

First Baptist Church of Apopka presents...

Highland Christian Academy



PARENT HANDBOOK



Highland Christian Academy



Philosophy

The First Baptist Church of Apopka-**Highland Christian Academy Preschool** provides a structured educational program for young children. The philosophy is to instill a love of learning and to develop the “whole” child, not focusing just on academics, but also considering the child’s physical, social, emotional, and spiritual development. This philosophy is based in scripture; Luke 2:52 says, “And Jesus increased in wisdom (mental) and in stature (physical) and in favor (emotional) with God (spiritual) and man (social).”

Vision

Plant the child in the rich soil of Christ so that they may be able to grow into the mighty oaks of God. Psalm 1:3

Mission

Train the child in the knowledge of God so that he continues to grow in the way of Christ. Proverbs 22:4

Introduction

The Highland Christian Academy Preschool and Day Camp are staffed by a team of caring Christians who are dedicated and trained in the guidance and nurturing of children. Their ministry is to teach, love and care for children so that parents can go to work each day knowing their children are safe and happy. The Academy accepts all children regardless of race, nationality or creed, from 6 weeks of age to 5 years for preschool and grades K-5 for Day Camp.

History

First Baptist Church of Apopka opened its childcare facility in November 1990 with a preschool program for infants through 5-year-olds. Six years later, the ministry expanded to offer before and after school care for grades K-5. In January 1997, the church reorganized the programs and adopted the following Statement of Purpose:

***Ministry in the name of Jesus Christ
through loving children and their
families by providing Christian
education and child care.***

In 2005, we became Highland Christian Academy and began to see the opportunity for growth for our preschool program. In August of 2007, we introduced the Voluntary Pre-School and School Readiness program which allowed us to reach out and help our community. In June 2009, we became one of the first schools in our area to be ACSI Accredited. We are now Accredited through the Florida Leagues of Christians Schools (FLOCS). We are also recognized by The Florida Department of Education Division of Early Learning as a Gold Seal Quality Care Program.

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General Information

Our Preschool offers a full day for infants through Pre-K which is geared toward families with working parents. We use the Brightwheel program to communicate with our families. Here you will receive messages, pictures, and updates on your child. Brightwheel is also used for attendance to check in and check out your child. We use this same platform for your tuition payments. If your child is going to be absent or late, please call the office or notify Ms. Diane by Lillio as soon as possible but not later than 9:30 a.m. The latest time you can bring your child in is 11:00 a.m. Breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack are provided by the Academy daily. Breakfast is served between 7:30 – 9:00 am, lunch is served from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm. Afternoon snack is at 2:30 pm. We do not allow outside food, and it is not permitted in the classrooms (unless approved for a special occasion). Please give any instructions concerning food allergies to the Director in writing along with a Doctor's Note. If your child has an EPI PEN, please have one for our office. It must be in the original prescription box with the child's name, expiration, and Dr info on it. Each month a newsletter with a calendar of events is distributed. Please keep it for reference during the month. Each child will have their own folder in the classroom for important information regarding your child or school events. Please be sure to check your child's folder daily for any documents, news or scheduled activities.

Hours of Operation

Preschool and School Age care hours of operation beginning dates for the Academic Year and Summer Session are published yearly and follow the calendar of Orange County Public Schools. **The Academy is closed for major holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and the following Friday, Christmas Day, winter holidays are subject to change and will be announced at the beginning of the month.** Normal hours for full day care are from 6:00am to 6:00pm Monday-Friday. School Age care is offered before and/or after school and full days on school holidays as well as during the summer. Late pick up fee is on the Fee Schedule.

Activities

Weekly, the 2 through 5-year-old classes enjoy the following activities:

Chapel - Arts & Crafts - P.E. - Library - Music - Science - Cooking - Praise & Motion

Curriculum

Learning Beyond Paper

Learning Beyond Paper is a curriculum that was created by early learning educators, directors, teachers and owners. Learning Beyond's Lesson Plans and Daily Activities are carefully crafted to meet the development needs of each and every child. Learning activities are presented in a meaningful way, and every activity is linked to early childhood Standards for each age group.

Abeka Bible Curriculum

Abeka Bible curriculum will help your child connect to a meaningful relationship with the Lord. Spiritual development is a major emphasis in Christian schools. Time is allotted daily for spiritual development through Bible stories, songs, and prayer before meals, with a continual awareness of the needs of each child.

Bible Verse Memorization: Our 3-year-olds to VPK will get a weekly Bible verse for to learn. Our 2-year-olds will get a bi-weekly Bible Verse to learn. We encourage parents to read the verses daily with their child so they can be prepared to recite it to their teacher at the end of the week.

Through memorizing short Bible verses, your child will have God's instructions to help him daily as he learns about Creation, God's promises, obedience, prayer, God's protection, salvation, miracles, and Heaven. Psalm 119:11 says, "I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you."

Assessments

We currently are using the Learning Accomplishment Profile program and Teaching Strategies for assessments. They are done three times during the school year for ages two and older. Assessments are done in November, January and April. Parents are invited to have a conference with the teacher at that time to discuss their child's progress or concerns.

Child Care Food Program

We have partnered with the State of Florida to provide nutritious meals and snacks for the children. This program will enable every family to participate regardless of income. Breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack are provided for the children daily. A monthly menu (with a 4-week cycle) is posted; however, we reserve the right to make last-minute changes. Breakfast cut off time is at 9:00 a.m. (due to the rules of the food program.)

Infant Information

Infants: Each day parents must supply an adequate supply of disposable diapers, ointments for diaper changes (with medical release, a new one is required each month), baby wipes, and at least 3 bottles per day or however many your baby uses a day. The bottles will be rinsed out and sent home every day. Linens are provided for cribs, but you may bring some from home, if you prefer. The center participates in the federal food program, as a benefit we can provide certain formula. If your child has dietary restrictions, please bring a Dr's note and we will see if it is on the current list or if we can get approval to purchase it. Infants should bring at least 2 complete changes of clothing to stay at school it will be sent home when soiled and needs be replaced the next day with another set. Pacifiers are allowed in the infant room. All bottles, clothing and personal items should be marked with the child's first and last name. Infants will be promoted to the toddler class when they have had their 12th month birthday and

are developmentally ready. (See medications section for Diaper Creams.)

Toddler Information

Toddlers: Each day parents must supply an adequate supply of disposable diapers, ointments for diaper changes (with medical release, a new one is required each month), baby wipes. Bring at least 2 complete changes of clothing to stay at school, when it is soiled it will be sent home and a new one needs to come back as a 2nd set. Sippy cups of water are allowed in the toddler class. Please send 2 sippy cups a day, they will be sent home daily. Please mark with their first and last name. A blanket and crib sheet are needed for naptime and are to be taken home each Friday. See medications section for Diaper Creams.

Two-Year-Old Information

Two's: All children use cups rather than sippy cups. Parents must provide at least 2 sets of extra clothing in a clear Ziploc bag to stay at school; one small blanket and a crib sheet are needed for naptime and will be sent home every Friday. All clothing and personal items should be marked with the child's name. An adequate supply of disposable diapers, wipes and/or pull-ups each day if still being potty trained. Toilet training is encouraged in the two-year-old classes and must be successfully completed before the child can be promoted to the three-year-old class. Teachers will partnership with parents toward the goal of helping your child become potty trained, an important developmental milestone. Our two-year-old students will participate in circle time each morning where they will learn shapes, colors, numbers, and the alphabet. They will also have a weekly Bible story they learn and have a Bible memory verse sent home every 2 weeks to practice.

Three & Four Year Old Class

Three's & Four's : To ensure a bright start for your child, please have children in the preschool classes by 8:30 am. Parents must provide at least 2 sets of extra clothing in a clear Ziploc bag to stay at school; A blanket and crib sheet are needed for naptime, they will be sent home every Friday. All clothing and personal items should be marked with the child's name. Teachers will lead structured activities that build on fine motor skills, gross motor skills and cognitive development. Our three and four year old students will participate in circle time each morning where they will learn shapes, colors, numbers, and the alphabet. They will also have a weekly Bible story they learn and have a Bible memory verse sent home every week to practice at home and recite back to their teacher on Fridays.

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten or **VPK** gives children a jump start by preparing them for school and enhancing their pre-reading, pre-math, language and social skills. By developing the skills children need to become strong readers and students at an early age, children are more likely to be successful in school. VPK classrooms offer high-quality programs that include high literacy standards, developmentally appropriate curricula, manageable class sizes, and qualified teachers. They will also have a weekly Bible story they learn and have a Bible memory verse sent home every week to practice at home and recite back to their teacher on Fridays. Parents must provide at least 2 sets of extra clothing in a clear Ziploc bag and one small blanket or nap mat for naptime, which must be taken home each Friday.

School Agers

Before and after school care is a place where children can relax from school, receive help with their homework, have fun with friends and be safe until Mom and Dad return from work. We provide daily help with homework for the children plus their own special Bible club. They will also have a weekly Bible story they learn and have a Bible memory verse sent home every week to practice at home and recite back to their teacher on Fridays.

There is plenty of time for games, activities and crafts too. Before school children should arrive by 7:35 am. We currently pick up at the following elementary schools, provided that 5 children attending our academy are also enrolled in our before/after school pick-up service:

Wolf Lake - Rock Springs – Apopka – Dream Lake

If your child becomes ill during the day and leaves school, please call our office immediately so that the driver can be notified not to pick up your child. A full-day program is available when school is out for the summer and for holidays.

Summer Camp

A summer program is offered for children in kindergarten through 5th grade. There is a registration fee for summer camp that is due each May. Breakfast, lunch and snacks are offered. During the summer, school age children have quiet time for one hour each day. During this time, they can write in journals, read a book or listen while the teacher reads aloud. The children have the opportunity to attend field trips throughout the week and participate in special activities such as cooking.

Enrollment

During Registration, complete the following forms and submit them with the applicable fees:

1. Highland Christian Academy's Enrollment Package
2. Consent for Treatment (must be notarized)
3. Florida Department of Health Immunization and Physical Records
4. Photocopy of the child's Birth Certificate
5. A photograph of your child for our files

Attendance Policy

We plan for your child to attend every day that he/she is scheduled. Therefore, if your child is going to be absent from school, please call the office or notify Ms. Diane by Brightwheel as soon as possible but no later than 9:30 a.m. The latest time you can bring your child to school is 10:30 a.m. without communicating to the office prior to any last-minute appointments, etc.

If a child is absent for three (3) consecutive days with no contact with the parents, we will give a "Sunshine" call to make sure everything is okay. After five (5) consecutive days absence, all Agencies (4C and VPK) will be notified of the child's absence. After two (2) weeks of non-attendance the child will be terminated if no contact has been made with parents to hold the child's spot. Another registration fee of \$110.00 will be required to re-enroll. (VPK ONLY students will be excluded from being charged a registration fee. This does not apply to VPK wrap around students.) If you want your child to have breakfast at school they cannot arrive after 8:50 a.m. Due to the rules of the food program, breakfast ends promptly at 9:00 a.m. (meaning they cannot be fed after 9:00 am)

Late pick-up school policy 6:01 (\$5.00 Charge) then \$1 per minute after PER CHILD.

Registration Fee's, Tuition Payments, Student Withdrawals

The registration fee is due annually by August 1. There is an early bird discount if it is paid by May 31. Summer Camp for 5-year-old and school age has an additional registration fee each summer, that is due in May. Payments can be made with cash, check, or money order at the office. If you want to pay by ACH or with a debit/credit card, you can pay on the Brightwheel app. Your tuition will be billed on Friday morning for the next week. Payment is to be received by Monday morning in order for your child to attend. If your payment is not made on time a late fee of \$20.00 will be charged to your account. **If payment or arrangements have not been made with the Director, your child will not be permitted to attend until payment has been made with the office.** If you have made a payment by check and it is returned for any reason, you will be charged a returned fee of \$45.00 to your account. If your check is returned more than 3 times, we will be unable to accept personal checks as a payment method for your account. Even if your child is absent the weekly tuition is still due per your contract. This reserves your child's space in the program. This includes our holiday closings, training day closings and if we have to be closed due to natural disasters such as hurricanes, severe weather, power outages, and situations that are outside of our control.

If an account falls more than two weeks behind it is expected that the student's parents not only pay the "past due" fees but personally schedule a private appointment with the HCA Director to discuss options to bring the account back to "current status." The HCA Director will then present the family with a financial plan approved by the HCA Committee to get the account back on track. The parents will then sign off on the financial plan in order for the student to stay enrolled at HCA. Every financial plan established will be developed on a case-by-case basis in order to meet the needs of each family.

Parents may withdraw a child from the program at any time. A **TWO-WEEK WRITTEN NOTICE IS REQUIRED.** Parents wishing to withdraw their child who fail to provide the required two-week notice will still be liable for the last 2 weeks' tuition.

Weather Policy

Severe Weather- In the event of a hurricane or other severe weather, the Academy will follow the lead of Orange County Public Schools and will close when the school system closes. Please watch the local news for the school system's announcements regarding closing. When closed due to severe weather you are still responsible for your tuition. In the event that OCPS is closed more than one day, Highland Christian Academy may choose to open if able. If OCPS opens and we have no power we will remain closed. For our school age children during inclement weather OCPS may not release the children immediately due to their policies. Our buses will be waiting for them to be released.

Discipline Policy

“Discipline” is not punishment for misbehavior. Rather it is teaching a child how to relate to others and how to work or behave in a particular environment. We attempt to teach acceptable behavior through lovingly administered correction of inappropriate behavior. “Rewards” may include hugs, smiles, or words of praise and an occasional prize such as a sticker for the older children. We do not use spanking as a corrective measure. Usually, a child misbehaves for an underlying reason such as a need for more attention. We attempt to determine the child's need as we show him or her correct behavior. Corrective measures may include, but are not limited to, counseling, sitting in a “time-out” chair or being separated from the group for a short time. If a preschool child continually misbehaves, a parent-teacher conference will be necessary. If a child’s continual misbehavior is a disruption to the Preschool’s program, and/or we feel that a child’s physical aggression has become dangerous for other children, and a workable solution has not been found after parent-teacher conferences, the Academy reserves the right to remove the child from the roll without prior notice to the parents.

School Age: Parents of school age children will be notified in writing of significant

discipline problems. When a child has received three “Discipline Referrals”, within 12 months, the child may be removed from the roll. In the case of an “extreme” discipline problem, the child may be removed from the roll immediately.

Prior to expulsion, a parent will be called, and correspondence will be sent home indicating what the problem is, and every effort will be made by both HCA and the parent to correct the problem. If, after one or two weeks, depending on the risk to other children’s welfare or safety and the child’s actions do not improve, and HCA finds that they can no longer accommodate the child, the parent will be asked to remove him/her. The parent will be given a minimum of one week’s notice to find another childcare provider to care for this child.

In Case of Illness

For the protection of all the children in attendance, children who are in the contagious stage of any illness may not attend. If your child becomes ill during the day, you will receive a phone call. Children must be picked up within **1 Hour**. Please make advance arrangements to have an alternate sitter for your child when he or she is sick, and you are unable to be away from work. Following is a more specific policy regarding illness:

Sick Child Policy

1. No child will be permitted to attend who has a fever of 101.5 degrees (oral equivalent) or higher. The child will only be able to attend if the child has been fever free for 24 hrs since the last fever.
2. No child in the contagious stage of any disease may attend.
3. A child with any contagious illness must have a note from the doctor before returning to school. (for some illnesses like Strep throat and pink eye the child must be on the antibiotic/ eye drops for 24 hours before returning)
4. If the child was out due to the Flu, RSV, Covid, bronchitis, pneumonia, Upper Respiratory

Infection they can not return for at least 5 days even if they are fever free.

5. A child who has diarrhea (3 loose stools) or is vomiting may not attend. When the diarrhea or vomiting has been complete for 24 hours, the child may return. If the child has a particular diarrhea germ diagnosed, please immediately notify the Director. If diarrhea is due to antibiotics or recent vaccines we must have documentation from the Dr.

6. A child with a suspicious rash (other than a diaper rash or a common allergic rash) should be checked by a doctor or the Health Department to determine if the rash is contagious, and a note from the doctor stating what the rash is will be required for the child to return. In the case of chicken pox, the child may return 1 week after the rash began, and when all the chicken pox are scabbed over. If the child has hand, foot, mouth disease they can not return until the rash/bumps are completely scabbed over which is usually a week or longer. Please notify the Director immediately if chicken pox, hand foot and mouth or measles are diagnosed.

7. Colds spread very easily among the children. Children with mildly stuffy or clear runny noses and no fever will be permitted to attend. When a child becomes listless or is having fever with a cold or is very congested with a heavily running nose (yellow or greenish), he or she may not attend. Children with heavy coughs or with difficulty or rapid breathing may not attend. In children, breathing difficulties could indicate a serious condition.

8. LICE: No child with head lice will be permitted to attend for at least 72 hours. Child must be nit-free and must be approved by an administrative staff member to return.

9. When the Orange County Public Schools excludes a child for illness (including lice), he/she will also be excluded from the before/after school program until the child is no longer contagious and has a note from the doctor to return to school.

10. Documentation of diagnosis for contagious illnesses is required. Regardless of a doctor's note we reserve the right to determine the length of absence.

*** In cases of extreme sickness outbreak, we will follow the Health Department guidelines***

Medicine: Prescription/Over-the-Counter Administration

Prescription medicine may be administered under the following conditions:

1. The medicine is in the original container with the name of the physician, the child and the medication written on the label and has a current date.
2. The parent or guardian has signed an Authorization for Medication form stating the time, dosage and name of the medication as well as the day(s) the medicine is to be administered. The form must be completely and correctly filled out or we will be unable to administer the medication to the child.
3. If the medication calls for 4 dosages, we will only administer 2 of the 4. If the medication calls for 2 or less dosages a day, we will not administer it.
4. Medicine is administered between 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm, unless otherwise prescribed by the doctor.
5. Over the counter medication such as Tylenol or Motrin may be used in the infant room for teething with proper forms filled out and parent permission that day. It is good for 1 day only. If your child has febrile seizures, please bring in a note from the Dr and we can give the child their fever reducing medication with a completed form.
6. If your child has a lifesaving prescription medication such as EPIPEN, Benadryl, breathing treatments, or an Inhaler please leave one in the office appropriately marked and fill out a form. We will call when/if the medication needs to be administered.
7. If your child requires sunscreen, please fill out a form and leave a bottle in the office.
8. Infants: Diaper Cream Forms must be filled out monthly, please label your child's cream.

Emergency

Unfortunately, when groups of children play together, there is the possibility of an accident. In the event that your child is involved in an accident, we will first attempt to notify you or a member of your family. If there is a question about the seriousness of the child's condition, we will contact 911 even before calling parents. The Consent for Treatment form will be used for obtaining emergency medical treatment. Florida Hospital Apopka Emergency Room will be used for emergency treatment unless parents require a specific hospital. All children should be covered by their family's health insurance or school insurance as the primary coverage in the event of an accident or injury while in our care. For your child's safety and that of the Academy, we carry second-coverage accident insurance.

Security

The Academy provides a safe and nurturing environment that promotes learning and child development. As a safety feature, the Academy has a security keypad system for access to the school. All authorized guardians will have a code for entry. Parents must sign children in and out through the Academy before proceeding to classrooms. Children will be released only to those people authorized on the registration form. Any other arrangements must be made in writing or through the Director. Picture identification will be required of people not known by the staff. Authorized person must be 16 years of age or older to pick up any student.

Dress Code

Children should dress in comfortable clothing, appropriate for the weather, and play. Please remember that children will get dirty when they play. For safety reasons, only closed-toed, rubber-soled shoes are permitted (i.e., no sandals, flip flops). All personal items and clothing must be clearly marked with the child's name. All personal items (i.e. backpacks, blankets, artwork, etc.) must be taken home on Wednesdays and Fridays so they do not interfere with church activities which share classrooms. For your child's safety and care please refrain from bringing personal items such as toys, candy or gum to the Academy. **If your child is wearing inappropriate shoes, they will not be permitted to play on the playground or participate in any activities.**

Audio and Video Recording

Our campus has audio and video recordings for the safety and protection of our staff and students. There is no live feed access for parents.

First Baptist Church of Apopka

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Weekly Services

Sunday

9:00 a.m. Bible Study

10:30am Worship

10:30am Kid Zone (Children's Church)

6:00pm Worship

Wednesday

6:30pm Prayer Meeting

A nursery and children's activities are provided.

Highland Christian Academy

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