



100 Groton Parkway

Rochester, NY 14623

585-359-3710

*Parent/Student Handbook
2020-2021*

Community Beliefs

- We respect one another and our abilities.
- We are responsible for our words and actions.
- We approach life with a positive attitude.
 - We know we can learn and succeed.
- Most of all, we are proud of who we are.

Please note: Changes in this Handbook in **RED** are special inserts due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

School Operations

Holy Childhood is a non-profit, private school governed by New York State Department of Education and a Board of Directors. The Board of Directors consists of current and former parents along with community members dedicated to our mission. The Board oversees the activities of the school, clinic and adult programs at Holy Childhood to ensure all activities are consistent with our mission, and monitors our financial stability.

Our Clinic Program is governed by the Office of People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD, formally OMRDD) and is registered as an Article 16 clinic with the state of New York.

Overview of Program/Classes

Holy Childhood offers comprehensive and therapeutic services to children ages five to twenty-one in their School Program. Students attend from 46 different school districts in Monroe and outlying counties. All have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) determined through their district's Committee on Special Education (CSE.)

Referrals to the Children's Program are made by school district officials (CSE). Students must go through an Intake Process which consists of a tour, application, review of records and observations. Initial referrals should be made directly to the Principal, David Halpern. He works directly with an Intake Committee to determine whether or not referrals can be accepted into program.

The Program consists of both 8:1:3 classes - eight students, one teacher and three para-educators. One of the para-educators is a Certified Teaching Assistant. In addition to academics, the curriculum addresses cognitive and language skills, fine motor skills, social/behavioral skills and self-help skills.

The intermediate and secondary classrooms begin the Transition Program where emphasis is placed on preparing students for all aspects of life beyond graduation. The Transition Program focuses on job completion, following directions, accepting criticism, cooperation, time management, self esteem building, self advocacy, taking pride in one's accomplishments, eye/hand coordination and fine motor skill development.

Our programs are designed to be student focused while meeting the academic, physical, communication, social, and life skills that will contribute to student independence and success as an adult. Students are exposed to in-school jobs and community based work experience program in order to provide students with rich learning experiences in a natural setting. These work experiences, both in school and community based are supported by job coaches who strive for teaching the skills to each student that will lead to greater independence and improved work skills. Individual schedules are developed based on needs.

In the summer of 2012, Holy Childhood opened a community classroom in the Genesee Valley Regional Market, located in Henrietta, NY. This pioneer program has been the result of much hard work from administration, state and town officials and staff and we

are eager to fill the classroom with students who will receive daily instruction within the community in both the classroom and a variety of work sites available within the market. The goal of the program is for students to broaden their work experiences and to gain successful employment. A second classroom was opened the summer of 2016.

Clinical Services at SHC: Helen H, Heller Health Center

Many of the children and adults who attend Holy Childhood have physical or psychological issues that accompany their developmental disabilities. The Agency's Helen H. Heller Health Center, addresses these needs. The Center is certified by the New York State Office of People with Developmental Disabilities as an Article 16 Clinic.

The Health Center offers comprehensive diagnostic and treatment services to both the student and adult population of Holy Childhood. These services include physical examinations, state-mandated health screenings (including vision, hearing and scoliosis), emergency first aid, the administration of medications and illness assessment.

The Health Center staff also includes occupational therapists and speech language pathologists who provide services for students in and out of the classrooms. Participants in the Adult Program have access to these services as well. A psychologist is on staff to provide evaluations (as recommended by New York State Education Law) and counseling for children and adults.

The staff of the Children's Program and Health Center work closely together to provide a well-rounded program that meets the individual needs of each student in an optimal setting. Any services not available at Holy Childhood are often set up and provided through referral to other community resources by the School's clinicians.

Homerooms consist of students grouped by grade, with multiple ages in each homeroom. Usually students within two to three years of age are grouped together.



Academically, students are grouped by performance levels in small classes. A student's grouping may change during the year to reflect changes in performance.

Basic language and math skills are taught using multi-sensory, direct instruction and other research based techniques. A variety of enrichment opportunities such as art, music, drama, activities of daily living, social skills, practical work experiences, science, social studies, and physical education are also offered.

Decisions regarding student placement is a team decision and/or an administrative decision in order to comply with NYSED regulations

Attendance

It is essential that each student be in attendance every day and report to their classes on time. Frequent absences and tardiness may seriously affect academic, vocational and social progress as well as their eligibility for programs.

Families are discouraged from taking students out of school prior to a school break. The school must be notified of absences for vacations at least one week in advance. Whenever possible, regularly scheduled medical appointments should be made after school hours.

Absences

In order for an absence to be excused, a parent or guardian must notify the school office by 8:00 a.m. when a student is unable to attend school due to health issues or other emergencies. For an extensive illness involving 3 or more days of absence (consecutive or non-consecutive), the school requires a statement from a physician.

The school must also be notified in advance of an absence for religious holidays in order for the absence to be excused.

Attendance is accessible by each student's district of residence or home school district. Extensive absences should be reported to the district by the parents/guardian.

Students who have or suspected of having COVID-19 must be referred to their primary care physician. Parents will need to call the health office and inform the nursing staff of the potential of an infection. If the child is tested for the illness, the health office must be informed of the result. The County Health Department will follow up with the family.

Release from School

When it is necessary for the parent to take a child out of class for a doctor's appointment or other reason during the day, please send a note to school at the beginning of the day so the teacher and student can be prepared. Students must be picked up prior to 2:45 and parents must sign the student out. Please be mindful of the bus loop as it is closed during arrival and dismissal time. Busses line up in the bus loop and vehicles are not permitted to pass a bus/van with its flashers on.

Due to the need to be physically distant during dismissal from school, parents are asked to pick up their child before 2:15 PM or after 2:45 PM. This will reduce the congestion in the lobby area.

School Cancellation

Holy Childhood follows the Rush-Henrietta Public School plan for cancellation of classes due to inclement weather or emergencies. If Holy Childhood needs to deviate from the plan, each family will be contacted by telephone using the Connect-Ed. system. Information will also be viewable on the local news channels and radio channels.

****** Please notify the office of any changes in contact information as they occur.**

Arrival

The school day begins at 8:30 a.m. Students arriving after 8:30 a.m. must be signed in by an adult. It should be noted that the loop is closed to traffic while busses are loading and unloading. Cars may not pass busses where students are loading or unloading. Please notify the office if there are any concerns.

Dismissal

School dismisses at 2:30 p.m. If a student is dismissing early, parent/guardian is asked to notify the teacher and/or the main office and sign the student out prior to leaving. HC staff should also be notified if the student is returning and the approximate time.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, if your child is not riding the bus, parents are requested to pick their child up before 2:15 PM or after 2:45 PM so as to not interfere with the regular dismissal.

RESPITE-Medicaid Waiver Programs

There are several after-school activities available to students who qualify for the Medicaid Waiver programs Around the Town, Teen Social and Out and About (for older students 16+) as well as an after school Respite Program.

Around the Town is an after school program for younger students, held once a week from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. during the school year. Participants go out into the community to learn about activities and resources and meet new people. It's also an opportunity to socialize and have fun with school friends while offering parents and families a brief respite. Outings include: tours, sports clinics with area schools and sports teams, an annual fishing outing with the DEC, bowling, restaurants and movies. For more information about Around the Town, please contact Tim Baird at 585-359-3710, ext. 168 or email tbaird@holychildhood.org.

Teen Social takes place at the Holy Childhood campus from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. once a month. Activities include: create your own musical instrument with the Eastman School of Music, a visit from the Zoo mobile, arts and craft projects and the annual

Holiday Hop. For more information about Teen Social, please contact Tim Baird at 585-359-3710, ext. 168 or email tbaird@holychildhood.org.

Out & About is extracurricular recreational programs that allows Holy Childhood adult consumers and students ages 16 and up to broaden their recreational and social skills and knowledge. It takes place after School and work hours. Outings offer inclusion and interaction within the community that are crucial to establishing normal and healthy social lives. Staff contact: Tim Baird

After School Respite assists students to develop friendships and build social, recreation and leisure skills. Respite provides an opportunity for our students to practice being more independent in order to become self-reliant adults.

Communication

Agency: School Program Director newsletters are sent home monthly and our website provides much information agency-wide. Be sure to visit the website at www.holychildhood.org to sign up for the agency email newsletters. This helps keep everyone apprised of current and future news at Holy Childhood. All effort is made to foster frequent and productive communication between teachers and parents for the benefit of the student.

Parent Communication: Teachers use various forms of communication-communication folders, journals notebooks, daily sheets and weekend sheets. Be sure to communicate to your child's teacher your preference! School wide memos as well as student work are sent home in the folders. Please be sure to review the materials on a daily basis and return any needed paperwork using the same folder.

Parents may schedule meetings with teachers at any time if the need arises by calling the agency at 585-359-3710, or communicate with them directly.

Parent/Teacher Conferences: Formal conferences are scheduled twice each year in November and in the spring to prepare for the annual Committee on Special Education (CSE) meeting. The purpose of the parent-teacher conference is to discuss the student's academic, vocational, and social progress so that home and school can more effectively work together. The spring meeting also involves transition planning with our Transition Coordinator, who will assist the team with the creation and development of the Measurable Post Secondary Goals and Transition Needs and record the information into the IEP. These meetings also help discern areas that need reinforcement and extra attention in order to help the student grow to his/her full potential.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, most meetings will be done remotely using WebEx or other virtual communication systems. Call or email the teacher to arrange for any parent/teacher meeting if needed.

Visitors

All visitors and parents must sign in at the Main Desk in the Lobby and a call will be placed to the office/classroom. Please remain in the lobby unless directed otherwise by a Holy Childhood staff member.

Our Visitor and Entry protocol has changed since the pandemic hit. We must now screen each visitor or parent that is entering the building. Upon entry, in front of the reception desk, there is a system called Raptor. You will need to scan the bar code behind your license with the infra-red scanner. This will activate the computer screen where you will have a series of questions to answer including where in the building you are visiting and if you have been exposed to anyone with COVID-19. The computer's camera will take your picture. You will then be referred to the automatic temperature check. Failure to complete either of these screenings or a temperature of 100 degrees or more will refuse to allow you admittance to the rest of the building. If you do not have a driver's license, please speak with the receptionist. You will still need to have your temperature taken. The Raptor System will print out a Visitor Pass which you will need to adhere to your shirt or jacket.

Dress Code

Please help your children start the day in a positive manner by being well-groomed and appropriately dressed for school. Our dedicated staff is committed to working with families to provide visual aids or make recommendations for the purchase of specific equipment that may assist a student with being independent in the area of self care.

There are special occasions here at Holy Childhood when special attire is suggested. Parents/guardians will receive notices indicating that “dress up” attire is requested. Dress-up attire would not include: halter tops, camisole tops, plunging necklines or strapless tops for the girls and no t-shirts depicting inappropriate images or messages.

Student Behavior Support:

Our goal is to assure a safe and orderly learning environment for our students. The Administration oversees the development and implementation of a school wide behavior system known as Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) and Safety Care which provide the framework for all team members in order to best support students when he/she experiences specific challenges while in school. If a specific individual crisis management plan is to be drafted, parents will be contacted directly by the homeroom teacher. Together with the educational team, a plan will be created for all to follow to promote good behavior and consistency among staff. These plans are reviewed monthly and parents are invited to participate. If modifications are required, the team

contacts and consults with the PBIS team as well as administration and the documents are sent home with parents.

The Safety Care training program for child and youth care staff presents a crisis prevention and intervention model designed to teach staff how to help children learn constructive ways to handle crisis. The ability of the entire organization to respond effectively to staff and young people in crisis situations is critical in establishing not only a safe environment, but also one that promotes growth and development.

Although the primary goal of Safety Care is assist the student in identifying constructive and adaptive ways in dealing with their anger or frustration; there will be occurrences in which physical restraints will be utilized. Physical restraints are only used as a measure of last resort to contain and/or control the behavior of a student and to ensure the safety and protection the students, peers and staff at Holy Childhood.

Health and Safety

Students should bring their own nutritious lunches and drinks. A milk and juice program is available for interested families. If you are interested in signing up, please contact your child's homeroom teacher for more information. The lunchroom has a vending machine. Vending machine beverages are \$1.00. Lunch boxes or bags should be labeled with the student's name. From time to time, memos may be sent home stating that lunch is not required due to a special lunch. Please contact your child's homeroom teacher with specific questions.

The Vending Machines are shut down for the pandemic.

Three **microwaves** are available for heating food. Please send proper eating utensils for your child to eat his/her lunch. In the event that there is no silverware, plastic silverware will be provided. We simply ask for you to be mindful of bringing the items needed to control our expenses. There is one designated as Gluten-free. Students are encouraged to be responsible for bringing their lunch each day.

Medication Policy

If a child takes medication, we ask that parents be conscientious about giving the medication prior to arrival at school. We further ask that a small amount of medication be sent to the school office to be given, only with parent permission, in the event of a missed dose. All medication, prescription and non-prescription, must be brought to the office by the parents (not in the student's lunch box) with written instructions for the administration of the medication. The original container must be clearly labeled with the student's name. Prescription medication must have the pharmacy label intact. No over-the-counter medication will be given to the students without written permission from the parents. Communication from the health office will be made when medicine has been administered.

Health Information

Required medical forms will be sent to you from the Health office. These papers must be signed and completed prior to the start of school. Please call the Health office at 585-359-3710 x130 with questions.

Fire Drills

Regular fire drills are conducted throughout the school year. At the sound of the alarm, each student must leave his/her room and walk single file along the designated route as outlined by the plan for that room. Silence must prevail during the entire procedure. Students stay outside together with their class and teacher until signaled that it is safe to return. Social stories (stories written with picture support) are available to help to teach all students how to respond to the fire alarm in the event of an emergency.

Forbidden Articles

Tobacco, alcohol, drugs, knives, weapons, matches, lighters, and any other items deemed by administration to be dangerous or inappropriate, are not allowed on school grounds. If any such article is found, it will be confiscated. Parents will be contacted.

Report Cards

Reporting schedule:

Holy Childhood reports progress on the IEP goals quarterly. This means that 4 times a year, you will receive a packet from school with grades and comments following each of the 10 week quarters. Some of the districts report summer into the IEP, while other districts require a separate narrative to explain what was addressed during the summer program. All related services will also report grades and comments into the same document.

Parents are urged to ask for conferences at any time there is concern. Your child's success is our goal.

Standardized Testing

Students enrolled at Holy Childhood are deemed eligible for the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA). Teachers are trained in the implementation and administration of this state-wide assessment tool. Data collection begins in the fall and continues into the first of the year. Parents are required to meet with the teacher in person or over-the-phone; however, signatures are required to release information to the state for scoring and reporting purposes. Tasks are selected using the New York State common core learning standards and are meant to reflect skills previously learned by the student. Scores are based on a scale of 1-4, 4 being the best. These scores are shared with the home district and then to the state level. The scores have a huge impact on the home

school district and, as their customers; we take great pride in completing the documentation in an exemplary manner!

Activities

Field Trips a.k.a. Community Based Instruction (CBI)

Occasionally the teachers schedule educational field trips as part of the instructional program. Your child's teacher(s) will send home a permission slip explaining the date and time of the field trip. Prompt return of the signed permission slip is required in order for your son/daughter to go on the field trip with his/ her classmates. Fees may be collected to cover expenses, if needed.

All Field Trips (CBIs) are on pause until further notice.

Classroom celebrations

Occasionally, there are requests to celebrate birthdays at lunch within the classroom. *Notices will be sent home for class parties that may be held during the week.* Birthday parties for individual students are allowed during lunch or at the end of the day only. Please notify the teacher ahead of time so they may plan accordingly for your child's class.

Birthday celebrations and class parties are on pause for the duration of the pandemic.

Student Pictures/Yearbook

Pictures are taken in the fall in time to purchase before the holidays. Senior portraits are taken by photographers and special memos are sent home notifying parents/guardians about additional items needed for graduating seniors for publication in the yearbook. Yearbooks are designed by the Yearbook Committee and distributed in June for all who would like to place an order.

Special Events

Throughout the year there are numerous events that are planned by a committee to invite guests to our school for school wide events throughout the year. We have made numerous friends over our rich history and celebrate annually with many generous groups of individuals, including Firefighters from the City of Rochester, Gates and Henrietta for an agency wide holiday celebration; gentlemen from Alhambra, a fraternal organization, organizes a lunch trip once a year for every classroom and holds an annual pizza party and dance for our entire agency to enjoy; two women's groups host BINGO and bring in entertainment for an afternoon of fun. We also welcome friends from Rochester Press Radio who celebrate the successes of many of our students, adults and volunteers each May.

In addition to all the above, our Special Events Committee organizes monthly activities that welcomes guests from area middle/high school students, fraternal organizations, social and civic groups, dance troops and friends and volunteers from the greater

Rochester Community. We are truly grateful to so many individuals who share their time, talents and treasure with the children and adults at Holy Childhood.

All Special events are on pause until further notice.

Miscellaneous

Lost and Found

All articles left in the classrooms, halls or grounds are placed in a central location in the main office. Unclaimed articles are given to needy families twice each school year.

Transportation

It is the responsibility of your school district to provide transportation of your child(ren) to and from school each day. If you have concerns about transportation, you should contact the transportation department of your home school district. The arrangements are made at your annual CSE meeting and include door to door or curb to curb transportation.

Still have questions? Maybe these frequently asked questions will help:

How do I contact the School?

- Main office 585-359-3710
- President/C.E.O.: Donna DeDee
- School Program Director: David Halpern; Assistant School Program Director: Kathryn Miller
- Director of Programs and Services: Nate Zelensikar
- Health Office: Heather Quermous and Andrea Garling
- ***Please call 359-3710 ext. 130 to report an absence***
- Receptionist: Georgia Kay Weston
- School Administrative Assistant: Patty Purvee

What are the school hours?

- Summer Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. (student hours).
- School Year: 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.(student hours)
- The Main office is open from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- The voicemail system is always available so feel free to leave a message with any staff member.

What do I need to know about visiting the school?

- Our school has an open door policy; however, it is requested that you **schedule an appointment with your child's teacher before visiting** so as not to interfere with the teacher's preparation time. We take educating your child seriously and try to keep distractions to a minimum, so please enter in a quiet manner.
See visitor section for COVID-19 requirements.

- Upon arrival, check in at the Main desk. Every visitor will be required to have a nametag and sign our Visitor's Log. Please be sure to sign out upon leaving. **See Visitor section for COVID-19 requirements.**

Will there be an orientation for new families?

- The school program conducts an Open House in the fall. Memos will be sent to all families with the date and time. **Open House will be rescheduled during the pandemic hybrid model.**
- Parent Teacher Conferences also serve as an opportunity for parents to meet the educational and clinical teams working with their child(ren) and to meet other Holy Childhood parents. **All conferences will be held virtually.**

How often will I receive information on my child's progress?

- Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled regularly at the convenience of the family. If needed or requested, more frequent class team meetings are scheduled.
- Report cards are sent home at the end of each quarter.
- Parents are encouraged to call or e-mail their children's teachers any time they have a question or concern. Parent/teacher communication is essential for the success of your child.

Will I get a list of supplies to send in with my child?

- Included in the tuition and district fees is money that goes toward supplies for the student. We do not send home a list of school supplies needed for the school year.

Is there a parent group?

- **Our Parent Association is on pause during the pandemic. All events/meetings are paused.**

Does the school provide lunch?

- No, the school does not provide lunch. All students bring their lunch to school. Microwaves are available for student use in the cafeteria. A Gluten Free microwave is also available.

I hear a lot about work programs. How do I sign my son/daughter up?

- Transition program planning is an integral part of our IEP development for students age 14+. Initially a Level 1 Assessment at age 12 is completed with each student and this forms a basis for programming and IEP development.

- Our Transition Coordinator, who will participate in the development and implementation of each student's transition plan while enrolled in our school program works, with each classroom team, student and parents to plan the student's involvement in the work-based learning program. We also have a PAES Lab Evaluator who will work collaboratively with all senior high school and transition classroom instructors to develop and polish student level of independence and work related skills. There is also a Work-Based Learning Coordinator who schedules all of the work internships and supervises the job coaches. Together the Transition Coordinator, Work-Based Learning Coordinator and PAES Lab Evaluator will educate the families and each student with opportunities for community-based work experiences that match up with specific student preferences and with personal strengths and limitations.
- Students participating in the S.W.I.P. (School to Work Internship Program) may be required to purchase a work uniform depending upon the specific work site assigned. Information will be sent home to parents/guardians regarding the purchase of these items. **The Work-Based Learning Program is on pause while we determine the ability of our work sites to safely accept our students. Notification will be sent out to eligible students when we are cleared to restart the program.**

What is a rubric?

- A rubric is a form of self-assessment that is created by each teacher that outlines the skills required to perform a task most accurately, successfully, while also teaching self-advocacy, personal responsibility and social/work etiquette. This is an excellent teaching tool that allows the student to assess how they did at the end of the day/event and match it up with the teacher or job supervisor assessment. When designed properly it has proven to be a great tool for skill identification and development which will promote strengthened awareness and improved independence.

What is the physical education program at the school?

- We have two certified Physical Education Teachers here at Holy Childhood. The staff rotates coverage between the gymnasium and the pool. Students receive 2 periods of gym and 1, 90 minute block in the pool weekly. **During the pandemic hybrid model for reopening, students will only get one face-to-face physical education class. When the school's pool reopens after the repairs are completed, students will get one swim period every other week.**
- Sneakers are mandatory for participation in P.E., swim suits, towels should be sent in weekly and labeled with the student's name.
- The Physical Education Teachers also volunteer their time to support several special events throughout the year. Memos will be sent home if your child(ren) are interested in participating in these events. Permission slips must be signed and

returned to confirm participation in all sport events. **Most special events are on pause during the pandemic.**

How are medications and over-the-counter medications handled at this school?

- Holy Childhood has a **Zero-Tolerance** Policy for drugs and alcohol. Use or possession on school property or during school activities is grounds for immediate expulsion and notification of law enforcement.
- ANY medications must be delivered to the Health office for safekeeping and for proper administration, along with medical personnel authorization for administration.
- Medications must be delivered to the bus driver (if the transportation department allows) by an adult and not the individual assigned to the medications. The medications must also be secured in lock boxes, sealed containers, etc. to protect others within reach.