



**THE WEST HILL SCHOOL**  
Connect. Learn. Grow.

## Curriculum Framework

### Mission Statement

The West Hill School offers pre-school age children a safe and nurturing environment that encourages a life-long celebration of learning. Through our rich and varied curriculum, balanced with play and multisensory academic instruction, the children explore and satisfy their curiosities while developing their cognitive, social/emotional, and physical skills. Children experience and practice the self-regulation skills of careful listening and focus and attention that promote school readiness. Through activities that reinforce the development of empathy and emotion management, children learn to build friendships and successful interpersonal relationships. Children develop a sense of appreciation and respect for our natural world. It is our goal that each child progresses to kindergarten with the tools to achieve a balanced education that promotes self-confidence, joy of discovery, pride in accomplishment, and respect for differences in our school, our community, and our world.

### Daily Experiences for Children that Support the West Hill School's Mission Statement

During a child's preschool years and beyond, experiencing a meaningful connection to oneself, to other, and to his/her learning creates a strong foundation for a fulfilled future that includes a healthy sense of identity, meaningful relationships, and a lifelong love of learning.

Keeping the importance of connections as a daily priority, each of the nurturing and skillfully trained West Hill School classroom teachers begins the day with a morning meeting to recognize and value each child, to build relationships among peers, and to create a safe, positive and care classroom community. Planned activities throughout the day focus on helping children to develop the interpersonal skills needed for building relationships with both peers and adults.

Child-Choice play in the Discovery Room lays a solid foundation for learning and academic success. Through daily Child-Choice play in experience centers (construction, dramatic play, math and manipulative, science, creative arts, music and movement, and literacy), the children learn to interact with others, develop language skills, and investigate, question, and ponder problems. Child-Choice play guides children in encouraging the skills of independence, initiative, and decision-making while strengthening the necessary social skills to lead them to powerful connections with others.

The children practice social and self-regulation skills taught to them from the research-based *Second Step* program from the Committee for Children. This preschool program addresses skills for learning, emotion management,

friendship building and empathy through the use of puppets, stories, music, movement, and role-playing. Caring, experienced teachers model, practice, coach, and reinforce the use of the skills in all aspects of the children's day. These interactions involve learning to form and to value relationships with others by emphasizing an appreciation of oneself and a respect for the differences of others, the confidence to take risks, and the empathy needed to care for others.

Recognizing that parents/guardians play a critical role in supporting the growth and development of the children, The West Hill School staff members view families as members of the school team. Input about their children, families, culture, and the school are exchanged through Brightwheel messages and pictures, parent/ guardian teacher conferences, school handbooks, orientations, surveys, and questionnaires, and in both informal and formal meetings. The West Hill School families volunteer their time, talents, and resources to further fosters a strong relationship and connection between home and school.

Throughout the day, in both indoor and outdoor large and small group settings, the children engage in joyful and enriching experiences that nurture the development of their cognitive, social/ emotional, creative, and physical growth.

Small group classroom settings provide the children with an extensive learning exploration founded on a researched-based program about how young children learn, *Learn Every Day*. This theme-based and customized curriculum is aligned with current research, linked to and guided by the *Pennsylvania Department of Education's Early Learning Standards*, and written by national experts. This innovative, interactive, and developmental curriculum was designed to foster curiosity and wonder, respect individual differences, honor every child's culture, and recognize that family members are partners in a child's education. The award-winning *Get Set For School* readiness curriculum uses lively music and multi-sensory activities to build a solid foundation for school success in literacy, mathematics, and writing. The *Foundations* Prekindergarten activity program supports students' emerging understanding of the alphabetic principles of letter-sound association and change order, and written language skill manuscript letter formation. Enriched experiences in Spanish language and culture, yoga, creative movement, music, and in-house science field trips taught by science specialists, promote an enhanced learning environment for the children.

The large Discovery Room is filled with engaging experience centers that offer opportunities for children to immerse themselves in the tools for inquiry in the areas of literacy, science, mathematics, movement, music, dramatic play, and creative arts. The Discovery Room includes well-designed spaces for active and self-directed play and learning, as well as, area for quiet activities. The intentional and fun multisensory experience centers are interest-based and focus on extending creative thinking and fostering language interactions while promoting play, exploration, and discovery.

We celebrate the love of learning each day and further enhance the experience of the children with and school events through Community Service Projects, Holiday Celebrations, Spirit Days, Festivals, Special Reader Days, the *Bucket-Filler Program*, Curriculum Based Assemblies, Holiday Festivals, and a Family Night where children showcase their learning.

## Thematic Unit Objectives

In a nurturing and loving atmosphere that supports all learners, children grow into curious, independent learners while developing important self-identity and interpersonal skills. The relationship between teachers and children, the implementation of a comprehensive multisensory, hands-on curriculum, and the emphasis on the individual child, are designed to build enthusiasm for learning and an appreciation and respect for others. All learning domains are interrelated, and the developmentally appropriate skills and concepts addressed are aligned with the PA Early Learning Standards and contained in the thematic units that integrate all subject areas. The thematic units build upon the skills and concepts gained in the previous years at The West Hill School and include the following:

## Blue Group Themes

- All About Me
- School and Community Norms
- *Bucket-Fillers* and Kindness
- Recycling
- Our Green Earth
- Five Senses
- Colors
- Shapes
- Measurements
- Numbers
- Holidays
- Seasons
- Animal Habitats
- Hibernation
- Butterfly Life Cycle
- Make-Believe
- Active Me
- Community Places and Helpers
- Safety
- Family Night Theme
- Emergent Themes

## Blue Group Objectives

### Arts and Creativity – By the end of the school year, the child will....

- Learn music from other cultures;
- Participate in creative movement and music activities;
- Listen intentionally to music;
- Learn how music can be used to express feelings;
- Express himself/herself through participation in creating music;
- Express himself/herself through music, art, and dance;
- Use shapes to create art;
- Mix colors to make new color combinations;
- Use a variety of mediums to express himself/herself;
- Construct sculptures and other arts from various materials;
- Show growing creativity and imagination in using materials and in role-playing and in dramatic play situations.
- Participate in creative expression through acting out a familiar story;
- Participate in role-playing activities related to safety and health;

### **Cognitive Skills – By the end of the school year, the child will...**

- Solve a simple problem using previously learned information;
- Engage in symbolic play with other children;
- Make choices based on previously learned skills;
- Identify multiple uses for an object;
- Begin to identify similarities and differences;
- Classify items into two categories,
- Sort by categories with multiple attributes;
- Develop observation skills,
- Learn to ask complex questions;
- Recognize cause and effect;
- Make deductions;
- Solve riddles
- Identify common shapes in the environment;
- Solve a problem using deductive reasoning;
- Seek multiple solutions to solve a problem;
- Use past knowledge to build new knowledge and to solve a problem;
- Demonstrate imagination and inventiveness in approaching tasks and activities;
- Classify by using two or more attributes;
- Understand the difference between real and make believe;
- Play games with rules;
- Classify, compare, and contrast experiences related to community places;
- Solve a problem with oral information;
- Maintain interest in a short project until it is completed;
- Solve a problem that has more than one solution.

### **Communication – By the end of the school year, the child will...**

- Be introduced to music from other cultures;
- Learn vocabulary associated with going to school;
- Follow two-step directions;
- Communicate likes and/or dislikes;
- Answer simple questions requiring a one-word answer;
- Use descriptive words when discussing an activity;
- Express ideas using age-appropriate language;
- Use complex sentences to describe routines and activities;
- Learn new vocabulary related to the senses, and identify the function of each sense;
- Use color words to describe everyday objects;
- Use vocabulary related to numbers, size, etc.;
- Learn vocabulary associated with music and musical instruments;
- Use multiple-word sentences to describe feelings and activities;
- Use vocabulary related to sports and exercise;
- Recite short stories and rhymes;
- Demonstrate knowledge of prepositions with increasing accuracy in spoken language;
- Use age-appropriate grammar;
- Listen with intent.

## Literacy – By the end of the school year, the child will...

- Identify the letter in his/her name;
- Learn the rudiments of connecting words and ideas to form sentences;
- Use vocabulary related to body parts;
- Develop listening skills;
- Recognize his/her name in print;
- Retell a simple story;
- Be introduced to the concept of simile;
- Recognize environmental print;
- Ask questions for clarification;
- Understand that a book has a beginning, middle, and end;
- Hold a book upright facing the reader;
- Retell favorite stories;
- Differentiate between fiction and nonfiction books;
- Understand and use prepositions;
- Develop letter recognition and phonemic awareness;
- Connect phrases and sentences to build ideas;
- Be introduced to onomatopoeia;
- Experience stories from other cultures;
- Continue to build oral language skills;
- Continue recognizing upper case letters;
- Respond to different types of literature;
- Recognize rhyming words in selecting readings, with adult assistance;
- Sing finger plays and rhymes;
- Recognize different types of genres such as poetry and fiction; with adult assistance;
- Use illustration clues and story sequence to infer and predict what happens next in the story;
- Create letter forms using various materials;
- Demonstrate listening comprehension;
- Associate some letters with their names and sounds.

## Mathematics – By the end of the school year, the child will...

- Begin to identify and recognize patterns;
- Be introduced to the concept of size;
- Make simple comparisons;
- Identify number concepts up to ten;
- Learn to make a simple graph;
- Explore one-to-one correspondence;
- Classify by color;
- Classify by common shapes;
- Begin to compare height, weight, and capacity;
- Understand the concepts of more and less;
- Recognize number and quantity in everyday environments;
- Use a variety of strategies related to numbers such as comparisons, sets, and graphs;
- Combine items based on similar attributes;
- Continue to recognize patterns;
- Continue to develop understanding of shapes, including cylinders;
- Represent numbers up to ten;

- Sort, classify, and serialize (put in a pattern);
- Understand concepts such as up/down, over/under, above/ below;
- Identify shapes found in the environment;
- Understand the concepts of weight and size;
- Order objects by size and length;
- Be introduced to the concept of a Venn Diagram;
- Estimate based on facts;
- Understand size and length;
- Create number forms using various materials;
- Use concrete objects as nonstandard unit to estimate and measure;
- Fill shapes with solids or liquids and understand that different sized containers hold more or less;
- Build with blocks and construction toys that develop problem solving and special relationships.

### **Personal Health & Development – By the end of the school year, the child will...**

- Begin to learn about basic hygiene and ways to stay healthy in a school setting;
- Perform simple self-help skills;
- Learn about personal hygiene and how germs can spread by sharing eating utensils;
- Build gross motor skill by galloping, jumping; and hopping;
- Develop gross skills with activities such as throwing a ball or climbing on outdoor equipment;
- Experiment with different writing tools;
- Build motor skills by cutting out patterns;
- Explore ways to express needs, wants and feelings;
- Cooperate in group activities with one or more children;
- Learn about safety when working with certain elements;
- Develop fine motor skills by using musical instruments that require manipulation;
- Participate in activities that will build physical fitness;
- Continue to develop fine motor skills through emergent writing;
- Recognize that group and individual physical activities can be fun and can contribute to overall health and wellness;
- Understand how various places in the community can help him/her learn and develop;
- Understand the role of healthcare professionals in personal health;
- Recognize the importance of traffic rules and laws;
- Understand the value of personal safety;
- Articulate basic safety rules;
- Develop a better understanding of the world and how people depend on each other.

### **Science Constructs – By the end of the school year, the child will...**

- Understand the concept of charting based on one attribute;
- Be introduced to the concept of distance;
- Practice making a hypothesis based on information;
- Learn various body parts and their functions;
- Identify similarities and differences;
- Acquire knowledge about the physical properties of the world;
- Predict the outcome of a science experiment;
- Test predictions through exploration and experimentation;
- Observe and discuss common properties;
- Generate explanations regarding experiments and explorations;

- Observe processes and relationships;
- Recognize patterns;
- Draw conclusions;
- Use a variety of tools to solve problems and draw conclusions;
- Use equipment for investigation;
- Make and verify predictions;
- Observe, investigate, and ask questions about the world around him/her;
- Understand the role of safety at home and at school.

### **Social and Emotional Skills – By the end of the school year, the child will...**

- Recognize that people differ and that differences should be respected;
- Appreciate and understand that everyone has strengths and weaknesses;
- Learn that words can hurt and that unkind words and actions are not acceptable at school;
- Begin to identify emotions;
- Participate in small-group discussions;
- Understand family relationships and how families help each other;
- Identify common emotions;
- Participate in small-group discussions about emotions and feelings;
- Begin to recognize that people depend on each other;
- Learn about trust;
- Understand the importance of being a member of a community group;
- Feel positive about how he/she is and how he/she looks;
- Enjoy a collaborative group activity;
- Work cooperatively in groups;
- Develop self-esteem through making individual choices;
- Demonstrate initiative in chosen learning activities;
- Understand the value of participation in group activities without competition;
- Cooperate with others;
- Recognize and label emotions and feelings of others;
- Understand the importance of trusting community workers;
- Work together to achieve a common goal;
- Learn more about the culture and social customs of others;
- Play cooperatively using words to resolve conflicts;
- Follow directions for class routines and transitions;
- Enjoy social interactions with peers;
- Show care and concern for others;
- Understand strong feelings;
- Identify one's own strong feelings;
- Use calm down strategies when experiencing strong feelings;
- Use problem-solving steps after calming down;
- Use fair ways to play (play together, trade, take turns);
- Recognize and honor the choices made by others;
- Learn more about the importance of getting along with others;
- Work in a group and understand that we all have strengths and weaknesses;
- Follow simple rules, routines, and directions by listening, focusing, and utilizing self-talk;
- Complete a task once it is started.

## Social Studies – By the end of the school year, the child will...

- Be introduced to music from other cultures;
- Learn more about others and how people differ;
- Identify similarities and differences in family characteristics;
- Develop an understanding of the roles of community helpers, such as how an optometrist cares for vision;
- Learn what it means to be a good citizen;
- Recognize that people from different cultures may have customs that are unfamiliar;
- Develop a growing understanding of position in space, geographic location, and direction;
- Understand that other cultures have different types and styles of music and art;
- Understand the function of social events such as mealtime;
- Be exposed to children’s literature from cultures around the world;
- Be exposed to the cultural value of team sports and good sportsmanship;
- Understand the importance of places in the community for society;
- Recognize the role of community workers in society;
- Understand the role of transportation in society;
- Recognize the value of public transportation;
- Talk about the role of community helpers in keeping people safe.

### Blue Group Assessment of Students

Teachers monitor and record children’s progress over time. Assessment is linked to instruction, enabling teachers to respond to children’s needs and to identify children who might need additional reinforcement for a learning objective. Assessment also enables teachers to keep parents/ guardians informed and involved. Ongoing assessment practices include observation, questioning of students, note-taking, formal assessment of developmental skills, portfolios of children’s work, and checklists that are completed twice a year and discussed with parents/ guardians at conferences.