



2009-2010

Parent Handbook

A Hands-on, Multi-sensory, Multi-age Education

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www.harmonyschoolsc.com

Table of Contents

Mission Statement.....	3
Welcome	3
Educational Philosophy.....	4
Classroom.....	6
Harmony School Communication Process.....	7
Parents & Community	9
Teachers/Staff.....	9
School Hours.....	10
Attendance	11
Late Pickup	11
Parent Commitment	11-12
Registration/Materials Fee	12
Parent Meetings	12-13
Tuition and Fees	13
Financial Aid.....	14
Curriculum.....	14
Music Program	14
Field Trips	14
Snacks	15
Library	16
Computer Use.....	16
Birthdays & Special Occasions	16-17
Lost & Found.....	17
School Newsletter	17
Parent Boards/ School Pockets	17
Enrollment.....	18
Student Behavior.....	19
Discipline Policy	19
Parent/Teacher Conferences	21
Health & Safety	22
Immunizations	22
Illness	22
Injury or Illness at School	22-23
Medication.....	23
Appropriate Clothing	23
Emergency Procedures.....	23
Inclement Weather Policy	23-24
Fire Drills and Emergencies	24
Fundraising Activities	24
Foundations/Grants.....	24
Non-Discrimination Policy	24

Mission Statement

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

Welcome

Welcome to Harmony School! You will find, as you peruse this parent handbook, that this is a very special place for you and your child/children. Our community offers a diverse program focusing on the talents and needs of your child. This focus is both our heritage and our strength, which has evolved over the 20+ year history Harmony School has been in operation. Your interest and involvement is 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 or children.

Debbie Holmes
Harmony School Director and Founder

Educational Philosophy

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 his or her own learning style, special talents and unique gifts. We individualize instruction to address each child's special qualities.

The preschool curriculum:

- Provides children with everyday learning skills including dressing, cleaning up messes, sorting and organizing, asking for help and sharing.
- Encourages children to make decisions and choices based on their own interests and desires, and enables children to use a wide range of skills.
- Encourages the use of language by allowing children the freedom to interact and communicate.
- Exposes children to pre-math and pre-reading/writing materials, a wide range of science, geography, and social studies materials, all with a hands-on, interactive and manipulative, discovery approach to knowledge acquisition.
- Nurtures each child's natural inclination to become a life-long learner.
- Includes Harmony's fun summer program complete with water play, field trips, art projects and more.

The kindergarten curriculum:

- Gives children the opportunity to explore the world around them.
- Provides children with classroom materials designed to strengthen fine motor, language, pre-math, science, geography, music, art and social skills.
- Encourages independence.
- Nourishes each child's natural curiosity and enthusiasm.
- Helps children develop respect and acceptance of self and others.
- Nurtures students' imagination and sense of wonder that is the source of creativity and innovation.
- Develops further skills by applying what the learning environment cultivated

- Teaches writing and language skills through language experience, picture charts, storytelling, group stories, weekly readers, making books, writing poems and cooking.
- Integrates math using manipulative materials.
- Provides access to Harmony's fun summer program complete with swimming at Trenholm Park, field trips, art projects and more.

All kindergarten activities develop organizational skills, independence, concentration and focus, and group problem-solving.

Each Friday, the kindergarten students take a field trip to enjoyable places such as the library, State Museum, Columbia Museum of Art, Riverbanks Zoo, or a community-minded trip to plant flowers at a Habitat for Humanity home, senior citizen facility or to aid a local non-profit.

At the end of the school year, kindergarten students can participate in student favorite: an overnight camping trip to the mountains or coast.

The elementary curriculum:

- Helps nurture a love for learning that encourages the innate curiosity of children
- Emphasizes the acquisition of solid academic skills in the areas of reading, writing, mathematical processes and research
- Develops children's unique writing styles through daily writing experiences and research projects
- Integrates units of study allowing for hands-on, experiential learning with an emphasis on expressing themselves through writing
- Provides the setting for inquiry-based learning projects, applying skills from all curricular areas
- Encourages the children to develop a respect for self and others and to enable children to find within them an acceptance needed to live in today's world
- Exposes children to many forms of music, art, fine literature, poetry, and physical movement
- Provides a local and global awareness and an appreciation for the environment
- Encourages self-motivation, self-reliance, and the ability to complete and critically evaluate tasks and projects

- Provides access to Harmony's fun summer program for elementary-age students which features fun activities such as swimming, hiking trips, African drumming, plus reinforces practical classroom tasks such as reading and creative writing.

The elementary school day features two main learning clusters: uninterrupted work time and integrated project work.

The mornings are spent engaging in uninterrupted work time, following individual work plans and meeting with teachers in small groups to acquire reading, writing and mathematics skills. The curriculum utilizes a number of manipulatives, traditional texts, a classroom library, literacy circles and technology.

Afternoons are spent doing integrated project work with students conducting in-depth experiments and researching projects in science and social studies.

A wide variety of field trips, community speakers and parent volunteers support these studies. Students are encouraged to share their findings with the group to further students' critical analytical skills and public speaking.

After-school care for preschool, kindergarten and elementary students:

During school hours our students put forth a tremendous amount of mental energy. Therefore our after school environment allows them time to play, relax and simply be kids. The children have the opportunity to engage in a number of free play activities including art, building with blocks, playing games, dramatic play and enjoying outside time.

We also offer extracurricular activities during after school hours. In the past we have had art, gymnastics, Kindermusik, Spanish, and African drumming. After school classes are not included in the tuition. Payment is usually made directly to the teachers in charge of the classes.

Summer Program:

Harmony's fun summer program provides kids with an enriching experience whether they are in their first year at Harmony or a first grader. Participating kids enjoy a variety of age-appropriate, fun activities and field trips during summer vacation. From swimming and exploring to artsy crafts and music classes, Harmony is the place to make great friends and have great fun all summer long.

Classroom

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

Harmony School Communication Process

School question or suggestion?	Question or concerns about your child
Complete input form, available at suggestion box, drop in suggestion box	If you have questions related to:
Director will review and route to one of the following:	Class Subject: Student's Teacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given to a specific teacher to answer 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be addressed at parent meeting 	General Question: Student's Teacher
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Taken to Board for input 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directly handled by Director 	Need further info./emergency: Director
	Need further info./emergency: Board Chair

Communication Guidelines for Staff and Parents:

- 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 (See Governance Process).
- 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.

Harmony School 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 Decisions w/Staff Input	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff Positions: Certified; Classified (w/committee input) Site Development Budget Salaries Staff and Parent Evaluations

Harmony School
Ideas/Concerns/Issues
(Related to the School)

Statement:

Suggestion: (Implementation – Solution)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ Date: _____

Input forms are reviewed and routed to the appropriate individuals or groups weekly. We will let you know where we have directed your input form as soon as it has been reviewed. The person or party that receives your form will then be responsible to respond to your input in a timely manner. Thank you, Harmony School Staff.

Harmony School
Ideas/Concerns/Issues
(Related to the School)

Statement:

Suggestion: (Implementation – Solution)

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Parents & Community

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. In showing support by helping out at Harmony School, parents become partners in the development of their child's self-worth, as well as maintaining their interest and motivation in learning.

For Harmony School, it is the community made up of the classroom, the educators, and the 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.

Teachers/Staff

The Harmony School staff is highly motivated and enthusiastic, providing the students with solid role models. The staff — teaching as much from example as from experience — instills in students the understanding that learning is fun, which is essential for a child's sense of self, and encourages the development of life long learners.

School Hours

Doors open each day at 7:45 am. Kindergarten and preschool start promptly at 8:30 am. The elementary school day begins at 8:15 am with a morning meeting and ends at 2:30 pm.

All kindergarten students must be in class by 8:30 am.
All elementary students must be in class by 8:15 am.

School Hours of Operation and Program Schedule:

School Hours	7:45 – 5:30*
Early Drop Off (Preschool & Kindergarten students)	7:45 – 8:30
Early Drop Off (Elementary students)	7:45 – 8:10
Preschool with Naptime	8:30 – 2:15*
Kindergarten	8:30 – 2:15
Elementary School	8:15 – 2:30
After-school care for all programs	Release Time – 5:30*
Harmony Office Hours	8:15 – 2:45

*There is a fifteen-minute grace period for pickup.

Student Drop Off

Children may arrive as early as 7:45 am and stay at school until 5:30 pm*. Preschool children should arrive no later than 9:00. Kindergarten students must be in class no later than 8:30 am and elementary children must be in class no later than 8:15 am. **If a kindergarten or elementary student is late to class five times, it counts as one absence.**

Pick up and Delivery

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 while on the school grounds. All preschool children should be escorted to their classroom by a parent. The main entrance is locked at 9 am. After 9 am, parents and students must enter through the playground entrance.

Please call the school if your child is going to be late or sick. Also, please let the office manager know if someone else will be picking up your child. Any person picking up your child other than yourself must show I.D. or know your family's chosen code word.

Attendance

Although there is no mandatory attendance policy for preschool students, your child's first years in school are an important time in which he or she will begin to form behavior, attendance, and study habits that last throughout a 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 administrator know in advance. Daily attendance is taken for all students.

For continuity and planning, we expect kindergarten and elementary students to be in school every day we are in session. Exceptions to this policy naturally include ill health, emergencies and family obligations. It would be helpful to give advance notice of planned absences. Please inform your child's teacher and the office manager of upcoming vacations as field trips are usually planned well in advance. Students absent for more than twenty days (10 excused/10 unexcused) run the risk of being ineligible for promotion. **If a kindergarten or elementary student is late to class five times, it counts as one absence.**

Late Pickup

We know roads can be blocked by trains, heavy traffic or accidents and other factors can make parents late. We have a 15 minute grace period for pickup after release times. Parents picking up children later than their scheduled release times (and grace period) will be charged a fee of \$1 per minute.

Parent Commitment

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 of Directors 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. Harmony School is not subsidized by any government or church-related organization, and the costs of operating the school are not fully covered by tuition. Therefore, we rely on your generosity – of both time and financial

support for specific projects and fundraisers – to help keep tuition costs 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 parent (and grandparent) volunteers while recognizing that time constraints can sometimes limit their availability. However, during the school year, the Harmony School PTO in partnership with the Board, teachers and other staff develop new opportunities for more parents to become involved.

Parents may choose from such activities as serving on the Board of Directors, transporting students on field trips, purchasing supplies, ordering books, helping in the classroom, maintaining school facilities, teaching special programs, organizing or assisting with fundraising. The Harmony School PTO has a listing of volunteer activities and helps coordinate this effort. Additionally, each fall and spring parents participate in a work day to tackle major projects such as painting classrooms, playground/grounds cleanup and playground equipment assembly.

Registration and Fees

In order to reduce our reliance on fund-raising activities there is an annual registration/materials fee of \$120 per student. This helps cover classroom materials such as art supplies and textbooks.

For returning students, the fee is due with their registration packets in February. For new students it is due with their application. The registration/materials fee is non-refundable.

For elementary students, there is a supply fee due twice a year: at the beginning of the school year and after the winter break.

Parent Meetings

A parent orientation meeting is held within the first two weeks of the fall session. We discuss general information about the school, its policies, classroom curriculum and field trips. Other parent meetings are held as necessary.

The Harmony PTO meets periodically and we encourage your involvement. At these meetings we discuss topics such as school events, fundraising, parent and student concerns, field trips and class events and projects. The PTO also has a list of ongoing volunteer opportunities.

PTO meetings are usually held after school and childcare may be available for a minimal fee. Childcare is also provided on parent workdays. Parent workdays are held in the spring and fall and are a great way to bring parents and children together as a community to help improve Harmony's physical facility.

Tuition

Harmony School's annual tuition for 2009/2010 is as follows:

Elementary After-care	\$120 per month
Elementary School without After-care	\$505 per month
Kindergarten After-care	\$120 per month
Half Day Kindergarten	\$405 per month
Preschool After-care	\$120 per month
Preschool and Naptime (2:15 release)	\$395 per month
Non-Harmony students After-care only	\$250 per child, per month

Payment of full tuition is due on the first day of each month. Tuition can be paid in one lump sum or in monthly payments. A late charge of \$10 will be applied to any unpaid balance remaining after the 10th of each month (unless prior arrangements have been made). We do not offer prorated tuition plans.

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 slot for the next school year.

Field Trip Fees

A \$50 preschool and \$90 kindergarten fee (does not include May camping trip) will be due one week after the Parent Orientation Meeting. This once-a-year fee covers all field trips.

The Elementary field trip fee is \$150 and does not include the overnight trip.

Financial Aid

Harmony can provide financial assistance and/or scholarships on a case-by-case basis. Financial aid is available for Kindergarten and Elementary students only. Please contact the school office for an application packet if the need arises.

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 literature, mathematics, science, geography, and history, learning for each student is expanded beyond the traditional.

Music Program

Music is built into the Preschool and Kindergarten curriculums. Elementary students receive music classes as part of their weekly curriculum. In addition, each spring Harmony hosts an Artist in Residence program that features African drumming for all students and ends with a school-wide performance.

Field Trips

Community integration is a key part of Harmony School's curriculum. Your child will have the opportunity to participate in various field trips throughout the year and parents are needed to provide transportation. The Harmony School bus has 14 seats available for children and there are 20 children in each preschool class, this means we need volunteers to drive the remaining young children in car seats in their car. Here are the guidelines for volunteer drivers:

Proof of Liability Insurance: Must carry at least the minimum amount of liability insurance required by South Carolina on the vehicle you will be driving.

Proof of Driver's License: Must have a valid South Carolina driver's license.

Driving Record: Must have a clean driving record which reflects no citations other than minor violations, as defined by South Carolina (i.e. non-moving violations, speeding infractions of less than 15 mph, etc.), and that your license has not been revoked or suspended in the past five years.

Speed Limits: Will abide by all posted speed limits on this trip.

Use of Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Substances: Will not smoke nor will allow anyone to smoke in the vehicle on field trip. During the 12 hours preceding the trip and between the time of departure and the return, will not consume alcohol or any other substance that could adversely affect driving ability.

When volunteering to drive, please consider the following:

- Be on time
- Each child in the car must be individually seat-belted
- Children should not be placed in the front passenger seat of vehicles equipped with airbags
- No detours

All volunteer drivers need to complete the Volunteer Driver Agreement form in the enrollment packet and return it to Shannon McDonald before driving on school field trips. The school generally pays for all parking and admission expenses for drivers and students, but not for gas. **If you are joining the trip but are not a driver, you will be expected to pay your own way.**

Children should not be given extra money for treats or souvenirs unless instructed by the teachers. Teachers will assign students to vehicles and there will be no changes after the trip begins unless permitted by the teachers. If your child uses a car seat, leave it at the school's main entrance on field trip days.

Snacks

Preschool/Kindergarten Program Students - Please send a healthy, nutritious snack along with your child's lunch for afternoon snack time. Harmony provides a morning snack.

Elementary Program Students – Harmony provides a morning snack. Elementary children should bring a healthy nutritious snack if in aftercare program.

Library

Harmony School has classroom libraries maintained by the teachers. We encourage parents to make regular visits with their children to local libraries.

Computer Use

The purpose of the Harmony School network is to provide a communication tool and access to rich information resources for educational activities. 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 computers and the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and inappropriate use may result in a cancellation of those privileges and other penalties. Independent-student use of networked information resources will be permitted after students and parents read and sign a release form.

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 arrange in advance with your child's teacher if you wish to be a part of the birthday circle celebration or would like to bring mini cupcakes, cookies, etc.

If your child is in the preschool/kindergarten program, please provide enough treats for both preschool classes (40 children).

Elementary students should bring treats for their class only, as elementary students celebrate in their own classroom.

If you are planning a home birthday party, **please send invitations rather than distributing them at school unless you plan to invite all children at the school.** 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.

Lost & Found

Lost and found items are placed in a box at the main entrance of the school. Please label your child's removable clothing when at all possible. Unclaimed items are periodically distributed to a charitable organization.

School Newsletter

The school publishes a monthly newsletter about school-related activities, units, field trips, policies, special occasions and more and distributes it via e-mail. If you do not have an e-mail address, please let the office manager know and a copy will be placed in your student's parent pocket.

Parent Boards/ School Pockets

Information about field trips, fundraisers, volunteer opportunities, school supply lists, and general information is posted for review and updated regularly on the white boards and the school's two entrances. **Please check these white boards daily.** Preschool and kindergarten students also have a colored pocket marked with his or her name on the wall next to the cubbies which should also be checked daily.

Elementary students and parents need to check the corkboard display case outside the Elementary classroom for important information. A parent communication folder is sent home frequently. Please remind your child or children to return these to Harmony with your comments.

We do everything possible to make communication flow smoothly. However, we rely on parents to be proactive by checking their e-mail, the parent boards, their child's school pockets or communication folders on a daily basis and refer to the school's website (www.harmonyschoolsc.com).

Enrollment

Anyone is invited to apply for admission to Harmony School.

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.

The following is our official enrollment policy.

1. Children are placed on the Waiting List for the year specified by the parents when Harmony School receives a completed application.
2. Children are accepted from the Waiting List into the School based on the date the application is received by Harmony School. Harmony School reserves the right to accept students out of sequence in order to maintain age and gender balance 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. Harmony School will then notify the next child on the Waiting List.
6. When your child is accepted as a student, a \$120 registration/materials fee is due with enrollment forms. This fee is non-refundable.
7. Harmony School requires a four week withdrawal notice. Parents can be held liable for payment of the full term of your child's contract.
8. There is a trial period of four weeks during which time the school may request that the student be withdrawn. If this occurs, you will receive a full refund of your registration fee.
9. The parent is responsible for notifying Harmony School of any address or telephone changes.
10. Harmony School reserves the right to change its Enrollment policy as needed without notice.

Student Behavior

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.

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. 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 her work at school she will have to stay in at playground time to clean up while her friends go outside. If a child draws on the wall he will have to scrub it off. A child who destroys a toy might make amends by giving up her allowance to replace the broken toy. Logical consequences give children a sense of satisfaction in that they can often make an unpleasant situation right again.

Time Out

Time out 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. Time out spaces are usually off in a corner or in the hallway away from other children so the misbehaving child can not disturb or disrupt classmates or continue to attract attention to him/herself in an inappropriate way.

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.

Communication and Resolution

When a child has misbehaved it is very important to process the episode together. After a child has received logical consequences, time out or restraint, we tell them we need to talk about what has happened. Sometimes the child is not ready to talk and needs more time to calm down. We respect this and will come back later to try again. We ask several questions. The first is, "Can you tell me what the problem was?" Next we ask, "How did you choose to handle your problem?" Then we say, "Do you think you made the best choice?" Some children are stubborn and will answer, "Yes." In these instances we say, "What else could you have done that wouldn't have gotten you into trouble?" Finally we ask them, "So what will you do next time you have this problem?" After talking with the child about the misbehavior we thank them for talking with us and praise them for thinking of a better solution than the one they opted to use previously. It is important to forgive them and allow them the opportunity to start fresh.

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.

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 chose 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 his/her 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. If that doesn't work you can come to me for help.

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. Toys guns or other toy weapons are not permitted. The Harmony School’s policy regarding dangerous weapons such as pocketknives, 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. If a second incident occurs, the child is expelled.

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.) In the event that the child’s needs are beyond the scope of what can be addressed at Harmony School, enrollment may be terminated.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Preschool / Kindergarten:

Teachers will meet with parents twice a year — once in the late fall and once in the spring. At the first conference, the student’s progress will be discussed in addition to a goal for the student. This goal may be academic or social depending on the student’s strengths and challenges. We ask that parents come to the conferences with ideas for a goal, and then work with the teacher to make an appropriate one.

A parent or teacher may request a conference at any time.

Elementary School:

Teachers invite parents and students to visit us the week before school starts. (A specific date is announced via email and / or phone calls.) Later, there will be a school-wide meeting where all the teachers and parents have an opportunity to meet, ask questions, and hear about the curriculum.

Teachers have conferences with parents three times a year. **These conferences are mandatory.** The first meeting will take place approximately six weeks after the first day of school. By this time we will have assessed each child. Furthermore, we will see how they relate to others in our classroom communities.

The other two conferences will take place in the late fall and at the end of the year, after the teachers have written reports on each child's progress.

A parent or teacher may request additional conferences as needed. At pick-up and drop-off time it is crucial that teachers focus on the safety and needs of the children, therefore these are not appropriate times for impromptu conferences. However, parents are always welcome to bring in a note or send an email to request a conference. The teachers will then find a time when the participants can focus on the issues at hand.

Health & Safety

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.

Illness

The health of all the children at Harmony School depends on each family acting responsibly. Please consider these general guidelines.

- Vomiting is frequently a symptom of oncoming illness; therefore, do not send your child to school for 24 hours after such an upset.
- Keep your child home if he/she is experiencing diarrhea.
- A child should remain at home 24 hours after a fever.
- An extra day at home is good protection against a relapse and/or re-infection.

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 Childcare Exclusion List which outlines conditions that exclude a child from childcare until the condition is rectified. The information is available online at http://www.scdhec.gov/health/disease/docs/2009-2010_Childcare_Exclusion_List.pdf.

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. In

the event of an injury or illness too severe to warrant waiting for the parent, 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, the office manager 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.**

Medication

If medication is required during school hours, your child's teacher will dispense it. Harmony School is not allowed to administer any form of medication, either prescription or over-the-counter, if there is not a medical release form on file. The medical release form is included in your enrollment packet.

Appropriate Clothing

At Harmony School, children go outside in all kinds of weather. Please always consider this when your child is dressing for school. We believe that students and parents can choose apparel that demonstrates individuality, as well as maintain the standards of appropriateness to ensure that the school environment is conducive to student learning.

In the elementary school, we often work on a rug. Therefore, we want to keep our rugs and floors as sanitary as possible. We ask that children bring a pair of swim shoes, dance slippers, moccasins, or clean socks (changed daily) so that they can leave muddy, dusty, or sandy shoes by the door. Athletic shoes (or closed-toe shoes) are recommended for recess. To prevent injuries, children who choose to play games like soccer and kickball are asked to wear footwear that protects their toes.

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.

Emergency Procedures

Inclement Weather Policy

Please listen to your radio or television or check for closings online. **We follow Richland School District One.** In the rare instance that we deviate from this policy, you will be notified by telephone.

Should it be necessary to end school early due to weather or other natural disaster, we will make every effort to contact parents or people you have listed as your emergency contacts. Be sure to let your friends/relatives know you have listed them and again, make sure this information is up-to-date.

Fire Drills and Emergencies

The teachers will supervise and conduct fire drills throughout the year. All children are lead to the front of the school, roll call is taken for all classes and the children are lead back into their classes where 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.

Fundraising Activities

Tuition revenues do not cover the full cost of Harmony School operations. In the past, the gap has been alleviated through fundraising activities. There is an expectation that parents and families become involved in organizing fundraising activities. We encourage our parents and teachers to be active in our PTO.

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 through the PTO to help with these efforts.

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 on the basis of 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.