



2016

FAMILY HANDBOOK

HORIZONS

Student Enrichment Program
at Norwalk Community College
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**Horizons Student Enrichment Program
at Norwalk Community College**

FAMILY HANDBOOK

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HORIZONS@ NCC MISSION STATEMENT

Horizons builds brighter futures for K-12 students from low-income families by creating year-round academic, artistic, and athletic opportunities, nurturing potential, cultivating a safe and supportive community, and inspiring individual dreams.

WELCOME TO HORIZONS!!

For those of you returning to us, thank you for your continued confidence. For those of you new to the program, you are about to have a great experience watching your child grow and achieve new and wonderful things.

The following handbook will help you know how we plan for the health and safety of your child when he/she is at Horizons. If you have questions about any part of it, please feel free to contact us.

These are some things we recommend you do in order for your child to have a successful experience at Horizons:

- Go over behavior rules with your child.
- Remind your child how important it is to follow the rules.
- Have an authorized adult be there to put your child on the bus and meet him/her when he/she gets off the bus.
- Be available to talk to us if requested.
- Take a little time every day to ask about what happened at Horizons.
- Let us know if something is happening in your child's life that could affect his/her behavior or mood.
- Get your child ready for Horizons every day; expect him/her to take part in all activities every day (swimsuit and athletic shoes). **AND FLIP FLOPS IN THEIR BACKPACKPACKS FOR SWIMMING.**
- Make every effort to attend your child's Closing Ceremony

What happens this summer will be the result of your effort and involvement and the hard work of your child and our staff. It is a partnership that we are so glad you are a part of. We look forward to a great summer!

Sparkle & Shine!

Catherine Neiswonger
Director

Mission

Horizons strives to minimize the summer decline in students' performance and maximize their performance and self-confidence during the school year. This is done by quality instruction provided in small groups and through enrichment activities to extend and enhance learning opportunities over a six week period during the summer.

HORIZONS

STUDENT ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Horizons! We encourage open lines of communication. We believe that adults of the community will contribute to the success of Horizons. Feel free to openly discuss ideas and issues with each other and with us. We hope you will actively participate in your child's Horizons experiences.

Horizons communicates with families in the following ways:

Communications:

- Telephone {203-857-7396} or {203-857-7143} or Fax {203-857-3386}
- Individual, Small Group, and Whole Group Meetings
- Horizons Family Handbook
- Horizons Master Calendar
- Event Flyers (usually English and Spanish)

In order to keep you informed of, it is very important you notify Horizons of any address or telephone changes.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

□ Summer Program

The Summer Program runs for six weeks, from June 25th through August 1st. It's an intensive Pre-Kindergarten through 1st Grade program. Set on the campus of Norwalk Community College, the Summer Program gives 36 children a chance to have new experiences, meet new friends, take part in academic classes, sports, eat nourishing breakfasts and lunches, swim* (off campus), go on cultural trips, and become part of a diverse family of caring teachers and staff. Many Horizons high school students and graduates return to the Summer Program as assistant teachers, acting as role models for their younger peers. All of our students benefit from a low 4 to 1 student/teacher ratio and from the support services of reading specialists and social workers. Horizons strives to minimize the summer decline in students' performance and maximize their performance and self-confidence during the school year. *Swimming is a core piece of the program. Students receive instruction from Certified Lifeguards.

□ Parent Program

Studies have shown that active parent involvement contributes to success in the classroom and positive social behavior. Horizons encourages parents to get involved as we develop a Parent Council, a group of volunteers who meet several times a year. The council sets its own agenda for the year in conjunction with the Horizons Director. The council brainstorms ideas for parent workshops and is also a wonderful opportunity to connect with other Horizons parents. Other opportunities to participate may include parent workshops, and a variety of volunteer opportunities. We ask parents to give back by volunteering at least once during the summer and as we grow once during the school year. Your

participation in our various programs throughout the year allows us to get feedback on what we offer, thus enabling us to serve our students better.

◇ **Staff Qualifications**

The Summer Program is by the Director. Our teachers teach in classrooms during the school year. Teacher Assistants may also teach during the school year or may be recent graduates from NCC. Volunteers are qualified college &/or high school students.

◇ **Admissions**

Horizons serves students from low income families in lower Fairfield County in Kindergarten through Third Grade. New students applying to Horizons are not guaranteed entry into the program. Once we receive an application, an information sheet goes out to individual schools about each applicant. We make our decisions in early March and letters are mailed. Once accepted into the program, Horizons students must stay with us through the 8th Grade. Our office requires a completed Re-Enrollment form (formerly know as the re-application form) and a registration fee each year from each Horizons student due on February 15th. The forms/applications are mailed to families in January. We must have your child's medical evaluation forms by May 1st, in order for your child to be able to participate in the program.

Admissions Forms/Applications Deadlines:

- Horizons Student **Annual** Re-Enrollment Form/Registration Fee (\$30 + \$20/each sibling) **February 15th**
- New Student Application (Grades K-7) **March 15th**
- New Student Registration Fee (\$30 + \$20/each sibling) **May 1st**
- Annual Report of Horizons Student Health History Form **June 1**

◇ **Attendance**

As Horizons is a full scholarship program, your child's consistent attendance is considered your payment for the program. **Poor attendance and repeated tardiness are important determining factors in admission for future years at Horizons.** **If your child cannot make the 6-week commitment for the entire Summer Program, please apply another year.** If your child is too ill to attend, call Horizons. A doctor's note is required in order for the absence to be excused.

◇ **Arrival and Departure Policy**

The Horizons summer program begins with the students' arrival at 8:15 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m. Bus transportation brings students to and from stops near their homes. A family-designated adult is expected to be at the stop to take a K-3 student from the bus, unless other arrangements are separately authorized. Students who are not met at the stop will be returned to the school. The student will be placed in care of the Horizons Program Director or another adult school staff member on duty, and a fee (\$1/minute) will be charged. Attempts to contact the family will be made. Should no family member appear to pick up the student, Social Services will be contacted to take supervision of the student.

If a student needs to be picked up by an authorized person during the day, the parent must call the office before noon and the authorized person must sign him/her out with the Horizons office.

◇ **Transportation Policy**

The deadline for address changes for bus stop pick-up and drop-off is June 1st. **Once a bus stop is established for your child, it can not be changed.** Please make sure that we have your address needs on time.

A student may be dropped off at his/her designated bus stop unaccompanied if the student is in grades 4-8.

◇ **Food Policy**

Each student will be offered breakfast, lunch, and snack each day of the summer program. Food and drink that is served complies with the nutritional requirements of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The campus is a **NUT FREE** environment.

Returning students who are no longer eligible for free or reduced lunches during the regular school year will be asked by Horizons to **pay a fee** to help defray program expenses.

◇ **Clothing Policy**

Horizons summer students need to have:

- athletic shoes/sneakers should be worn.
- backpack/bag **PLEASE PUT A PAIR OF FLIP FLOPS IN BACKPACK ON SWIM DAYS.**
- bathing suit (one-piece for girls)
- towel
- shorts and t-shirts (no belly shirts or bare mid-riffs)

There is space available for the summer session in each student's classroom to store these belongings

◇ **Confidentiality Statement**

Young children do not have the ability or the maturity to know which home matters are okay to discuss in public and which are private matters and are not. Horizons staff respects the privacy of the families of children. Any personal information inadvertently disclosed by children attending Horizons is treated as strictly confidential and repeated to no one unless the health or well-being of the child could be endangered by withholding such information. Under such a circumstance, the matter would be disclosed in a confidential manner only to those with a need to know and/or an authorized official of Horizons.

Student Records

At Horizons, we understand the importance of protecting the rights of children, their families, and our teachers. This practice of maintaining the confidentiality of verbal information and written records is a basic policy of our program. Horizons reveals/shares identity of and/or information about students and/or their families only in cases of professional necessity. Horizons staff respects the confidentiality of verbal and written reports of children, families, and teachers in the classroom, the school, and in their non-work environments. Your child's school will be asked to provide us with information regarding your child, including, report cards. You have signed a release form in order for the school to pass this information on to the Horizons office.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline Policy

Horizons makes the final decisions about all discipline issues. Decisions may range from reprimand to expulsion. In all cases, parents/guardians are asked to be involved in the process.

◦ **Citizenship**

All children are expected to behave politely and to respect school property and buses. Occasionally a problem will arise, and the classroom teachers will address the problem. The Director may also need to be involved. In all instances, Horizons will work with the parents to change unacceptable behavior and to teach each child the value of self-discipline. Discipline procedures vary according to age and the severity of the misbehavior. Our staff will use the behavior modification technique of time-out, where a student must sit or stand away from a group until the teacher and the child decide she/he can behave properly. We may also use behavior contracts, a written agreement between Horizons and the family, spelling out expectations and outcomes for the student, the teacher, and the parents/guardians.

◦ **Discipline**

The Horizons program provides a nurturing environment built on a structure of loving discipline, limits, and standards of behavior which we believe are essential to the development of the child's positive self-image.

We emphasize the following in working with the children:

- We give warnings before changing an activity
- We state directions in a positive manner and avoid using "no" and "don't" as much as possible
- We substitute an acceptable activity for one that is not permitted
- We redirect aggressive behavior to a quiet activity
- We explain results rather than using threats
- We remove children from a situation when they can not cooperate or use materials correctly
- We set definite limits and use short, simple directions
- We expect each child to follow the directions and rules of the program

We do not permit the following disciplinary actions:

- Physical punishment of any kind
- Verbal abuse of any kind
- Forcing or withholding drinks, food, or rest periods

◦ **Non-Verbal Problems**

Horizons does not tolerate aggression, such as hitting, biting, or kicking. First-time occurrences of these behaviors will typically be handled within the classroom by the teacher staff including written documentation. If these types of behaviors recur or continue, the Horizons Program Director must be notified. He/She will advise the Executive Director, and they will determine what measures will be taken.

o **Procedure for the Termination of a Child from Horizons**

In all instances, Horizons will work with parents/guardians to change unacceptable behavior or any existing problems, and to teach the child the value of self-discipline. Horizons reserves the right to take whatever action is deemed necessary in order to provide a safe environment for each participant. In the event that a student must be terminated from the program, the Program Director and/or the Executive Director will provide the parent/guardian with a written explanation defining the reasons for termination.

SAFETY

The Director and teaching staff are responsible for children at all session times. Horizons teachers will keep a daily attendance record and provide them to the Director. Any child checking in or out of any Horizons session with an authorized person must do so with the Teacher or Director.

› **Drugs, Alcohol, and Firearms**

Possession and/or use of unprescribed/illegal drugs, alcohol, drug paraphernalia, firearms, or any other type of weapon on school property is against Horizons policy. Use or possession will be grounds for immediate dismissal and/or any other action deemed necessary.

› **Missing Child Plan at Norwalk Community College Campus:**

- Staff reports the missing student to the Horizons Director
- The Director calls the campus security immediately to check the building and area around the school
- Local authorities (local police or state troopers) will be contacted by campus security .
- The Director calls the parents/guardian or emergency contacts
- The Director continues to search until police arrive, then makes himself/herself available to assist
- The Executive Director informs NCCS Headmaster and Horizons Board Chair

During times away from Norwalk Community College Campus:

- Attendance is taken often
- The teaching staff and Director briefly search for the missing student
- The Director or his/her designee calls the police immediately
- The Director or his/her designee calls the Parent/guardian
- The teacher staff and/or Program Director will not leave the area or the other students unattended

› **Injury Prevention Plan**

- Horizons staff is responsible for regular inspection of building and playground
- Horizons staff is responsible for immediate repairs
- A playground safety plan is followed by all staff
- Staff to student ratio is kept at the level that Horizons decides is safest for the students
- Annually, the Program Director will review all Horizons accident reports for a pattern of injuries. If a pattern becomes apparent Horizons will change activities and/or rules to prevent these injuries from reoccurring. The Director will be a part of any activity change discussion resulting from any injury pattern

- Horizons staff is responsible for regular checks of the inside and outside of the building for potential hazards such as broken equipment, holes in the ground, uncovered outlets, etc.
- Two Horizons staff members will be on the playground with the children at all times. These staff members will be positioned in such a way that all of the children are well supervised.
- Horizons staff is responsible for replacing resilient surfaces before summer sessions
- Horizons staff will lock up cleaning supplies and other dangerous items when students are present
- Horizons staff will have access to a compliant first aid kit
- Horizons staff know where the nearest fire extinguisher and emergency exit from the building are located

RULES AND SAFETY

Horizons staff and/or Program Directors review all the rules with the students on the first session day

- **Playground Safety Plan**

- Horizons staff know the playground safety rules
- Horizons staff on duty will walk around to maintain constant supervision of the children playing
- Horizons staff and school site personnel check regularly for debris, broken glass, etc.

- **Maintenance**

- Horizons staff notify Program Director of any maintenance problems
- Maintenance problems are repaired by our NCC maintenance department.

- **Fire Safety Policy**

Emergency exit paths are posted by all the classroom doors. Horizons staff will follow fire safety plans in the case of suspected fire. During a fire drill, Horizons staff will follow the fire safety plans to exit the building to a gathering area where attendance will be taken.

- **Field Trip Policy**

At the time of registration, parents sign a permission form that includes field trip and activities permission. Information about individual field trips will be provided by the Horizons teaching staff.

On the day of a field trip, students are asked to be on time and ready to depart at the designated time. The Horizons Program Director and/or teaching staff will have a list of the students on the field trip, together with emergency authorizations and student information sheets for each student, as well as a first aid kit. Any food and/or drink will be properly stowed in coolers. Only water will be offered while on the bus. If a student arrives late and class is on a field trip, Horizons reserves the right to send the student home.

Safety Rules for Field Trips:

- Students must stay with the group
- The Horizons teaching staff will instruct the group when it is time to cross a street, roadway or path
- The buddy system is used when crossing a street
- Students and adults walk slowly when crossing the street
- Horizons teaching staff will count the number of students often to be sure everyone is accounted for
- If a student cannot respond to the rules, he/she may be assigned one adult alone (if available) or picked up by the Executive Director and brought back to the NCC campus

- **Transportation Safety Policy**

Safe and dependable transportation is our main concern. Full cooperation from each student and family is needed. If the driver finds a student's behavior to be unsafe, the driver will report it to the Director who will contact the student and family and provide notice to the Director. Appropriate action

will be in the sole discretion of the Horizons personnel. Students may lose their spot on the bus for the summer.

- **Bus Safety**

The safety of your child is the primary concern of everyone involved in the Horizons Program. The following bus rules have been written with this in mind. Please make sure your child knows and understands the bus rules and the consequences for not following them. Thank you for your cooperation.

Bus Safety Rules:

- Students are expected to obey the drivers and bus monitors
- Courtesy to fellow students, teachers/assistants, and bus drivers is required
- Younger students should ride in the front of the bus
- Students are to remain in their seat at all times and keep hands and head inside the bus
- Students must keep their belongings on their laps, unless the seat next to them is vacant
- Students must avoid turning around to talk with those behind them
- Students must talk in a quiet manner
- Profane language is not allowed
- Nothing can be thrown either inside the bus or from the bus
- Food, candy, chewing gum and drinks are not allowed on the bus
- Smoking is not allowed on the bus
- Ipods, CD player, and musical instruments are not to be played on the bus
- Remain seated until the bus has stopped completely and the driver opens the door.
- In case of emergency, remain seated and wait for instructions from the driver.

Disciplinary Action for Violating Bus Rules:

1. Bus rules infractions will be reported to the program director by the bus driver or bus monitor.
2. A student may be suspended from riding the bus for violating the bus rules. If this happens, the family is responsible for getting the student to the program. If student cannot get here, those absences are considered unexcused.
3. Suspensions are determined by the Director.

- **Swimming Safety Rules**

Swimming is a very important part of the Horizons program for all ages. Students receive instruction from Certified Lifeguards. All Horizons students swim daily during the summer session. Safety rules for the pool are listed and posted in the pool area. A staff-to-child ratio of 1 to 8 is maintained for all swimming groups. Lifeguards are in attendance.

Pool safety rules include:

- Walk, no running or jumping
- Pushing or horseplay is not permitted
- Glass or metal objects must stay outside the pool grounds
- Alcohol is not permitted
- Non-swimmers in pool area must stay in shallow end of pool
- Diving is not allowed except during an organized class period

In the afternoon, when students arrive at the donated swimming pool, at the onset of the swimming lessons, the instructor reviews all of the safety rules with the students. Before a student may enter the water his/her swimming skills will be determined by the instructor. During the lessons, Horizons staff and the instructor account for the students by constantly taking head counts. The instructor has a whistle or other audible signaling device to warn the students of any danger. Emergency procedures prescribed by the swimming venue will be followed in the event of an emergency.

HEALTH

Medical Documentation

All students must have all requested information and permission forms fully completed and on file at the Horizons school site. Horizons information and permission form copies will be with the teaching staff at all times during sessions.

Please keep Horizons informed of changes in work and emergency phone numbers!

Δ Health and Emergency Procedures

Medications must be brought to school, given to the Horizons Program Director in a medication container, labeled with the student's name, the name of the doctor, the name of the medication, the dosage of the medication with the instructions clearly printed on the container. The medication will be stored in a locked area. If a student becomes sick during a session, his/her temperature may be taken and the parents/guardian or emergency contact will be notified, if necessary. In the event the student needs to go home, the student may remain out of the classroom until his/her parents or designated emergency contact arrives.

In an emergency, a reasonable effort will be made to contact the parents/guardian/emergency contacts. Should this fail, the student will be taken to the nearest physician for treatment. Any time there is a serious accident or injury at the school, the parents/guardian/emergency contacts will be notified as quickly as they can be contacted. If the injury is minor, the parents/guardian will be notified at the end of the day. In all instances Horizons teaching staff and/or Program Director keeps injury logs that are reviewed annually.

Examples of serious incidents include broken bones, unconsciousness, deep cuts requiring stitches, concussions, allergic reactions, or foreign objects in the eye, ears, or nose.

Examples of minor accidents or injuries include small scratches, bruises, small cuts or scrapes, or insect stings without allergic reaction. Horizons staff members must be made aware of students who have bee or other insect allergies so that immediate action will be taken in these cases. This information must be listed on the health history and immunization form and on the student information form.

Δ Administration of Medication

The policy and procedures for medicines administration apply to all students in Horizons sessions. Medicines may not go back and forth between home and Horizons. If you ask, pharmacies will provide a separate medicine container for Horizons session use. Unopened over-the-counter medicines may be provided for labeling and storing at school.

Narcotics will not be administered at school.

Medication orders do not carry over from one Horizons year to the next. A new medication order is required for each year.

We recommend that medication be given at times other than Horizons session hours.

Short-Term Request for Medication Administration

If a child must take medication during the session hours for 10 days or less, Horizons will accept a correctly and currently labeled pharmacy container and not need a doctor's order. Medication will be administered for no longer than 5 days on a short term request. Antibiotic medication will be administered on a short term request for up to 10 days. A Medication request Form, if required, must be signed.

Long-Term Request for Medication Administration

A doctor's order is required for medicines to be given for longer than 10 days, including over-the-counter medications. The doctor's order must state how often and how long the medicine is to be given, along with the name and dosage of medicine. An order may be given for the duration of the Horizons session. A Physician's Request for Administration of Medication, if required, must be completed by the ordering MD, signed by a parent/guardian.

HEALTH POLICIES

∞ **Fever and Vomiting**

If your child has a fever, please keep him/her at home until he/she is fever-free for 24 hours. If your child has vomited in the morning, please do not send him/her to school that day. If your child becomes ill, develops a fever at school (99 degrees and over), or vomits, Horizons will call you (or your emergency contact) to pick up your child.

∞ **If You Do Not Want Horizons to Seek Treatment for Your Child**

To deny permission for Horizons Staff and/or Hospital and Emergency Staff to give medicine or seek and give treatment without your specific permission, you must give Horizons a written, dated, and signed statement saying exactly what you do not permit. **By submitting this statement, you release Horizons of all responsibility and liability for your child's well-being when any kind of medical attention is required.**

∞ **Policy for Reporting Abuse and/or Neglect**

Horizons is required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the Connecticut Department of Children & Families (CT DCF). Horizons will document any suspicion of child abuse and/or neglect. In some instances, the Program Director and/or Executive Director will discuss evidence of non-physical abuse or neglect with the parents/guardians. In the case of obvious physical abuse, the Horizons is required by law to notify CT DCF. Horizons is also required by law to follow procedures in reporting suspicion of child abuse and neglect. In any case, of suspicion reported, the Executive Director will be notified immediately. CT DCF will investigate and decide whether or not abuse and/or neglect have happened.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

∞ **Medical Emergency Procedure**

All medical emergencies will be treated immediately. A medical emergency includes:

- Cardiac arrest / Respiratory arrest
- Unresponsiveness / Unconsciousness
- Sudden Collapse
- Seizures
- Hemorrhage or severe bleeding
- Choking
- Asthma attack or wheezing
- High fever / vomiting / diarrhea in young children
- Obvious or suspected fracture
- Any suspected head, neck, or back injury
- Heat stroke / heat exhaustion
- Suspected or known overdose or poisoning
- Burns
- Tooth / teeth knocked out or loose
- Severe abdominal pain
- Allergic reactions --- suspected or documented
- Eye injuries

∞ **Fire Procedures**

Emergency evacuation routes are posted by all the classroom doors. During a fire drill, Horizons staff members will follow the established fire policy to evacuate the building.

Once evacuation has occurred, no child or staff will be permitted to re-enter any building until the fire alarm has been turned off and school officials signal that it is safe to enter.

∞ **Plumbing Failure, Flooding, Bomb Threats, Natural Disasters Procedures**

During any of these incidents, Horizons teacher staff will follow established procedures to insure safety of children.

If the building must be evacuated, students and staff will assemble in their designated fire drill areas, and attendance will be taken.

∞ **Dismissal to parents if an emergency requires prompt dismissal of students**

In the event of a national/regional emergency that would require prompt dismissal of students, Horizons parents will be notified via phone. The students will report to their homerooms at this time. If there is more than one child in the same family, the students should report to the classroom of their youngest sibling. Parents/Guardians or designated individual for emergency pick up are to arrive at the lobby area of Child Development Lab School to pick up child. The teaching staff will stay until all children are picked up. No children will be left unattended.

HORIZONS HISTORY

The Horizons Student Enrichment Program was founded on the NCCS campus in 1964. From the beginning, the program emphasized a full day of academic classes and enrichment activities including athletics, field trips, and a swimming program.

Conceived as a program that would reach out and serve children from low-income communities, the Horizons mission remains essentially unchanged today. Horizons is an enrichment program designed to encourage students from a diverse low-income population to explore new worlds and to realize their full potential. Guided by a professional faculty in a nurturing environment, the program emphasizes academics, the arts, intramural sports, and social growth. Horizons is committed to the development of the whole child through experiences that enhance self-esteem, build problem-solving skills, and encourage a lifelong interest in learning.

In 2013 Norwalk Community College became one of 15 affiliated programs located at independent schools across the country.