

DISCOVERY SCHOOL

2023-2024 School Year



4600 Beach Boulevard
Jacksonville, FL 32207

904-346-5100

www.Hope-Haven.org



HOPEHAVEN

WHERE HOPE TRANSFORMS FAMILIES

Welcome to Discovery School at Hope Haven



We know families have many choices when it comes to selecting a school, and we are happy you chose Discovery School at Hope Haven. This handbook has been developed to provide you with important information necessary for your child to have a successful school year. Please take some time to familiarize yourself with our policies and procedures. We look forward to working with you and your child.



Our Program Philosophy

Children's experiences during early childhood have a considerable impact on their later growth and development.

Discovery School at Hope Haven strives to provide a high quality program for all children enrolled. We aim to offers a positive environment with emphasis on self-worth, responsibility, self-discipline, and respect for others.

Discovery School teachers use a team approach to design learning opportunities focused on the individual learning styles and abilities of each child. The team works with families, therapists, health care providers, and other professionals to prepare students for success in school and in life.

We welcome the opportunity to partner with you to provide your child high quality early intervention services that foster learning through play and academic enrichment.

Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.

~ Fred Rogers



Family Rights & Responsibilities

Your rights are to:

- Be involved in your child's education and care.
- Receive information regarding your child's progress and development.
- Share in decisions about your child's care and education.
- Have access to the classroom through visitation or observation.
- Be informed when a communicable disease or traumatic situation occurs.
- Be informed by your child's teacher about issues concerning your child.
- Be informed about changes in fees, teachers, or programming.

Your responsibilities are to:

- Be involved in your child's education and learning.
- Let the teachers know you are interested in your child's progress.
- Set goals and share in decisions about your child's learning.
- Share information about your child and home that may affect behavior.
- Discuss problems and concerns with the teacher first.
- Follow the school policies and consult the handbook as needed.
- Keep your child home when sick.
- Read to your child and spend time talking and playing together.
- Attend Individual Development Plan (IDP) meetings.



School Policies

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- All children enrolled in Discovery School must be 3 years of age on or before their first day of school.
- A \$150 deposit is due in order to secure your child's seat. Tuition must be paid monthly by the first day of the month.
- A health certificate (#3040) and immunization form (#680) signed by your child's physician must be on file within 30 days from the date of enrollment. Failure to provide these forms will surrender your child's place to another student.
- All enrollment forms provided (registration, financial, medical, etc.) must be completed and on file prior to the start of school.
- Students who qualify for scholarship funding must provide the school with a screenshot of their child's award number. Any fees not covered by the scholarships are the responsibility of the parent.

ALLERGIES

Please indicate on the enrollment form if your child has allergies (both food and non-food related allergies). All staff must be made aware of any potential allergies. This information will be posted in the classrooms and other relevant areas, such as the kitchen. If your child has a life-threatening allergy, the school program requires specific information on how to administer medical treatment to the child, as well as the appropriate supplies needed.



School Policies

ATTENDANCE

Discovery School at Hope Haven will provide school for 5 hours a day, 5 days a week for 180 days. All families will receive a current school year calendar upon enrollment. Children **must attend** class from 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. daily in order to receive credit for attendance and remain eligible for enrollment in the school program. Students **may attend** our program from 8:00 – 9:00 a.m. for enrichment and socialization at no additional charge. Excessive, unexcused absences may lead to removal from the program.

It is imperative that a parent/guardian sign each child in and out **every day** on the attendance roster with a full signature, noting the time. Please call Discovery School at (904) 346-5100, ext. 228 to let us know if your child will be absent. If a staff member is not available to answer the phone, please leave a voicemail.

Students are expected to be in school by 8:50 a.m. in order to begin lessons at 9:00 a.m. **Late arrivals and early departures are disruptive to the classroom environment.**

CLOTHING

Children should be sent to school in comfortable clothing and protective shoes that allow them to participate in all activities. We may get messy!

A complete change of clothes (pants, shirt, underwear, socks) must be sent to school. This will be kept in the child's classroom in case of accidents and should be labeled with your child's name. It is important to send clothes that are appropriate for the weather (shorts in summer, pants in winter, etc). Unless it is too cold, too hot, or rainy, the children will play outside daily. Plan clothing accordingly. Place your child's name in any coats or sweaters. Please help your child keep up with his or her belongings by practicing putting coats and jackets into backpacks at home.



School Policies

DISCIPLINE

Our classroom environment is designed to provide age-appropriate activities that allow students to be as independent as possible while providing support. Our small class size and low teacher-to-child ratio allow for more consistent reinforcement of appropriate behaviors.

We understand the importance of kind, respectful, and emotionally calm responses when students are struggling. The use of physical punishment, psychological abuse, and coercion of any kind is prohibited on the Discovery School campus. There is no situation in which these approaches are acceptable. Research shows that physical or emotional punishment demeans the child and does not support positive changes in the child's behavior over the long term. Instead, we implement research-based strategies to help students work through these difficult times. These could include redirection, planned ignoring, use of a calm down area, presentation of appropriate choices, reinforcement systems, etc. If behaviors are recurring, staff will look at the function of the student's behavior and work to develop an individualized positive behavior support plan which utilizes aforementioned strategies to address the behavior. This will be shared with staff and families to ensure that it is being implemented across settings.

When more significant behavior challenges occur, it may be necessary to convene our multidisciplinary team. This group of Hope Haven staff consists of highly trained professionals with a background in behavior, mental health, and/or education. This team will work with the family to determine how to best serve the student.



School Policies

DISCIPLINE (continued)

While the goal of this policy is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary measures, behaviors which are high frequency, high intensity, and/or place the student, their peers, or the staff in unsafe situations might warrant a student's removal from the program. This will not be considered, however, until the team deems that all other possible interventions have been exhausted and this is in the best interest of the child. If this occurs, our team will offer assistance to the family in accessing services and an alternate placement. Hope Haven complies with all federal and state civil rights laws.

This policy is communicated to staff during onboarding and reiterated throughout the year during professional development opportunities.

DROP-OFF/PICK-UP PROCEDURES

All parents are asked to park in the parking lot to walk your child inside the school. All students must be signed in and out by an **adult** listed on the enrollment paperwork. **During drop-off and pick-up the parking lot becomes very busy, so we ask that parents use caution and drive slowly for the safety of our students and all Hope Haven clients.**

Students may not be dropped off before 8:00 am and must be picked up by 2:00 pm if they are not enrolled in Hope After School.

Be sure to check your child's binder or folder daily for new items/ announcements placed there throughout the day. Each child **must** be signed out by a parent/guardian when leaving the facility. Children will only be released to individuals listed on the child's enrollment form. The adult picking up the child **must** bring a photo ID upon arrival for the staff to verify. **No exceptions will be made to this policy, so please share this information with any individuals picking up your child in your absence.**



School Policies

DROP-OFF/PICK-UP PROCEDURES (continued)

Early Drop-Off

Teachers are available to accept children enrolled in Discovery School as early as 8:00 a.m. Please refrain from attempting to enter the building prior to this time, as our staff is busy ensuring the building is secure and opening up the classrooms.

EMERGENCY CARE

If a child is injured during the school day, a teacher will fill out an incident report. In the event of a serious injury, a parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible. Although Discovery School staff have current First Aid and CPR training, we will contact 911 if professional assistance is needed. Families are responsible for maintaining current emergency contact information.

FINANCIAL POLICIES

All families will be required to sign a financial contract and comply with the financial policies outlined. School tuition and Hope After School fees are due according to the schedule provided during enrollment. For your convenience, Hope Haven accepts credit card payments as well as cash and checks. Payments can be made at the front desk in both buildings. Please do not hand payments to the school staff. If a payment has not been received by the due date, the students will not be permitted to return until payment has been made.

HEALTH DOCUMENTATION

Students are required by law to have a current Florida health form (HRS680 - Part A) with proof of up-to-date immunizations and a copy of their birth certificate on file in the school office. Students will not be allowed to attend our program until these documents are received.



School Policies

ILLNESS

While we understand that it is sometimes difficult for parents to make arrangements for their sick children, our program is for **well children only**. Many of our students and clients are medically fragile, and our health policy is strictly enforced. We appreciate your understanding regarding this policy.

For the health and safety of all our children and staff, please keep your sick child home.

Reasons to keep your child at home include, but are not limited to:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Sore throat
- Rash
- Symptoms of a contagious disease
- Thick nasal discharge, clear or colored
- Chronic cough

Students displaying any of these symptoms will be removed from class to rest, and a parent/caregiver will be contacted for pick-up. Please make arrangements for another adult to pick up your child if you are unable to do so. If we are unable to make contact with a parent/caregiver within 15 minutes, the staff will begin calling the emergency contacts listed on the student's enrollment form.

Please alert the school if your child develops a communicable disease (such as chicken pox, strep throat, pinkeye, head lice, etc.) so we may notify other families to help contain the infection. **Children must not have had a fever, vomiting, or diarrhea for at least 24 hours (without medication) before they will be permitted to return to the classroom.**



School Policies

INSECT SPRAY AND SUNSCREEN

Insects are part of life in Florida. Insect spray must be in the original container and labeled with your child's name. Sunscreen of SPF 15 or more is recommended during the warmer weather months. If you send sunscreen to school with your child, we must have a signed medication form in order to apply it, as needed.

LUNCH AND FOOD POLICIES

All students must bring lunch and a daily snack to school. Students enrolled in Hope After School will be given an additional snack in the afternoon. The children will also participate in making snacks during various units. Water will be provided during snack time. If you choose to send a snack, it should be labeled with your child's name.

If your child is on a special diet or has a food allergy, please notify the school staff.

Good nutrition is an important part of our program and, as such, we ask that only nutritious snacks and lunches be sent to school. Please refrain from sending caffeinated beverages or non-nutritious food items for lunch or snacks. It is difficult to convince a student to eat his or her healthy lunch if a friend is eating treats.

Be sure to put an ice pack in your child's lunch box to keep it cool or in a thermos to keep it warm. We are unable to heat up lunches for the children. We do not provide drinks, except for water. If your child needs something other than water to drink, it must be sent in the lunchbox.



School Policies

MANDATED REPORTING

The staff members at Hope Haven are mandated reporters, and are **required** to report any signs of child abuse or neglect. Staff members are prohibited from verbally or physically abusing any child in our care.

MEDICATION

If a child requires medication during the day, documentation must be provided as to the time and quantity of the medicine needed. A medication form provided by Discovery School must be filled out and signed by a parent/guardian. All medication must be in the original container. The medication should be placed in a small bag, labeled with the child's name. This bag will be kept in a locked cabinet. No medication (including sunscreen and/or bug spray) will be administered without written consent from a parent or guardian.

REST TIME

All students will have a rest time during the school day.

RELATED SERVICES

Hope Haven provides a multi-disciplinary approach to the education and treatment of all children. For children who require service outside of the classroom setting,

Hope Haven is able to share lists of local providers who offer:

- Speech/Language Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Behavioral Assessment and Services (ABA Therapy)

Hope Haven offers:

- Academic Assessments/Support/Tutoring



School Policies

RELATED SERVICES (cont'd.)

- Mental Health Services, such as Counseling and Parent Training
- Educational Assessments and Advocacy
- IEP Assistance and Advocacy

TOYS AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Unless requested by a teacher, personal toys should be kept at home. If personal toys are brought to school, the child will be asked to keep them in their backpack until the end of the day. Discovery School staff is not responsible for lost or broken items from home.

ENRICHMENT THERAPIES

Throughout the school year, your student will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of fun and beneficial therapies. These may include Pediatric Recreation Therapy, Art Therapy, Music Therapy, Pet Therapy, etc. and are a valuable part of our program. Because of this, all students are automatically enrolled in these sessions. Please let us know if you do not wish for your child to participate.

Please note: Some therapies will require you to sign an additional consent form before a student may attend.



School Policies

IDPs and PROGRESS MONITORING

Individualized Development Plans (IDPs) will be developed for each student in Discovery School and will highlight current functioning across several domains. Student specific goals will also be developed and tracked throughout the year.

Our staff neuropsychologist will also develop abbreviated assessments which may include cognitive, language, and academic components. The results, along with teacher collected data, will be used to inform IDPs. It will also be used to plan overall program improvements aimed at maximizing student growth.

A multidisciplinary team meeting will occur several times throughout the school year and will allow families to meet with their student's support team to discuss strengths and opportunities for growth. We encourage you to attend each of these meetings, as they will be a great opportunity for us to work together to find solutions to best support your child.

We will also be available to answer any questions you might have. Parents will be provided a written copy of all IDPs and abbreviated assessment results at least twice per school year.



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