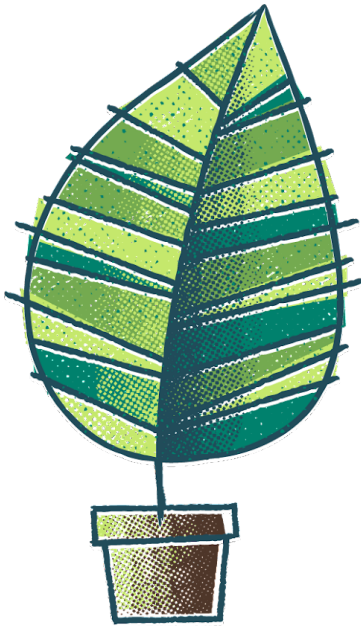


2023-24 FAMILY HANDBOOK

August 30 - May 31



The
**DISCOVERY
SCHOOL**
EARLY CHILDHOOD

The Discovery School
4225 Middle Road
Allison Park, PA 15101
(412) 712-7307
info@discoveryschoolpgh.com

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PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATIONAL APPROACH

Mission: The Discovery School engages families, honors children as unique beings, and inspires them to explore and construct meaning of the world around them.

Our Approach to Early Childhood Education: *(inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach)*

The Discovery School is a Reggio Emilia inspired early childhood program that serves children ages 2 years, 7 months to 6 years old. We offer preschool, pre-k, and kindergarten classes. Our approach to learning values children's innate sense of wonder, and allows them to construct meaning of the world around them through play and exploration. Our unique nature campus provides the ideal setting for learning and discovery.

We hope to engage families that share our passion for the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood learning, which values the child as strong, capable and resilient, rich with wonder and knowledge. Every child brings with them deep curiosity and potential, and this innate curiosity drives their interest to understand their world and their place within it. We carefully design learning experiences that build upon children's natural curiosity, encourage exploration of our natural environment, and foster creative expression. Our preschool emphasizes the connections between children, family, and school and engages families as an active part of their child's educational experience.

Our Beliefs About Children and Learning:

- We believe there is strength in our uniqueness. We value differences and respect all families as collaborators who contribute distinctive experiences and wisdom.
- We believe children are innately curious and creative, and learn best through active exploration and discovery.
- We believe learning should be joyful and challenging.
- We believe children learn best through feedback, reflection and seeing growth through their process of learning.
- We believe that integrated learning helps students to see connections between discrete disciplines and recognize the value of what they are learning.

Key Principles of our Educational Approach

The Image of the Child

Children are capable beings who should actively participate in the creation of their own learning. The curriculum is carefully designed, and emerges based on the interests and developmental needs of the children.

Creative Expression

Creativity is encouraged and honored as a necessary way for children to actively make meaning and communicate about their own learning. We integrate the arts as a vital part of the program.

Documentation of Learning

We believe that learning is a process, and we work to tell the story of a child's learning through active documentation (photos, work samples, student words, displays, portfolios, etc.)

Environment as Teacher

The learning environment is intentionally designed to inspire children to explore and innovate. Every area is carefully planned to offer opportunities to think, construct, challenge, and create. The natural environment is integrated as a vital part of learning.

Role of Families

We value families as essential members of our school community. By truly listening to our families, we strive to create the conditions that foster engagement.

Role of Educator

The educator is viewed as a partner in learning, alongside the children. By listening, observing, and documenting children's learning, the teacher is equipped to guide and facilitate experiences.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION & DAILY ROUTINE

Visit www.discoveryschoolpgh.com/program for detailed descriptions and sample daily schedules.

[Preschool Program](#)

[PreK Program](#)

[Kindergarten Program](#)

SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR (2023-24)

Up to date calendar will be posted on Brightwheel

August :

31: Welcome Day (T/Th, PreK, Kinder)

September:

1: Welcome Day (M/W/F, 5-day)

4: No School - Labor Day

5: First Day of School

October:

20: Staff Development (½ day for children)

November

6: Conferences - No School (MWF only)

7: Conferences - No School

22-27: Fall Break - No School

December

25-31: Winter Break - No School

January

1: Winter Break - No School

12: Staff Development (½ day for children)

16: MLK Jr. Day - No School

22 - 26: Re-enrollment Week

February

19: Presidents' Day - No School

March

8: Staff Development (½ day for children)

25-29: Spring Break - No School

April

1: Spring Break - No School

May

9: Conferences - No School

10: Conferences - No School (MWF only)

27: Memorial Day - No School

31: Last Day of School

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

At The Discovery School we believe that there is strength in our uniqueness. We value differences and respect all families as collaborators who contribute individual culture, distinctive experiences, and wisdom. We strive to cultivate a school community where all families and staff feel valued and respected.

We define diversity as inclusive of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, family structure, neurodiverse learning styles, age, physical or mental ability, national origin, immigration status, veteran status, physical appearance, religion, and language or any other basis protected by state or federal law. A diverse, inclusive, and respectful community enables us to better understand ourselves and others, value multiple perspectives, and work together in shaping a more compassionate and equitable world.

Our efforts toward inclusivity are rooted in our school mission, stating: The Discovery School engages families, honors children as unique beings, and inspires them to explore and construct meaning of the world around them.

Curriculum + Class Culture

We consciously construct curricula that develop social-emotional skills, build upon children's natural curiosity, encourage exploration of our natural environment, and foster creative expression. Our approach to developing early learning experiences is rooted in [developmentally appropriate practice](#) and [anti-bias education](#), as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. For example, our young children may engage in experiences such as:

- Reading books that reflect a variety of races, ethnicities, abilities, family structures, etc. without highlighting one specific representation. Thus, allowing children to "see themselves" with the intention of honoring the diversity of the class community.
- Incorporating music and movement from diverse cultures
- Providing play materials that represent diverse populations (ex. dolls that represent different races)
- Participating in "Family Share" and welcoming guest speakers that provide diverse perspectives, break through stereotypes, and share cultural traditions. (ex. family member coming in to teach the class about a special holiday tradition during Rosh Hashanah; female firefighter visiting to share about job duties, etc.)
- Engaging in "All About Me" projects that celebrate our individual differences, families and culture.

We honor our parents/guardians as their child's "first teacher", and commit to providing parents with transparency in regard to our curriculum. We encourage parents to have an open dialogue with your child's educator and communicate about any topics that may be sensitive to your family.

School Policies:

- **Enrollment Policy:** Admission is based on space availability, with preference first given to siblings of alumni and staff children, and then the online submission date of the New Student Application. Admission is granted on a “first come, first serve” basis, without discrimination in regard to race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, family structure, neurodiverse learning styles, age, physical or mental ability, national origin, immigration status, veteran status, physical appearance, religion, and language.
- **Financial Assistance:** The Discovery School is committed to keeping tuition rates as low as possible while still upholding the integrity and financial stability of our program. It is the desire of The Discovery School to serve as many families as possible with the finite resources available during any given school year. Financial Assistance is awarded on the basis of demonstrated eligibility and the total amount of financial funding available. The applications for financial assistance and admission are separate and in no case will a child be denied admission to the School because of implied, inferred, or demonstrated financial need.

Staff Commitment & Training

- **Staff Recruitment & Hiring Practices:** We have implemented a standardized job posting and application process, utilizing diverse outreach methods to broaden our recruiting efforts and expand our candidate pool. Additionally we have expanded our interview group to include multiple perspectives and utilize rubrics to support non-bias evaluation.
- **Staff Training:** We commit to on-going staff training, focused on culturally responsive teaching, anti-bias education and trauma informed practice. This training supports our staff in building understanding of diverse needs and perspectives, allowing them to plan learning experiences and respond to the needs of our school community.

Family & Community Engagement

- **Community Events:** Our community events honor our shared human values within a diverse greater community. Together we celebrate the values of inclusion, gratitude, imagination, loving kindness, and the joy of nature. Through thoughtful, anti-biased planning and communication we ensure that ALL children and families feel included in each celebration regardless of culture or belief system. Our community events revolve around seasonal celebrations.
- **Family Share:** Parents and other family members are encouraged to schedule a time to come in and share with the class. We are always eager to learn more about our families' cultural traditions, travel adventures, work experiences and special talents.
- **Promoting Community Events: Bulletin Board:** Our families are welcome to post flyers or notes to our community bulletin board that inform families about upcoming class or community events. This board is located at the base of the main stairwell in Building A. We reserve the right to remove posted materials that do not align with our community values.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Our educators meet or exceed the Pennsylvania Department of Education licensing requirements. All of the lead teachers hold a four-year college degree as well as a valid Instructional I or Instructional II teaching certificate in Early Childhood Education or Private Academic Teacher Certification in nursery/kindergarten. Many also have earned a master's degree in a field of education. All of our staff have ample experience working with young children in a supervised program. Most importantly, our staff members truly love and understand child development and are dedicated students to the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood learning.

COMMUNICATION

School-Wide (non emergency) Information:

The Discovery School communicates school-wide information with families in a number of ways:

- Parent Handbook
- Brightwheel communication
- Website
- Email/Notices sent home

Classroom Information:

- Monthly newsletters
- Brightwheel updates and communication
- Documentation in the classroom

Child Specific Information:

- Brief conversations or questions can be addressed during drop off and pick up times. If you would like to communicate about something private, or need longer than a few minutes, please feel free to schedule an appointment.
- Conferences are held two times per year - fall and spring. During conferences, the educator will share observations and documentation of the child's learning and developmental progress.
- During school hours, educators cannot accept phone calls. If you have a message for a teacher during school hours, please leave a phone message (412-712-7307) or send a Brightwheel message, and we will respond as soon as possible.
- Please communicate with the educator about any changes at home or within the family (i.e., parent on a trip, family member in the hospital, sick grandparent). These changes can affect your child, and it is useful for staff to be aware of these developments.

FOOD POLICY

(including snacks and birthday treats)

Children are not allowed to share food at school. Please talk with your child and help them understand that food sharing is not allowed. This is a preventative safety measure to reduce food allergy exposures. Hand washing and tabletop washing are additional risk-reduction measures that are used. Parents can help by ensuring adequate hand and face washing at home before arrival at school.

NO NUT POLICY: We ask that families not send any food or food product that lists peanuts and/or tree nuts on the ingredient label. The Discovery School has adopted a “No Peanuts or Tree Nuts at School” policy. We ask that parents carefully monitor foods being sent in (snack, birthday treat, party treat) to ensure that no peanuts, or other nuts are among the foods selected (allergy-wise, coconuts are considered a fruit and are okay). Food labels/ingredients may change over time, so it is always recommended that you read the label before purchasing snacks.

Food Allergies: In classrooms where children have potentially life-threatening allergies or sensitivities, The Discovery School will put additional safety measures into place that address the individual situation and are in compliance with the child’s emergency care plan. Safety measures may include banning a certain food/ingredient in the classroom or school.

Snack: Please send in an individual snack and water bottle each day. When possible, we will picnic outdoors. Please keep this in mind when packing - reusable containers and less messy snacks are helpful. Snacks should be packaged separately from a child’s lunch for those who stay the full-day.

Lunch: For children in our full-day classes, please pack a lunch from home.

Birthday Treats: We believe that birthdays are a very special time for children, and happily allow families to bring in a special treat or token to be sent home with each child. We ask that parents talk with the educator ahead of time to learn about any classroom allergies or food intolerances.

ENROLLMENT, WAITLIST AND WITHDRAWAL

Priority Enrollment Process:

The Discovery School sets two registration windows each year:

- priority deadline for currently enrolled children, siblings, and children of TDS staff (closes Jan. 31)
- open enrollment for new families (begins Feb. 1)

Currently enrolled families, TDS alumni families, and TDS staff families who return their Re-Enrollment/Sibling Form and registration fee by the deadline will receive first placement in the class of their choice for the following school year. In the event a family does not receive

admission to their first or second choice class, we will call the family to discuss other class options. The family may choose to place their child on the waitlist for that class in the event a space opens up.

Currently enrolled families who miss the re-enrollment deadline will not receive priority placement. These families will be included in the open enrollment process.

Open Enrollment Process:

New families to The Discovery School can register for our waitlist any time using our New Student Application form on our website. There is no registration fee to be placed on the waitlist. After completing the online form, we will contact your family via email to confirm your child's place on our waitlist for the preferred school year. Placement order on the waitlist is based upon the date on which the New Student Application is submitted.

Open enrollment begins in the first week of February. All families who have completed the New Student Application form by **February 1st** will be included in the open enrollment process. We will contact (email and call) our waitlisted families, in order based on the date the application was submitted, to notify you of all applicable class openings for the following year. Families will be able to choose their preferred class option at that time. Families have 2 business days to confirm or pass on the class space. Once you have confirmed your space in a class, a nonrefundable \$150 registration fee (\$75 of which will be applied to the 1st month tuition due May 1st) is required within one week to hold your child's enrollment in the class. Additional enrollment paperwork and nonrefundable enrollment fee are due May 1st. The enrollment fee will be applied to your September tuition.

Waitlist:

The Discovery School holds one waitlist for each upcoming school year that includes all classes. Children who do not receive a space in a class will have the opportunity to remain on the waitlist (for current and following school years). If a space opens up throughout the school year, we will contact our waitlisted families, in order, to fill the opening. Please note, we will not admit new children during our third trimester (after Feb. 23rd). Removal from the waitlist can be requested anytime via email to info@discoveryschoolpgh.com.

Withdrawal:

- Notice must be provided in writing at least 30 days prior to withdrawal. If a child is withdrawn, there will be no refund after monthly tuition has been paid.
- The registration and enrollment fees are not refundable.

TUITION PAYMENTS

Tuition is broken up into 9 equal payments. The non-refundable enrollment fee, amount equivalent to one month tuition, is due on **May 1** and will be applied to the September tuition. The remaining payments are due on the first of each month (Oct. - May). Parents/Guardians will receive an e-invoice via Brightwheel for all payments due, and are responsible for making payments on-time. Please log into your Brightwheel account to set up your payment method. Parents/Guardians may opt for the "auto-pay" feature to automatically pay the monthly tuition

(Oct. - May). Please note that there is a 2.9% convenience fee when using a credit card. There is no charge for ACH payments.

Enrollment is for the school year, September – May. The school budget must meet all financial obligations regardless of attendance of an individual child. If The Discovery School is open, families must pay full tuition to hold their child’s spot in a class. There will not be tuition reimbursement if your child must miss school due to sickness and/or personal reasons.

Preschool Classes	Monthly Tuition Cost	Yearly Tuition Cost
2 Days/Week (Tues/Thurs) 9am - 12:15pm	\$350/month	\$3,150/school year
3 Days/Week (Mon/Wed/Fri) 9am - 12:15pm	\$485/month	\$4,365/school year
5 Days/Week (Mon-Fri) 9am - 12:15pm	\$785/month	\$7,065/school year
Extended Day 12pm - 2:30pm	\$110/month (per wk day)	
Pre-Kinder Classes	Monthly Tuition Cost	Yearly Tuition Cost
5 Days/Week half day 8:45am - 12:00pm	\$850/month	\$7,650/school year
5 Days/Week full day 8:45am - 2:30pm	\$1,350/month	\$12,150/school year
Kindergarten Class	Monthly Tuition Cost	Yearly Tuition Cost
5 Days/Week full day 8:30am - 2:45pm	\$1,350/month	\$12,150/school year

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Discovery School is committed to keeping tuition rates as low as possible while still upholding the integrity and financial stability of our program. Financial Assistance is awarded on the basis of demonstrated eligibility and the total amount of financial funding available.

The applications for financial assistance and admission are separate and in no case will a child be denied admission to the School because of implied, inferred, or demonstrated financial need. The following guidelines have been adopted:

- Financial assistance grants are annual and based on available school funding. A family must apply for assistance each year.
- The [Discovery School partners with School and Student Services](#) (SSS) in our financial aid process. The Discovery School considers a family’s contribution based upon the evaluation completed by SSS and the funding available. Applications must be completed within the SSS portal before financial aid can be considered.
- Families with more than one child at The Discovery School only need to submit one application.
- Financial assistance is evaluated for those meeting the initial application deadline. However, priority is given to returning students requesting financial assistance. If funds are available, then applications can be considered after the initial deadline.

- Financial Aid is only available for tuition and not for other fees or incidental expenses.
- If parents are separated or divorced, all paperwork and tax documentation is required from both parents.
- The Discovery School maintains strict confidentiality. Faculty and the student body are not informed of financial aid decisions.
- Financial awards are made annually, but applied to accounts monthly and are subject to withdrawal in the case a family/student falls out of compliance with this policy.

REQUIRED FORMS FOR ENROLLMENT

Click on the links below to complete enrollment forms via Brightwheel by **May 1, 2023**:

- [2023-24 Enrollment Agreement](#)
- [2023-24 Enrollment Form & Permissions](#)
- [Child Health Assessment](#)
- [Dental Report](#) (for Kindergarten only)
- [FARE Form](#) (required ONLY for children with severe allergies)

POSITIVE DISCIPLINE POLICY

Our commitment to social-emotional learning as well as a developmentally appropriate play-based curriculum sets the foundation for positive social experiences. Educators explicitly teach and model appropriate social behavior, communicate clear boundaries, support mindfulness practice, and guide positive interactions among children and adults. Nurturing social-emotional development is essential to early childhood development, and helps children grow into self-assured learners in a community setting.

To promote prosocial interactions, our educators will:

- Carefully craft the learning environment to meet the needs of children
- Communicate clear expectations and boundaries
- Model and teach appropriate behaviors and self-regulatory strategies
- Use visual and/or nonverbal cues to support routines
- Use descriptive feedback to notice prosocial and learning behaviors (ex. "I noticed that you remembered to put your backpack in your cubby and your boots on the mat. You were able to take care of your belongings all by yourself!")

To support problem-solving or work through undesired behaviors, our educators will:

- Maintain emotional and physical safety of children.
- Redirect a child - supporting the child in substituting a productive activity in place of a nonproductive activity
- Actively listen to the child to determine an underlying emotion and/or cause of the behavior
- Support a child in regulating emotions if needed by practicing mindfulness strategies as well as providing comfort and/or physical space.
- Model and teach children to use sensitive and clear language to communicate needs and problem solve with peers.

If a child experiences a particularly challenging time, the school encourages parents and educators to work together and develop appropriate strategies. Behaviors that are emotionally or physically unsafe to self and others may require an individual support plan. In this situation, the educator will follow the following procedure:

1. The educator will observe and document a child's behavior.
2. The educator will discuss the child's behavior with a parent and inform him/her of learning-based strategies the teacher will implement.
3. After a predetermined amount of time, the teacher will follow up with the parent about how strategies are influencing the behavior.
4. If concern persists, a conference will be held with the teacher, parent, and director to discuss options to support the child in developing appropriate social skills.
5. Staff members will make reasonable effort to work with the child and his/her family to resolve behavioral concerns. At any time, an individual plan of action may need to be implemented, depending on the severity of the concern. If needed, educators may seek support from outside resources and/or ask parents to seek support.

PHYSICALLY HARMFUL BEHAVIOR: Physical behavior that results or could result in physical injury is handled in the following manner. The educator will first establish and maintain safety, and then follow up with any first aid/care that may be needed. The educator will then:

- Step 1: The first time a child demonstrates physically harmful behavior, the educator will communicate with both children's parents/guardians regarding the incident and document the behavior.
- Step 2: The next time a child demonstrates physically harmful behavior, the educator will communicate with both children's parents/guardians regarding the incident and document the behavior. The educator will develop an individual support plan in collaboration with the parent and director, outlining a specific goal and behavioral support strategies. The behavior plan will be revisited every two weeks to reflect on progress and supports.
- Step 3: If the physically harmful behavior occurs again, the child will be removed from the classroom and the parent/guardian will be called to pick up immediately. If the behavior continues, The Discovery School may require additional support be put into place to ensure safety of self and others (ex. one-on-one support person for child, etc.)

OUTSIDE SAFETY: Being a nature-based early childhood program, we utilize many acres of our nature campus, including unfenced areas, wooded trails, creeks and pond, etc. As a result, it is imperative that children are able to stay with the group and follow important safety directions.

NOTE: If a child's behavior poses a safety risk to self or others, The Discovery School reserves the right to dismiss a child from the program.

WHAT TO WEAR & BRING TO SCHOOL

Your child should wear:

- clothing appropriate for active and participatory play. Please **bring all outdoor gear in a labeled backpack.**
- sturdy, closed-toe, protective shoes that will enable them to run, climb, and hike with ease.

Rain: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rainsuit/Rain pants & jacket - Waterproof boots - Waterproof mittens (if cold) 	Cold Weather/Snow (below 40 degrees): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Snow pants - Warm coat - Snow hat - Waterproof mittens - Waterproof boots - Under layers
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Your child should bring:

- rubber-soled indoor shoes that the child can put on themselves.
- a backpack for personal belongings (should be large enough to contain all of their outdoor gear).
- a full extra set of seasonal clothes that fit – pants, shirt, underwear, socks and backup socks.
- extra diaper/wipes (if needed).
- nut-free snack and lunch (if participating in a full day program or extended day program).
- water bottle

NOTE: Please remember to label each item that your child brings to school (coat, hat, mittens, boots, etc.).

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

Classes	Arrival	Dismissal
Half Day Preschool	9:00am - 9:15am	12:15pm
Extended Day Program		2:30pm
Half Day PreK	8:45am - 9:00am	12:00pm
Full Day PreK	8:45am - 9:00am	2:30pm
Full Day Kinder	8:30am - 8:45am	2:45pm

Arrival & Dismissal Procedures:

- Drop-off can be completed by either parking and walking the child into the classroom or dropping the child off curbside with staff who will escort them to their room. For pick-up parents/caregivers will park and walk to their designated outdoor pick-up location on the north side of Building A to collect the child.
- Check in and out using the Brightwheel app.

- Late pick-up: Please send a Brightwheel message or call The Discovery School (412) 712-7307 to notify the school that you may be late and make arrangements.
- Early pick-up: When possible, please notify your educator ahead of time that you will be picking up your child early. You can pick up your child at the front office.

Authorized Pick-Up:

- Please update your child's Approved Pick Up list in the brightwheel profile if someone new is picking up your child. *We will require proof of identification the first time someone new picks up your child.*

CELEBRATIONS

Family Gatherings and Special Events

The Discovery School hosts three family gatherings throughout the school year (Fall Family Gathering, Winter Family Gathering, and Spring Family Gathering) to honor the season and strengthen the school community. In addition, we build in special classroom celebrations and projects throughout the school year, as well as participate in optional events within our greater community.

At The Discovery School our celebrations honor our shared human values within a diverse school community. Together we celebrate the values of inclusion, gratitude, imagination, loving kindness, and the joy of nature. Through thoughtful, anti-biased planning and communication we ensure that ALL children and families feel included in each celebration regardless of culture or belief system. We recognize and appreciate the importance of celebrating traditions as an integral part of a child's self and cultural identity. Families are welcomed and encouraged to share special traditions and celebrations of their culture with the class during a scheduled Family Share at any time during the school year.

Birthdays:

Your child's birthday is a very special time of year! Parents (or other special grown-ups) are invited to join our class during a scheduled time to celebrate. You may bring in a special book to read to the class, or share a special story or birthday tradition. You are also welcome to send in a birthday treat/token to be sent home with each child. Please contact your child's teacher ahead of time to schedule the day and time.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Germs spread quickly in an early childhood environment. All children and staff stay healthier when sick children stay at home. It is helpful to notify the teacher if your child will not attend school for illness or other absences.

We use information from Brightwheel to contact parents or another designated adult if a child develops symptoms of illness while in school. We will isolate the child in a comfortable, supervised place until he/she can be picked up.

If one or more of the following symptoms is present, we will call a parent to pick up the child

from school:

- temperature higher than 100°F
- nausea or vomiting
- red, pink, or crusted eyes
- stomach ache
- earache
- diarrhea
- rash/infection of skin
- headache
- thick or greenish mucus from nose
- cough
- sore throat

Antibiotic timeline: A child should be on antibiotics for at least 24 hours before returning to school. We strictly observe this health department regulation for children (and staff) to protect the health of everyone.

Return to school: Please keep your child home until they have been free of fever, vomiting and diarrhea for at least 24 hours without the use of medication.

We ask parents to notify the school immediately if a child is diagnosed with any communicable illnesses including COVID-19, flu, RSV, strep throat, pink eye, lice or any other illness common to a school environment. The notification allows The Discovery School to take appropriate action and inform parents within your child's classroom. Please note that we will not release the name of the child or family involved. We post "There has been a case of ____ reported ...".

The Discovery School follows CDC guidelines as they relate to COVID 19 and other communicable diseases. COVID 19 specific CDC information can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html>.

Medications for Allergies

- If your child has a diagnosed allergy that may result in a serious allergic reaction, these procedures must be followed:
 - A "[Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan](#)" aka FARE form must be completed by your child's health care provider.
 - It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to provide needed medication(s) (ie. *Epinephrine, Benadryl, Zyrtec*) by the child's first day of school.
 - Medications must be brought to the school office by the parent/guardian in the prescription-labeled container, to remain at school. Emergency Care Plan and medications will be kept with the classroom educator.
 - Medications will be discarded 1 week following the expiration date or at the conclusion of the school year unless the parent/guardian requests the return of the medication.

Screenings

- *Upon entering Kindergarten* the Pennsylvania School Health Law requires:

- **Physical and Dental examination:** Please provide documentation by your private health care provider and dentist. *Dental form can be found on Brightwheel.*
- **Height, Weight, Vision and Audio Screenings:** These screenings will be offered to our Kindergarten class during the school year by a Hampton School District certified school nurse. If you choose to have your child screened by a private provider instead, please provide appropriate documentation.
- **Vision Screenings:** This service will be offered to all students free of charge.
- **Speech and Audio Screenings:** will be offered to all preschool and pre-K students for a small fee by the provider.

SEXUAL ABUSE PREVENTION POLICY

The Discovery School (TDS) takes proactive steps to prevent any occurrence of sexual abuse or molestation in its workplace or at any activity sponsored by or related to it. To make this “zero—tolerance” policy clear to all, we have adopted mandatory procedures that employees, contractors, volunteers, and victims must follow when they learn of, witness, or experience sexual abuse or molestation. Additionally, all staff complete a variety of clearances to ensure they are permitted to work with children and receive training to appropriately recognize and respond to any signs of abuse. Volunteers also complete clearances and are supervised by staff while with children in our care.

Those reasonably suspected or believed to have committed sexual abuse or misconduct will be appropriately disciplined, up to and including termination of employment, as well as criminally prosecuted. No employee, volunteer, or other person, regardless of title or position has the authority to commit or allow sexual abuse or misconduct.

Reports should be made as soon as possible following the event but we recognize that some victims may feel unable to communicate the experience immediately and therefore we do not limit the time frame. Report to:

- Jessie Handron, School Director (jessie@discoveryschoolpgh.com or 412-559-6031)
- Katie Spencer, Business Manager (katie@discoveryschoolpgh.com or 412-712-7307)

SCHOOL CLOSURES & INCLEMENT WEATHER GUIDELINES

In the event of inclement weather or other emergency, The Discovery School may choose to delay opening, dismiss early, or close school for the day. All delays, early dismissals and school closures will be communicated by 7:00am via Brightwheel alert message.

EMERGENCIES

The Discovery School has an emergency preparedness plan that provides guidelines for a wide range of emergency situations. The Discovery School Emergency Preparedness Plan is located in the school.

Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

- **Immediate evacuation:** Students are evacuated to a safe area on the grounds of the facility in the event of a fire, etc. In case of inclement weather, we may proceed to our relocation facility: Central Elementary.
- **Evacuation to our Relocation Facility:** Total evacuation of the facility may become necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will be taken to a relocation facility: Central Elementary (4100 Middle Rd. Allison Park, PA 15101). If it ever becomes necessary to relocate, a sign will be posted on the door stating where we are located. If you're not sure how to get there, please ask for directions before there is an emergency.
- **Shelter In Place:** Sudden occurrences, weather or hazardous materials related, may dictate that taking cover inside the building is the best immediate response.
- **Lockdown:** An imminent danger either inside or outside our building may dictate that we follow our lockdown procedures.
- **Modified Operation:** May include cancellation/postponement or rescheduling of normal activities. These actions are normally taken in case of a winter storm or facility issue, such as utility disruptions.

Communication During an Emergency:

Depending on the emergency situation and the school's communication capabilities during and after the emergency, The Discovery School will inform and instruct parents/guardians about the emergency in the following order, until each parent/guardian is reached:

1. A Brightwheel alert message sent to primary family contact.
2. A text message sent to primary family contacts and emergency contact numbers.
3. A phone call to primary family contacts and emergency contact numbers. A staff member will call the emergency contact numbers for each student until an authorized adult is reached.

Once the emergency status has changed or is lowered, the emergency contact will receive a second communication from a staff member informing him/her of the change in status. We ask that you not call during the emergency. This will keep the main telephone line free to make emergency calls and relay information.

Please be sure to update your emergency contact information and approved pick up contacts on Brightwheel as needed. Your child will only be released to someone on your approved pick up list.

The safety of the children and staff is always the school's primary concern. Our school requires that staff members undergo emergency preparedness training twice per year, as well as remain actively certified in CPR and First Aid.

TICK PREVENTION AND TREATMENT

Parents Can:

1. Administer insect repellent (with Picaridin and/or Deet) especially around ankles, legs, and on clothing.
2. Dress children in pants, socks and sneakers.
3. Check children daily after school.
4. If a tick is found, remove it properly and notify the school and your pediatrician.

School Will:

1. Inform parents of risks and protective measures.
2. Perform basic tick checks after outdoor play/learning time.
3. If a tick is found, remove it properly and notify parents immediately.

Proper Tick Removal If you do find a tick embedded in your skin:

1. Use fine-point tweezers or tick removal tool
2. Grasp close to skin
3. Pull gently
4. Wash area with soap, water and antiseptic

TOILET TRAINING

It is not required that your child be potty trained to attend The Discovery School. We understand and respect that all children are unique, and reach various milestones at different times. If your child is not potty trained, please provide us with diapers/pull-ups, and an extra change of clothing.

When you feel your child is ready for potty training, we ask that you begin teaching at home during a weekend or school break. We will follow through and encourage your child while in care. Potty training will be done in a relaxed manner with the cooperation of the family.

The child **must** be kept in pull-ups at all times while going through the training process. Please keep in mind that the activity level at school can distract your child from responding to an urge to use the potty, more so than at your home. Therefore we request that you use pull-ups until your child can and will announce that he/she must use the bathroom and can control his/her bladder and bowels for a few minutes beyond that announcement.

PARENT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We recognize that early childhood is a special time for families, and we celebrate family involvement at The Discovery School. There are many diverse opportunities to get involved in your child's school experience. Educators regularly include parents in special celebrations, request volunteers for projects and/or excursions, as well as welcome parents who want to share a special tradition, interest or talent with the class. Some opportunities require clearances, while others do not.

- **Clearances Required:** field trip volunteer, in-class volunteer for celebration/project

- **No Clearances Needed:** event set up/takedown, snack donation, costume prep, creating table activities for family gatherings, campus excursion volunteer, etc.

Volunteer Clearances:

Volunteers who will be in direct contact with children in the school building are required to obtain all clearances (Child Abuse History Clearance, PA State Police Criminal History, FBI Fingerprint Criminal History). If you are interested in volunteering in the classroom, please submit clearances to info@discoveryschoolpgh.com.

1. Child Abuse History Clearance (www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home)

Submit copy of "PA Child Abuse History Certification"

2. PA State Police Request for Criminal History (<https://epatch.pa.gov/home>)

Submit copy of "Response for Criminal Record Check"

3. FBI Fingerprint Criminal History (<https://uenroll.identogo.com/>), enter service code: 1KG6V5

Submit copy of "Proof of Fingerprint Submission"

SCHOOL VISITOR POLICY

The safety of our students and staff is our foremost priority. Therefore our visitor policy is as follows during business hours (9:15am - 3:00pm, Monday - Friday).

1. Classroom visits must be arranged with a school employee in advance.
2. Upon arrival all visitors must enter through the front entrance of the main building, complete the Visitor Log, and provide a current government issued photo ID. A staff member will check these items and provide a Visitor Badge.
3. The Visitor Badge must be visible at all times while on school premises. All visitors must remain in approved areas only and will be escorted by a current school employee at all times. *Visitors who have submitted the volunteer clearances (above) in advance will be issued a distinctive Visitor Badge and will not need to be escorted by a staff member.
4. Students and staff are asked not to open doors for any person or group of people at a doorway. Visitors will ONLY be admitted through the front entrance of the main building.
5. Visitors who fail to secure a visitor pass will be asked either to register for one or leave campus immediately.
6. Visitors must sign out on the Visitor Log at the front entrance at the conclusion of their visit.

Our doors are open for parent drop-off in the classroom from 8:30am-9:15am. At 9:15am all doors are secured and the building cleared of all except staff, students, and registered visitors. Any parents remaining in the building after 9:15am will be escorted out by staff or asked to sign in as visitors.