

SOLA

Parent Handbook

2010-2011



Contact Information:
216 Pine Grove Drive
Wilmington, NC 28403
Solaschools.com
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910-798-1700

**In the event of an emergency during school hours please call:
910-352-4172**

2010-2011 Calendar

August	25	First Day of School
September	6	Closed
November	1	Half Day SOLA Closed at 12:30
	2	Closed
	11	Closed
	24-26	Closed
December	20	Closed
	21-31	Closed
January	17	Closed
	21	Half Day SOLA Closed at 12:30
	24	Closed
February	21	Closed
March	24	Half Day SOLA Closed at 12:30
	25	Closed
April	18-22	Closed
May	30	Closed
June	3	Last Day of School for Morning Programs
	8	Last Day of School for Mid-day & Afterschool

Inclement Weather Policy

During inclement weather, we will follow the County Schools decisions about closures and re-openings. In some instances we may make a decision other than the County and will post these on our voice mail message at SOLA. *A 2-hour county school delay will result in closings for the morning programs.*

Closing and delay announcements are also posted online at www.nhcs.k12.nc.us and on New Hanover County's emergency line: 254-4411.

SOLA's Top Beliefs

- We must use words.
- We are all friends here and we must have kindness and respect for everyone in our classroom.
- Children will be encouraged to model their own behavior according to what is being expected at any given moment. We offer plenty of time to march to your own drum and lead the parade... However, sometimes in life we must follow and allow others to lead!
- Children are encouraged to appreciate each other's strengths and differences. Again, we are all friends; we find each other a valuable part of the group. If someone was not themselves for the day, we all know they will have better tomorrow and maybe sooner! We always find a way to call out the best in each of our friends.
- Children are encouraged to understand that there are some things we all must work on and learn to do better.
- Children are shown how to be supportive of the positive we will always ask the children to evaluate their own behavior as well as the behavior of others in an objective non-judgmental way.
- Our emphasis will always be on setting the child up for success and employ the motto of fresh new starts in every new moment. We encourage the kids to get back to being friends as soon as they talk it out.
- It is our goal to reach every child where they are, find out what makes them tick and to never give up.
- Children will be encouraged to tell others how hurtful words and actions make them feel.
- Children will be encouraged to appreciate each other's strengths and differences.

SOLA Expectations for Teachers, Parents & Adults

- Adults in the environment are expected at all times to be calm, nurturing role models the children.
- We will offer another lesson to a child who may be struggling with a specific task.
- We communicate with all SOLA families on a regular basis. Communication will be as follows: First, in person, secondly through weekly folders, and finally by email.
- It is beneficial to your child to keep us in the loop about changes to the family structure or other circumstances. We will always keep your personal life confidential. However, it is helpful for us to know what is going on home. Likewise, we need to be informed of past extreme circumstances, for new students.
- You are expected to fulfill your financial obligations to SOLA regardless of whether or not you receive a bill.
- As adults at SOLA we try our very hardest to never call a child from across the room and expect the same of the children. Our goal is to train ourselves to always walk directly to the child before speaking to them. This respects the rights of other's concentration. We must all respect each other's activities and conversations by walking around them, not through them and using non-competing volumes.
- We always attempt to use positive language vs. negative with the children. Meaning we refrain from overusing the words, NO, Don't, Stop, so that when we do use them, it's serious! We try to phrase directions of what we want instead of pointing out what we don't want. Example: "Joe, please come to the brown rug" instead of, "Joe, don't go in the art room." Or "Scissors are only for cutting paper." vs. "Stop cutting that!"

Arriving & Departing at SOLA

Please arrive on time so your child has time to do what they need to do for themselves. Anything a child is able to do on their own, please allow them to do.

When you enter SOLA during a group time or work time please know that we are serious about keeping our flow and protecting the environment that we work hard to establish. If you arrive during a group time please wait outside the classroom until the group time has been completed; entering can be disruptive and distracting to the other children.

We encourage quick goodbyes. The best place to say goodbye is at the classroom door. We will call you if your child does not calm down within 30 minutes.

Mid-day drop-offs begin at 12:30. After-school drop-offs begin at 2:45.

Make sure your pick up authorization is current on your registration form. We need to be informed of any changes in your child's pick up person. It's our policy to get an ID from anyone we don't recognize.

If you are running late please call SOLA and let us know.

When school is over we do not offer a play/social time for kids and parents. NC State Law limits us to 4-hour programs for children. We do encourage you to go to the park if you'd like to visit and play. It is necessary for families to leave promptly at your assigned dismissal time. Please make every effort to pick up your child during your departure window. We always want to chat and keep you informed, however pickup times are not typically the best time for us. Please call or e-mail to make an appointment to chat.

Transportation

If your child rides the SOLA Van, you must call SOLA when your child does not attend school for vacation or illness. We need to be informed anytime we are not expected to pick up your child. When a child doesn't get on the van, it is necessary for us to wait and get clearance from a staff member or to call you to confirm that the child is not in fact supposed to ride the SOLA van.

- The first time of a failed notification we will gently remind you.
- The second or subsequent times there will be a \$15 penalty for each time.

Medication & Illness Policies

If your child is sick please notify SOLA as soon as possible. Please wait for your child to be free of fever, diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours before sending them back to school.

Over the counter medications for an ongoing non-contagious condition & any prescriptions must be administered by a parent.

A parent must also apply any sunscreen or bug repellent. Parents must sign a waiver and release for teachers to apply/reapply any product of this nature. Parents must also supply the product that will be applied.

Prescription Medications that must be taken at school need to be labeled by the pharmacy, with the child's name, accompanied by doctors' instructions, and written permission from the parent.

SOLA Discipline Policy

SOLA's Three + 1 Rules

We feel everything comes down to these three things:

- **Be Kind**
- **Be Gentle**
- **Be Respectful**
- **Have Fun (This was added by a SOLA student vote.)**

We encourage wide-open spirits and children who break the mold while demonstrating these three + 1 simple philosophies.

Stepping in to Coach or Mediate

Our first approach to any conflict or issue in the classroom or with an individual is always to determine if this is an instance which needs a mediator. Next, we decide if the children are working it out themselves. Our goal is to allow children to work out their differences without adult assistance. Occasionally, it is necessary for an adult to step in and provide the words that need to be used. Usually these words are assertive, respectful, and start with "I".

"I don't like it when you say _____ (fill in the blank) _____ to me"

"Please, respect my work."

"I want to work by myself right now"

"Please walk around my work"

"I am using this right now, but I will bring it to you when I'm finished"

The Peace Chair/Rug

Occasionally, the behavior of one in a group makes it necessary for a child to be removed from direct relationship with others. This is a time to regroup, gain control, and watch other's peaceful actions in the classroom until the child is ready to rejoin the group. This is the teacher's chance to point out what kind of behavior we are hoping to see. Ultimately, the ideal situation for the entire class is for the children to find the words to resolve conflicts independently

Break Time

A break time is meant to be a last resort. If the peace chair/rug is not working, we move even more away from the group. A child is never removed from our line of sight. Sometimes it is necessary just to be away from everyone for a few minutes just to cool off.

What if it is rough?

We always step in to buffer if conflicts turn physical, or appear to be very heated. Our goal is to catch physical responses before they occur. We have a zero tolerance policy in regards to violence. If you are informed that your child was physically rough during their school day, please address this with your child. Please remind them to be gentle and respect others personal space.

Self Discipline

We encourage self-discipline, this pertains to respect for the self, as well as respect for others and our school/classroom. When a child is having trouble or an altercation with another, they are encouraged to discuss with each other how to solve the problem between themselves. We will be working heavily on socializing and being a community in which the only choice is to work as a team.

Attire

We believe that truly creative work gets really messy. Please wear easy-care play clothes. Midday and After School students may bring art clothes along in a backpack. Note that even washable paint is not always truly washable and that we frequently use non-washable paints for crafts and murals.

Smocks

We have many types of art smocks to offer children. However, many messes are impervious to smocks. While most children wear smocks while working at SOLA many of them will get messy simply from removing the smock with messy hands. Painting and messy work will be a part of our school day.

Label Everything

Please label all clothing that your child wears and brings to SOLA.

Proper Shoes

Shoes without backs, such as clogs, flip-flops, Crocs, and backless slip-ons are not appropriate footwear for the playground. If your child does not wear appropriate footwear they will not be permitted to swing on the swing board or run on the playground.

Children may only wear shoes that they can manage to get on and off themselves. Only send your child wearing shoes with laces if they can tie them on their own. The exception to this rule is for children who are actively working on this skill. If a student is actively learning how to tie, we will help them with tying lessons.

Dress Yourself

We encourage self-sufficiency in dressing and toilet routines. Please keep this in mind when dressing/buying clothes for your child. Hard to reach buttons and tricky fasteners can make it frustrating and result in accidents. It is imperative that children wear clothing that they can quickly remove all by themselves to avoid bathroom accidents. (If your child is enrolled in the Two Year Old Program, please refer to our Summer Letter.)

What to Bring to SOLA

A Seasonal Change of Clothes: (with name written on tags), including socks, underwear, shirt, long pants, and/or short pants that are weather appropriate. Extra clothing that is sent to SOLA should be packed in a labeled plastic baggie for return of wet or dirty items.

Water Cup/Bottle:

Please pack a labeled water bottle or cup (with or without lid), with *water*. This cup is meant for water only! Anything not water will be poured out and replaced with water. You may leave these at SOLA each week. We would like to have you take them home and wash them over the weekend.

Lunches/Snacks for All Programs

Everyday please send an insulated **lunch box with a cold pack** labeled with your child's name on the outside of their lunchbox. This is to be packed with an appropriate nutritious assortment of foods and a cloth napkin with your name on it.

We encourage healthy eating at SOLA. If your child brings what would be deemed an inappropriate lunch/snack, we will have them put the food back in the lunchbox to take home.

Lunch/Snack Suggestions

Fresh Muffins
Fresh Fruit
Dried fruit
Fresh Vegetables
Raisins
Pretzels
Rice Cakes
Cheese & Crackers
Sandwich

NO TOYS

We do not allow toys from home brought to SOLA. This includes show and tell opportunities. Please help us be firm about this rule. (We do understand that the transition can be difficult at the beginning of the year and will make exceptions for our younger friends who may have "lovey".)

Holidays & Seasons

We are fortunate to have an eclectic group of families with various backgrounds and cultures. However, “Holidays in school” can be a sensitive subject. To honor our diversity here at SOLA we instead try to focus on the changing of the seasons.

We encourage the children to find our differences just as interesting as the changing of the leaves. Any conversations that come up about religious differences we will use as a teachable moment about how all families do things differently and that is what makes life interesting. We will keep it short and simple and move on.

Card & gift giving during the seasons: We will leave this open ended for you to make choices about. If you wish to bring small gifts for classmates or cards during various holidays, please be aware of our varying preferences about holidays. Try to keep your gifts and cards as neutral and in the SOLA spirit of seasons. It will be your responsibility to put these into the cubbies or folders.

For us, it’s not about political correctness, as much as, it is about wanting to be respectful of your right to practice whatever your personal beliefs are.

Birthday Celebrations at SOLA

Photo Collage of My Life!

On your child’s birthday, you may send a small poster board of photos of your child’s life. At group time, the birthday child will share with the class their Birthday Collage and participate in a Birthday Walk.

Bring a Gift to Give!

We’ve also grown fond of another birthday tradition. The tables turn a bit. Instead of the day being all about *getting* presents, the birthday child learns a lesson in giving. On your child’s birthday they may give a copy of their favorite book to the school. If you

would like to inscribe inside the front cover with a special message from the child, that would be wonderful. The birthday child takes great joy in unwrapping the present for the class and then finding it on the bookshelf for years to come.

Special Snack

You may also make arrangements to bring a special birthday snack. We prefer something like special bread, muffins or fruit tray instead of cake or cupcakes.

Donations and Shopping for SOLA

SOLA is always in need of donations. Please ask us for a list of items, we are in need of, if you are interested in making a donation.

You can also help SOLA when you are grocery shopping at Harris Teeter. Here’s how:

If you have a VIC card, please link it or re-link it to SOLA ~ School of Learning Art #5148.

Everyone must re-link every August. VIC cardholders are allowed to link their card to 5 schools. We are allowed to have a promotional day at Harris Teeter to encourage other shoppers to link up to SOLA! Please let us know if you would volunteer for this job! Below is an example of how the money can accumulate! We can earn a lot of much needed cash with very little effort. All you have to do is grocery shop at Harris Teeter and buy HT, Premier Selection, President’s Choice items. See how easily the money accumulates! In August we get double the dollars!

If our school has 100 customers linked, who shop once per week for 40 weeks and use their VIC cards to buy these 10 Harris Teeter Brand products each week:

Gallon HT Milk = \$3.99
Loaf of HT Bread = \$.99
64oz HT Orange Juice = \$2.39
Dozen HT Eggs = \$1.19
Cookies = \$2.49
Package HT Cheese = \$2.19

Bottle of HT Cran-Grape Juice = \$2.99
Box HT Cereal = \$1.99
Roll of HT Paper Towels = \$1.19
Package of Premier Selection
Package of HT Fresh Chicken = \$2.99

Total of \$22.51 x 100 customers x 40 weeks x 2% donation = **\$1800.80**

Hand Book Receipt

Please initial and return this portion of the handbook with your registration form to show us that you have read and understand the following pages! (Every person involved in the care of your child must read this handbook, if you have any questions please ask a SOLA staff member.)

- ___ Title page with Emergency phone number
- ___ 2010-2011 Calendar
- ___ Inclement Weather Policy
- ___ SOLA's Top 10 Beliefs
- ___ SOLA Expectations for Teachers, Parents, & Adults
- ___ Arriving & Departing at SOLA
- ___ Transportation
- ___ Medication & Illness Policy
- ___ SOLA Discipline Policy
- ___ Attire
- ___ What to Bring to SOLA
- ___ Holidays & Seasons
- ___ Birthday Celebrations at SOLA
- ___ Donations & Shopping for SOLA
- ___ I have read this entire handbook and all others involved in my child's care have read it as well.
- ___ I give SOLA permission to reapply bug repellent, sunscreen, and "itchy cream" that I have provided for my child.
- ___ I give permission for SOLA to transport my child on the SOLA Van from _____ for the Mid-day and/or Afterschool Programs.

Child's Name _____

Parent's Signature _____

Date _____

Print Parent's Name _____

