through the sense that learning is not a chore but is a family endeavor that can be both fun and exciting. Through parent participation at Harmony School, parents become partners in the development of their child's self-worth and natural curiosity.

For Harmony School, the community is made up of the classroom, educators, and parents who provide the students with a safe and nurturing environment. Through open lines of communication between all parties, Harmony School succeeds in creating enthusiastic and creative learners who enjoy school and helps students build bonds that foster life-long friendship.

Parents are the most valuable resource in providing our children with the nurturing community necessary for quality education. Your involvement at Harmony School is essential; not only in your child's education, but also as a means to enrich the education of your child's classmates.

Parental commitment at Harmony School is two-fold: a financial commitment and a service commitment. Parents accept responsibility for the cost of tuition for the current year as stated in the tuition and enrollment agreement. The Harmony School Board is committed to keeping these costs as low as possible and will continue to seek support from outside sources to help defray direct costs to parents. We rely on your generosity – both time and financial support for specific projects and fundraisers – to help keep tuition levels down. Parent involvement during the school year can save the school thousands of dollars in expenses, which otherwise would be reflected in larger tuition costs.

Harmony School values its many family and community volunteers while recognizing that time constraints can sometimes limit their availability. Parents may choose from such activities as chaperoning field trips, purchasing supplies, ordering books, helping in the classroom, maintaining school facilities, teaching special programs, organizing or assisting with fundraising. The Harmony School office can help coordinate this effort. Additionally, each fall and spring parents participate in a work day to tackle minor projects such as painting classrooms, playground/grounds cleanup and repairs.

Fundraising Activities

Our fundraising is focused on one main event each year: Harmony School's Annual Oyster Roast. This fundraiser is key to keeping our tuition costs lower while maintaining the depth of our program. We can't do it without our Harmony families.

Foundations/Grants

Harmony School is very interested in obtaining grants from funding sources such as the federal and state governments and private institutions. If you are interested in helping obtain these grants, there will be many opportunities to help with these efforts.

Free and Full Access

Parents are welcome to visit their children at Harmony School at any time! We encourage parental participation in the classroom and on field trips as mentioned in this handbook. We do ask that parents not interrupt nap times unless absolutely necessary (between 12:30 – 2:00 PM) as it disturbs all sleeping children.



Arrangements can be made in advance with the office to pick up during nap time – please simply call before 12:30 PM. Unless court orders stipulate otherwise and the visits are not disruptive to planned activities, feel free to visit us during the day!

Community Resources

The information and contacts are provided for the intended purpose of connecting individuals and families to needed resources. Harmony School cannot attest to the accuracy of information provided in these sites and does not constitute an endorsement by Harmony School.

Babynet: (803) 898-0463

1801 Main St, Columbia, SC 29201

<https://www.scdhhs.gov/resource/babynet>

Early intervention for infants and toddlers

Behavior Co: (803) 258-0533

3924 Forest Dr #3, Columbia, SC 29204

scbehaviorco.com

Provides ABA therapy

Brightstart: (803) 929-1112

P.O. Box 327, Columbia, SC 29202

brightstartsc.com

Early intervention for infants and toddlers

SC 211

<https://sc211.org>

Local residents can dial 211 from a phone to connect with a United Way agent for help with employment, food, healthcare, rent/shelter/utilities, and more.

SC Child Care: (803) 898-2570

1535 Confederate Ave, Columbia, SC 29201

scchildcare.org

Help with childcare costs, employment, food, healthcare, rent/shelter/utilities, and more.



SC Parents: (803) 733-5430

330 Lady Street, Suite 310, Columbia, SC 29201

scparents.org

Search and connect to support for financial assistance, food pantries, medical care and other free or reduced-cost help.



Tuition & Fees

Annual Family Registration Fee

\$100

Preschool Tuition

12-month program, June - May

\$8,100/Annual

\$675/Monthly

Elementary Tuition

10-month program, August - May

\$7,500/Annual

\$750/Monthly

Aftercare

\$260/Monthly

Elementary Summer ONLY

Registration Fee \$50

\$1,500 (2 payments of \$750)

Annual Registration Fee

The \$100 fee is due for returning students with their registration packets annually. For new students, it is due with their application. The Registration fee is per family and is non-refundable. As a small school with limited availability, the registration fee allows us to maintain our ratios. The required registration fee also helps cover classroom materials such as art supplies, food expenses, field trips, and textbooks.

Tuition

Tuition can be paid in one lump sum annually or in monthly payments. Monthly tuition is due on the first of the month. A late charge of \$30 will be applied to any unpaid balance remaining after the 10th of each month. All tuition is auto deducted through our online tuition management program, Brightwheel.

Whenever an account becomes past due by 30 days, the student may be withdrawn from school until the delinquency is cured. If the delinquency is not cured within an additional 30-day period, the student may be dismissed.

Preschool tuition is based on a 12-month contract. If the decision is made to not attend the summer program, tuition is still expected to continue to reserve your child's place for the next school year.

Late Pick-Up

Parents picking up children later than their scheduled release times will be charged a fee of \$25. **An additional \$25 fee is assessed for any child not picked up by 6:00 pm.**



Financial Aid

Historically Harmony has been able to provide financial assistance and/or scholarships on a case-by-case basis to Elementary students. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide any financial aid at this time. We are continuing our efforts to apply for grants that would fund a scholarship program.

However, we do accept the ABC Scholarship program vouchers for our preschool and elementary programs. Note that this scholarship does not cover absences. To aid scholarship families, Harmony School waives the tuition for 10 absences a school year; After 10 absences, the tuition daily rate will be charged to the scholarship family for each absence. Absences and any remaining tuition after the scholarship is applied is the parents' responsibility.

