

# Penn-Harris-Madison Early Learning Academy



## Handbook 2015 - 2016

Located at Horizon Elementary School  
10060 Brummitt Road  
Granger, Indiana 46530  
(574) 679-9788  
Mrs. Tressa Decker, Principal

**P-H-M EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY**

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# **P-H-M Early Learning Academy**

## **Parent Handbook 2015 - 2016**

We would like to welcome you and your child to our full-time, four-year-old preschool program located at Horizon Elementary School. We are very excited to work together to make this year one of substantial growth and memorable experiences for your child. We will have many opportunities throughout the year for exploration and learning. It is our hope that your child's year in preschool will be a fulfilling one!

As a parent, YOU are your child's greatest advocate and the expert on his/her talents, abilities, and needs. Open communication between families and the school is very important to us. You can contact the teacher by email, written notes, or telephone. Email is the preferred method of communication. However, if an emergency situation arises, you may call the school office between 7:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. daily to leave a message for your child's teacher. (Please understand that we cannot take phone calls during the school day while we are teaching.) We will do our very best to return email and voice messages before the next school day.

We will send a monthly newsletter home with your child to inform you of our classroom/school news and happenings, classroom needs, and updates to our schedules or routines throughout the year. We will also send various notes home to alert you of any special activities or events as needed. **PLEASE check your child's Communication Folder EVERY day for important papers.**

We look forward to working with you and your child this year.

### **Meet the Teacher**

Hello! I am Ashley Colborn, and I am excited to be the lead teacher at P-H-M's Early Learning Academy at Horizon. I would like to take this time to tell you a little about myself.

I am a Penn High School alumni, and a graduate of Indiana University, South Bend with a Bachelor of Science degree in General Studies. I obtained my teaching certification through Bethel College's Transition to Teaching program as well as acquiring a Master of Arts in Teaching and I have completed work to add an Early Childhood Education endorsement to my license. In addition, I am licensed to teach English as a New Language. I have had the privilege of working in various schools in my 5 years of teaching, including one year in Maui, Hawaii, and two years of kindergarten at Meadow's Edge Elementary School. I enjoy running, spending time with family, my dog, Phoenix, and cheering on Notre Dame!

Please contact me with any questions you may have regarding our classroom, schedules, or routines. I will read and respond to emails each day at this address [acolborn@phm.k12.in.us](mailto:acolborn@phm.k12.in.us).

### **School Hours**

Our school day is 8:10 a.m. to 2:40 p.m. Monday through Friday. The teacher will greet them at the classroom door starting at 8:00 a.m. Please be sure that your child arrives on time and is ready to learn and explore! Dropping off your child closer to 8:10 a.m. means you will avoid some of the traffic congestion and foot traffic on the sidewalks as Horizon students arrive.

## Arrival Procedures

Parents will drop off and pick up their preschool child(ren) using the main driveway at Horizon Elementary. Please do not enter the main driveway if there are school buses present. Children will be dropped off curbside and will enter the building through the classroom door, near Door E, located to the north (right) of the main entrance at Horizon. For the safety of all students, we ask that you and your student remain in your vehicle and continue to move forward until you reach the flagpole area at the main entry doors of the school. Most days, preschool staff members will be available to help your child out of the vehicle. If not, a sign will be posted to notify you that your child should exit the car and walk to Door E. The teacher will be at the door to greet students. **Never drop off your child unless you see the teacher!** Parents should not park in the drop off line nor leave the car unattended to walk students to the door.

If you arrive late to drop off your child, please park your car in a parking spot and walk into the front office to sign in your child.

Bus transportation is not available for preschool students this year.

## Dismissal Procedures

Children will be dismissed at 2:40 p.m. each school day through Door E. Please do not enter the pick-up line if buses are in the front drive at Horizon. You can simply wait in the right turn lane on Brummitt Road. Have your student's car-rider number tag hanging from the rear-view mirror for easy visibility. **Please remain in your car;** a staff member will assist your child to the car and keep the traffic flow moving at a safe rate for the children. For the safety of all students, we will load every child in his/her car on the **PASSENGER** side. Please adjust your child's booster seat to accommodate this procedure. If you arrive late to pick up your child, please park your vehicle in a parking spot and walk to the office to pick up your child.

*If you make ANY changes to your child's arrival or dismissal routine, we MUST receive a signed note from the parent/guardian in advance.* We do not allow anyone not listed as the child's emergency contact to pick up your child unless we have received a note from the parent/guardian specifying the change in schedule.

## Attendance Policies

Attendance should be regular. It is important that you send your child **every day**. This will help children form a positive attitude towards school. However, if your child is not well in the morning before school begins, please keep him/her at home. It keeps other students healthy, and it may save you a trip to school later to pick up a sick child!

**ABSENCE** – In the event that your child is ill, please follow these important steps:

- Call the school office in the morning to report your child's absence (574.679.9788). If we do not receive notification of an absence, our office staff will be contacting you.
- You must report your child's absence by 10:00 a.m. on the day your child misses school, or it will be recorded as an "unexcused" absence.

## Health & Safety

### **Immunization Requirements (I.C. 20-34-4-2)**

Each student should have the immunizations required by law or have a required waiver. **Students whose parents do not provide the required documentation within 20 days of the opening day of the school year (or from the student's first day of enrollment in the district) will not be allowed to attend school.** This is for the safety of all students and in accordance with state law. Any questions about immunizations or waivers should be directed to the principal or the Health Office.

Minimum immunization requirements for entry into all Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation schools in 2015 - 2016 are listed by the Indiana State Department of Health at [https://chirp.in.gov/docs/Combination\\_2014-15\\_and\\_2015-2016\\_schedule.pdf](https://chirp.in.gov/docs/Combination_2014-15_and_2015-2016_schedule.pdf). For your reference, the schedule of requirements is listed below:

2015 - 2016 School Year	
IN State Department of Health	
School Immunization Requirements	
Updated November 2014	
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3 to 5 years old	3 Hep B (Hepatitis B)
	4 DTaP (Diphtheria, Tetanus & Pertussis)
	3 Polio (Inactivated Polio)
	1 MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)
	1 Varicella
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## Medication Administration at School

### **Prescribed Medications**

In those circumstances where a student must take daily prescribed medication during the school day, the following guidelines are to be observed:

- A. Parents should, with their physician's counsel, determine whether the medication schedule could be adjusted to avoid administering medication during school hours.
- B. The Authorization to Administer Medication Form, available in the school Health Office or on the P-H-M web page, must be filed with the respective building Health Office before the student will be allowed to begin taking any medication during school hours.
- C. All medications must be registered with the school Health Office.
- D. Medication that is brought to the Health Office will be properly secured. Medication must be brought to school in the original container directly by the parent, guardian or authorized adult. A two to four (2-4) week supply of medication is recommended.
- E. Students who may require administration of an emergency medication may have such medication stored in the school Health Office. However, if authorization for self-medication has been provided by the parent and physician the student may carry the emergency medications. Only emergency medications will be allowed to be carried by a student and only if the proper forms are on file.

- F. Medication that is possessed by a school for administration during school hours or at school functions, for students in grades Preschool-5 may be released only to the student's parent, guardian or adult, eighteen (18) years of age or older and who has been designated, in writing, by the student's parent to receive the medication.
- G. Any unused medication unclaimed by the parent will be destroyed by school personnel when a prescription is no longer to be administered or at the end of the school year.
- H. The parents shall have sole responsibility to instruct their child to take the medication at the scheduled time.
- I. A log for each prescribed medication shall be maintained which will note the personnel giving the medication, the date, and the time of day. This log will be maintained along with the physician's written request and the parent's written release.

### **Non-Prescribed (Over the Counter) Medications**

A Medication Permit form, signed by a parent or guardian, must be on file in the school Health Office. Use of non-prescription medicine must comply with school regulations and will only be given in accordance with the directions on the label. This includes Tylenol, Advil, cough syrup, cough drops, herbal supplements/treatments and any other over-the-counter medication. If a non-prescribed (over the counter) medication needs to be administered on a routine basis, a physician order will be required. If you have questions call your school Health Office.

### **Illness or Injury at School**

Students who become ill or suffer a slight injury during the school day will be referred to the Health Office Staff. In many cases (complaints of headache, stomach ache, etc.), the student simply needs to take a short rest (10 minutes) followed by a return to the classroom. The Health Office Staff can also distribute ice (for bumps or minor insect stings) and apply band-aids (on paper cuts, small scrapes or abrasions). The Health Office Staff **cannot distribute any medication unless the parent supplies it and proper forms have been filed with the staff.** In more serious cases the parent will be called to come and take the child home for further medical evaluation.

It is critical that the school can contact parents in an emergency situation. Please be sure to update information on your child's emergency card any time that information changes.

It is often hard to know when to keep your child home from school when they are not feeling well. Here are a few guidelines:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher: home until he has been fever free for 24 hours.
- Vomiting: home until he can keep food down and is free of symptoms for 24 hours.
- Diarrhea: home until he is free of symptoms for 24 hours.
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis): home until he has been on antibiotic eye medication for 24 hours.
- Strep Throat: home until he is fever free and has been on antibiotic for 24 hours.
- Chickenpox: home for one week after the first pox appears or all pox are dry and crusted.
- Unexplained rash, blisters, or draining sores: children should be seen by their health care provider for a diagnosis.

If you are ever in doubt, please call your health care provider for their recommendations. You can also call the school Health Office Staff with questions regarding school policy about illness.

## **Control of Illness and/or Communicable Diseases**

Because a school has a high concentration of people, it is necessary to take specific measures when the health or safety of the school community is at risk. The school's professional staff has the authority to remove or isolate a student who has been ill or has been exposed to a communicable disease.

Specific diseases include: diphtheria, scarlet fever, strep infections, whooping cough, mumps, measles, rubella, Varicella and other conditions indicated by the Local and State Health Departments.

Any removal will be only for the contagious period as recommended by State and local health departments.

### **Head Lice**

Head lice are a common problem with school-aged children. It has nothing to do with cleanliness nor does it reflect poorly on you as a parent.

If live head lice or nits within one inch of the scalp are found in a child's hair, parents will be called to come and pick up their child and be provided with educational material. After treatment, the child will be allowed to return to school if no live lice are present or nits that are within one inch of the scalp. Please contact the school office if your child contracts lice. Feel free to contact our Health Office Staff for assistance in understanding and handling the treatment process. **Once your child is treated, a parent or guardian must bring him/her to school to be checked in the Health Office before being sent to class.**

## **Hoosier Healthwise for Children**

*Hoosier Healthwise* is an affordable insurance program offered by the State of Indiana for children from birth through age 18. Benefit packages cover a wide range of medical services and are available to families who meet income requirements. More information can be found at the website <http://member.indianamedicaid.com/programs--benefits/medicaid-programs/hoosier-healthwise.aspx>.

## Dress Code

- ***IMPORTANT:*** We ask that you PLEASE take the time to label clothing items such as: coats, sweaters, raincoats, boots, hats, mittens, shoes as well as backpacks and other items. Children often are not able to identify what belongs to them. Please print your child's name clearly with a permanent marker.
- Please provide a Ziploc bag with a change of clothes, labeled with your child's name, to be left at preschool.
- Dress your child in comfortable, durable clothing. Students will often be engaged in activities that involve paint, glue, clay, etc. and large motor movement. They should wear clothes that allow them to turn, jump and play!
- Also remember to follow the P-H-M dress code (***no flip-flops, high heels, spaghetti strap tops, spandex, ripped clothing, clothing with inappropriate words or pictures, or any accessories that might be a distraction***). Undergarments may not be showing at any time (even when bending over). The dress code will be strictly enforced, beginning the first day of school. All of this information can be found in the P-H-M Primary Handbook which is available on the P-H-M Website at [www.phmschools.org](http://www.phmschools.org).

## Curriculum Overview

This year in the Early Learning Academy, we will be learning many new skills including math, reading, science, social studies, writing, and social skills. The Early Learning Academy will be following the *Tools of the Mind* Curriculum, a program that builds strong foundations for school success. Content and lessons focus on social, emotional and cognitive learning with a daily emphasis on creativity and problem solving. We will be building routines in the classroom that will ensure kindergarten readiness. In addition to building foundational skills, our curriculum will challenge each student to achieve their highest potential. Ultimately your child will thrive in his/her Early Learning Academy classroom and for years to come!

## Student Records

The teachers, counselors, Health Office, and administrative staff keep many student records. There are two (2) basic kinds of records -- directory information and confidential records.

Directory information can be given to any person or organization for nonprofit making purposes when requested, unless the parents of the student restrict the information, in writing, to the principal by October 1 of that school year.

The Board designates as student "directory information": a student's name; address; telephone number; date and place of birth; major field of study; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; height and weight, if a member of an athletic team; dates of attendance; date of graduation; awards received; listing on an honor roll; or scholarships; photographs; video tape; and other similar information and images.

Parents and eligible students may refuse to allow the school to disclose any or all of such "directory information" upon written notification to the school by October 1.



The Family Policy Compliance Office in the U.S. Department of Education administers both FERPA and PPRA. Parents and/or eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW 20202-4605  
Washington, D.C.  
[www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/index](http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/index)

***Informal inquiries may be sent to the Family Policy Compliance Office via the following email addresses:***

[FERPA@ED.Gov](mailto:FERPA@ED.Gov); and  
[PPRA@ED.Gov](mailto:PPRA@ED.Gov).

## **Tuition Payments & Late Fees**

Tuition fees are set by the Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation board and your child is enrolled for the school year. During any absences, including sickness, holidays and vacation, fee payments continue for each child. Fees are subject to yearly increases each August. Tuition payments are due the first Friday of the each month by 3:00 p.m. for the predetermined monthly fee. If payment is not received by that time, a \$20 late fee will be added to your account and will be automatically due with your next tuition payment.

If withdrawing your child, as much notice as possible is appreciated. We require a minimum of two weeks notice.

## **Communication Folders**

A blue communication folder will be used to send important papers home. The guardian is responsible to check their child's backpack and communication folder EVERY DAY. *This folder will go home and must come back to school EVERY DAY!* Please send any notes or papers to school in the communication folder as well. Once these folders are sent home you will notice one side pocket has a green dot and the other has a red dot. The green dot means this is something that needs to be taken home and then returned to school. The red dot means that this is something to stay at home.

Your child will also need a backpack labeled with his/her name to carry items to and from school. This needs to be a regular sized backpack so folders, books, and projects can easily be transported home. Please encourage your child to take responsibility for bringing their backpack to school each day. Many projects, reading books, and handouts will come home on a regular basis, and some may be rather large, so please make sure your child's backpack is big enough to carry these items.

## Lunch/Snack

Your child will have the opportunity to eat both lunch and snack at The Early Learning Academy. Your child can enjoy a lunch from our cafeteria or bring a nutritious lunch from home. Please do not pack candy or pop.

### **Lunch**

- Early Learning Academy lunch is from 10:25 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. in the cafeteria.

### **Snack**

- Early Learning Academy snack time is at 1:00 p.m. in the classroom.

## Rest and Relaxation

Each day students come into a calm room where they can take their towel/blanket brought from home, then find a place to lie on the carpet and listen to music or sleep for about 30 minutes. This is a time to stay quiet and rest before finishing the afternoon. We ask that you send in a towel/blanket from home, labeled with your child's name or initials. This will need to be one that can be kept at school and occasionally sent home to be washed.

## Behavior Management

Early Learning Academy will be using a positive reinforcement behavior system in the classroom. Students will be encouraged to consciously make good choices, and will be reminded that they are in control of their behavior. This gives us great opportunities to talk about using words to problem solve with their peers.

We will use "Super Kid" punch cards for outstanding individual behaviors. When a student's card is filled up, he/she will get to pick something from the prize box! This is a good way to communicate with you as well. When you see a "Super Kid" card come home, use that as a time to encourage and celebrate good choices and positive behavior at school!

As a classroom team we will aim to fill up a popcorn bucket with popcorn, which is given for good group behavior. When the bucket is full, the class will earn a chosen reward! This provides recognition for cooperation and positive choices as a group.

The Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation maintains a safe and orderly environment. Students are expected to follow the Positive School-Wide Behavior Plan. The expectations and skills embedded in these plans are based upon the Lifelong Guidelines and Life Skills. These expectations and skills are taught and reviewed at various times throughout the school experience. Expectations, guidelines and skills are posted in every building and teachers expect students to follow them on a daily basis. The Lifelong Guidelines are: Truth, Trust, Active Listening, No put-downs, and Personal best. The Life Skills are: Integrity, Initiative, Flexibility, Perseverance, Organization, Sense of Humor, Effort, Common Sense, Problem-solving, Responsibility, Patience, Friendship, Curiosity, Cooperation and Caring.

It is the Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation's policy to provide an equal educational opportunity for children regardless of race, color, creed, age, disability, religion, gender, ancestry, national origin, place of residence within P-H-M's boundaries, or social or economic

background. In addition, it is our policy to maintain an environment that is conducive to learning and free from all forms of unlawful harassment.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding P-H-M's equal educational opportunity and anti-harassment policies:

Dr. Kay Antonelli  
Assistant Superintendent  
574-259-7941

Additional information regarding P-H-M's Equal Educational Opportunity and Anti-Harassment Policies may be found in Board Policies 2260, 2260.01, and 5517.

## **Parent Volunteers/Visitors**

(Please see sign-up sheets)

Parent volunteers do much to enhance our program. Some ways of assisting might include:

- assisting individual children or small groups
- guiding an art project
- preparing materials
- making games at home or school
- assisting with Mystery Reader
- holiday celebrations

If you are interested in helping please sign up on the appropriate sign-up sheet. **All volunteers will need to complete a required background check BEFORE volunteering.** This required background check can be done in the school office.

If you wish to visit our classroom, we ask that you contact your child's teacher to schedule a visit. Please call to schedule any visits at least 24 hours in advance. This will help us with planning.

Visitors may not enter the classroom until they have signed in at the front office and have received a visitor's badge. You will need to bring a **valid driver's license** to get a visitor's badge through our RAPTOR visitor monitoring system. This is a required component of our school safety plan. We also ask that all visitors wait at least one month (until October) before visiting our classroom so the children can adjust and become more comfortable in their new learning environment.

## **Child Custody**

At the time of enrollment, parents are expected to provide the school with court papers, including custody orders, pertaining to the allocation of parental rights and responsibilities. The school will honor all current court orders pertaining to the allocation of these rights. To the extent that these rights are modified by the court at any point during the time a child is enrolled as a student with Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation, it is the responsibility of the parents to submit to the school a copy of the most recent court order.

In general, the parent who has physical custody of the child has the right to make educational decisions relating to the child. In general, parents who share joint legal custody are to share the responsibility for the major decisions concerning the child's upbringing, including the child's education.

Unless restricted by a court order, a non-custodial parent will be given access to all student records, progress reports, and disciplinary actions. The non-custodial parent is responsible for informing the principal or the school office in writing of his or her wish to receive copies of records related to the student's school activities or academic progress. Should a custodial parent wish to prohibit the distribution of information and records to the non-custodial parent, he or she must provide a certified copy of the court order restricting the non-custodial parent's access.

Absent a court order to the contrary, the non-custodial parent may attend any school activities that are open to the public, such as concerts, fairs, and athletic events. In addition, the non-custodial parent may participate in parent-teacher conferences, classroom visitations, and all other school activities, unless the custodial parent has communicated in writing his or her desire that the non-custodial parent not participate in these activities and has provided the school a copy of the current custody order.

The non-custodial parent may not visit with the student during the school day nor may the student be released to the non-custodial parent unless the custodial parent gives written permission. The school day may not be used for additional parenting time.

## Emergency Cards

Each child in our school is required to have complete and up-to-date emergency contact information on file in the office. It is essential that we are able to contact you (or a designated adult) if necessary during the school day. If there are any changes in your housing, employment, emergency phone number, email address, etc., please contact the office ASAP so we can update the information on your child's emergency card. THANK YOU!

## Recess

Your child will have at least one recess period every day and will need clothing that is appropriate for the weather. Please make sure your child comes dressed to go outside each day. During the winter months, this would include snow pants, winter coat, mittens/gloves, boots, and a hat. We will go outside for recess unless the wind-chill is below zero. **Please label ALL belongings with your child's name.**

## Supplies

We are fortunate to have most of our supplies provided for us through our school budget. These items include paper, pencils, crayons, markers, scissors, glue, paint, etc. We do ask that you purchase a roomy, zipper-style backpack, 1 container of disinfectant wipes, and 2 large boxes of Kleenex to donate to the classroom. Thank you!

## Toys

Please do not allow your child to bring toys, cell phones, gaming devices, etc., to school. They could possibly be lost, stolen or broken, which causes an unhappy experience at school. In addition, these items are distracting to students, and we'd like to avoid distractions whenever possible.

## Birthdays

Birthdays are a fun time to celebrate each special student! At The Early Learning Academy we will do this during snack time on the day, or during the week, of the student's birthday. July birthdays will be celebrated in August and June birthdays in May. The child will wear a crown for the day; we will sing, play a game, and they will be the line leader that day. We do not encourage food for celebrating; however, you could send in a pencil, eraser, or something small for each classmate. We suggest your child pick out a book to donate to the Early Learning Academy classroom library to commemorate their special day. They can write their name in it, and the teacher will then read that story to the class!

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY, PLEASE  
CONTACT US! YOUR PARTNERSHIP IS IMPORTANT AND VALUED!**

**Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation  
Early Learning Academy**

**Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook**

This is to certify that I have received and read the Penn-Harris-Madison Early Learning Academy Parent Handbook and agree to abide by it while my child is enrolled in the Early Learning Academy.

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**Parent Signature**

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**Parent Name Printed** **Date**