



Kingfisher Academy

**Family Handbook
2016 - 2017**

School Hours

7:30 a.m. to 8:40 a.m.	Extended Hours
8:40 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.	Academic Day
3:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.	Bus and Carpooling
3:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.	Afterschool (Monday to Thursday)
3:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.	Afterschool (Friday)

Accreditation

We are accredited with quality through the Georgia Accrediting Commission and through the Human Scale Education Association. We are members of the PEACE School Association and members of the Environmental Educators' Alliance.

Extended hours and Extra-curriculars

Care before school is free to early dropper-offers. Afterschool Activities are many and varied. You generally pay the instructor and Kingfisher stays out of the negotiations. We are happy to drop off at dance classes, music lessons, martial arts all within the neighborhood. A good list of offerings will be available the first week of each month. Afterschool for our students begins at 3:30 and we close Monday through Thursday at 5:45 and 5:00 on Friday. Afterschool is \$30 a week for one child and \$40 a week for two children in a family.

Attendance and Tardiness

Regular attendance between the hours of 8:40 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. is extremely important. In addition, "Community Meeting" will happen each morning from 8:40 to 9:00 a.m. Please try to have your child present for this valuable daily community-building time. If a child is going to be absent, please notify the school so that appropriate staff may be informed and arrangements can be made to make up missed work.

We are strengthening our tardiness policy for children over eight. Everyone gets to be late one time a month without an excuse. After that, parents must write an excuse for being late and must come into the building to sign their child in. Students cannot be admitted to class without a pass, so if they arrive without one, they will wait in the office until the next class. Remember that valuable academic time will be missed due to tardiness. If tardiness or attendance issues begin to adversely affect student performance, a conference may be called with the family. A warning will be sent home if a student is tardy 5 times within a grading period.

Board of Directors and Advisors

This year we are increasing the size of our board and some members of the community have been invited to join the board. The board term is two years and the board meets quarterly during the school year.

Bullying and Teasing Policy

Kingfisher is a small, friendly school with children from many different neighborhoods, heritages, backgrounds, and family compositions. We emphasize respect, inclusiveness, and kindness between students and tolerate absolutely no name-calling, teasing, bullying, physical threats, intimidation, derogatory comments about families, etc. We consider this behavior to be serious and we do not allow it, nor do we condone any type of racial or sexual commentary while at school. All students must feel safe and comfortable at our school, and staff will intervene and notify parents of any teasing or bullying behavior. We consider outside –of-school communication between students via phone and/or internet social networking sites to be included in our school bullying and teasing policies and will take appropriate school actions if bullying or teasing occurs via those technologies.

Cell Phones and Electronics

Kingfisher Academy has a school phone and all of the teachers have cell phones. Absolutely no student at Kingfisher can use his or her cell phone during the school day-- not for texting, calling mom to bring lost homework, etc. No electronic games are allowed at school, except under special circumstance. These policies extend to cover field trips, as well as time spent during school hours, before and after school.

Communication

We try hard to make certain that everyone knows the important school news and we have many avenues through which to distribute items of interest.

- **Phone/fax:** Our phone number is 678-615-2313.
- **Mailboxes:** Every family associated with the school has a mailbox, which needs to be checked by the children/parents daily. Parents who have very specific questions can briefly write the teacher a note and place it in the teacher's mailbox. Expect a brief, written reply on either e-mail or back in your mailbox.
- **Website/e-mail:** We have faster wireless and so the web will be used much more often to distribute news and calendar information. We are also gathering parents' e-mails and teachers will be sending news by e-mail groups. If you do not have an e-mail address, let us know and we will make certain that you get a hard copy. The e-mail address used strictly for communication between a family and the school is director@kingfisheracademy.org. We also have a facebook page, which we use for announcements, as well and the link is <https://www.facebook.com/KingfisherSchool/>
- **Friday folders** will continue to be the main vehicle through which parents can see their student's progress. Parents are obligated to review the contents, sign the folder, and return it on Mondays. If the folder is not forthcoming on Friday, let the director know. If the folder is not returned on Monday, we may contact the family to ensure contents have been reviewed.
- **Bus-riding students** will be encouraged to check mailboxes before leaving for the day. Parents need to ask their students for notes and messages daily to make certain that important things are getting home

Discipline

In order to ensure a safe, respectful, and academic learning environment, Kingfisher Academy follows appropriate and legally based disciplinary procedures, including positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports to address inappropriate behavior. In the case of a student whose behavior impedes his or her learning or the learning of others, Kingfisher Academy reserves the right to enforce suspension or expulsion as deemed necessary by the administration of the school. Here are the steps:

1st incident—student conferences with the teacher in addition, a written plan is set up. A copy goes into the student's file and into his/her Friday folder.

2nd incident—student conferences with the teacher and the director and a written plan is set up. Copies go into student files and are sent home for signatures.

3rd incident—a conference is held with teacher, director, parent and student and generally a day at home occurs until this conference can occur.

4th incident—generally this results in suspension and/or further steps which may include asking the family to find a new school placement.

Donations

Kingfisher is a 501-C-3 organization and this means that a donation to us can mean a tax savings for you. Our tax ID is 58-2478864. Remember to ask for a tax-receipt if you make a gift to us. Please do not offer cash gifts to the teachers, as it calls our non-profit status into question. Sometimes grandparents pay their grandchild's tuition and if that is the case with your family, please talk to the director about ways to get a tax write-off for this—it can be donated to the school and credited to the family's account rather than paying it as tuition. Also, we will be looking for donations toward our scholarship fund with GASSO in January. Anything donated to us through the SSO can be a dollar for dollar tax credit against state taxes.

Dress Code

Kingfisher Academy does not have a daily student uniform. However, we do request that students wear clothing that is both appropriate and comfortable. Clothing should be chosen with free play, physical education, art, and hands-on science experiments in mind. Closed-toe shoes are necessary, particularly for children under six. **Absolutely no flip-flops will be allowed along with backless slip on sandals due to our insurance rules.** We also do not allow alcohol-related slogans on t-shirts, or violent or profane images. Pants need to be belted or fitted at the waist—we do not want to see underwear! Hats must be taken off inside unless for religious observance. If your daughter's skirt is so short we can see her underpants, it is too short for school. On days of experiential field trips, students may be asked to wear a school field trip uniform, which includes the school shirt and khaki pants or skirts, in order for staff to keep track of everyone. Parents will be informed prior to the trips. We go outside every day and children should wear the appropriate outdoor clothing to be comfortable. Not having a coat is not an excuse to stay inside during recess and p.e. We do not have extra staff to supervise the children who do not bring their outside apparel. Often, science and art classes are held outside and comfortable shoes are necessary for these classes.

Drop Off and Pick-up At Kingfisher

First day you may park and walk on in, if you want to do so.

Second day, we will meet cars at the sidewalk, you will drive out the exit, and we will escort the kids from the cars into the school.

Second day pick up—we will meet you in the parking lot and help load the children.

From then on, pick a day to come in and “check in” with the teacher once a week, regarding your child, but do not plan on coming in every day—teachers will have more planning to do this year and a ten-minute conference with seven or eight parents every day uses up all their time and your time. We will be diligent about Friday folders and e-mailing, so we hope that will help with communication. If we need to see a parent, the teacher will be waiting for you to get here to pick up your child.

Afterschool care is for parents that work specific hours and cannot pick until they get off work. The school day ends at 3:30, so please pick up your child at that time if you do not need childcare. Older children can ride the bus home or to afterschool activities, as long as they are within a couple of miles. We are happy to drop off at the Tucker Recreation Center for classes or Art Center, if you need that service. Parents that have questions, please see Debbie so we can work out a solution that will work for everyone.

Drug Policy

No child that has been expelled from another school due to drug possession will be admitted to Kingfisher. Any child that brings prescription drugs to school must bring them to the director to keep in the office. Absolutely no student may share or offer painkillers, cough medicine, etc. to another child. Teachers also do not give out aspirin or acetaminophen to any child for any reason.

Emergency Closing Information

In the event of severe weather, power failures, or other interruptions that may delay the opening of school or cancel classes, an announcement will be made as early as possible. Decisions will be made by 6:30 a.m., when possible, and the school's telephone message will address the school status. In addition, school closing announcements will be made on television stations WXIA 11 (NBC), WGCL 46 (CBS), and WAGA 5 (Fox), as well as radio station 94.1 (STAR 94) FM and other affiliated radio stations. Kingfisher Academy *generally* follows the decisions made by DeKalb Public Schools, but it is a good idea to phone to be certain.

Emergency Contact Information

It is the responsibility of the family to ensure that the school has current emergency contact information at all times. If any contact information changes, please notify the school so that our records may be updated.

Environmental Position

We are a small school and are members of the Environmental Educator's Alliance. As such, we have been discussing for several months ways that we can make our environment more ecologically friendly, as well as promoting this awareness to our families and to our students. We support and encourage carpooling among the families that attend Kingfisher, we encourage the older kids that live in the neighborhood to ride home on the bus, we recycle, we discourage disposable food wrappers in lunches, we have replaced most light bulbs on our floor with fluorescent bulbs, we use re-useable washcloths for cleaning, and are talking about many more ideas. We welcome family input on this issue. We expect Kingfisher to be a true "green school". This year, if you pack a plastic bag for lunch trash, we will be sure that your child puts their trash in the bag and back into the lunchbox to go home. We do not have the dumpster this year and do not want to encourage a lot of lunch trash.

Field Trips/Experiential Learning

Students will frequently be out of the classroom. Trips to parks will take place almost daily, weather permitting, and classes will regularly visit the Tucker or Northlake Library. Other trips may only involve walking in the neighborhood immediately around the school. Trips that involve travel from the school will be announced to families beforehand.

Fundraising

Kingfisher's only on-going fundraiser is the Friday lunch. We find that writing grants and requests works better for us in raising money for projects and takes much less time. We will be asking restaurants to sponsor a night for Kingfisher once a month. Grant writing is taking a more serious turn this year and we are setting up partnerships with a couple local businesses. We welcome donations of money and supplies and items for the play yard. We will have some sort of fundraiser this year to help defray costs for Spanish and art—we will discuss this in the fall. Also, there are quick and easy fundraisers with Kroger, Staples, Office Depot, Publix, etc. and these are listed on our website.

Insurance Policies

We are requiring all enrolled children to carry a Youth Accident Policy provided by our insurance agent, American Family Insurance with The Hartford Insurance Company. The cost is \$25 per child and we will require this amount from each student by the end of the 1st week at school. This provides added coverage on field trips, riding home on the bus, during field day activities, while engaged in sports activities.

Lunch and Snacks

Families are responsible for ensuring the student has a packed lunch and snacks for the school day. Please pack warm foods in a thermos and use an ice pack to keep the cold foods cold. As an environmentally aware school, we request that families use reusable containers and include almost no throwaway trash. All lunch trash will be returned in the lunchbox, so prepare for this by packing a small plastic bag for this purpose. We no longer allow plastic water bottles in the school, but we are happy to refill re-useable water bottles, if needed throughout the day. Please refrain from sending soda, candies, and difficult-to-open (and easy to spill) drink bottles. Please do not send red and purple juices, as they frequently spill and stain everything. Please continue to use thermos containers for hot foods, if possible. We will be offering the option of buying lunch on Friday for \$4/plate as a fundraiser for the school.

Medicine Policy

Kingfisher Academy cannot administer medicine at school. Regulations from our insurance company as well as from the state have made this policy necessary. Parents are encouraged, when possible, to administer antibiotics, pain relievers, etc. around school hours. In addition, Kingfisher staff is not allowed to provide over-the-counter drugs to the students. If you have an unusual or special circumstance, please talk with the director, not the teacher.

PTO

We have an active and useful group of parents and we strongly encourage families to come to the PTO meetings and get involved. The committees that have been active in the past included: A Fundraising Committee, The Teacher Holiday basket committee, the Teacher Appreciation Week committee, and an able group of room parents who set up communication trees. This year, we hope to continue those committees and perhaps add a "community care" group that announces new babies, disperses news of families, sets up food for families in crisis, etc.

Transportation

Between 7:30 and 8:45 a.m. and again at 3:20 to 4:00 p.m., school greeters will be available to retrieve students from their parents and walk them into or out of the school. Please notify the school if you want your child to walk, bike, or bus to and/or from school. We encourage families to carpool to save on gas. We offer bus service home to families in the 30021, 30084, 30087, 30345 and 30083 zip code areas for \$30.00 a month per family. Arrange to have someone greet your under 9 child at home when they get off the bus, for safety.

Tuition

The tuition at Kingfisher is currently one of the lowest in the city. We seek to provide an excellent learning environment for your child and we expect you to provide prompt payment each month. Most folks pay through FACTS and that is an excellent system for busy families to keep from falling behind. The money that comes from your tuition pays for the teachers' salaries and when several families in one class are behind on payments, it is very difficult to keep current on school obligations. If a family becomes more than one month behind, plans to catch up must be made or the family will need to seek another school to finish out the year. Absolutely no school records will be released to families who have not met their financial obligations to Kingfisher. We want to work with anyone having a rough time, but have certainly suffered when parents consider us "last on the list" of bills to pay when times get hard.

Parents who are in the armed services or work for the police or fire departments receive a discount of 10%. Parents with two children get a discount for the second child. Discounts cannot be combined this year. Families who refer someone to the school that enrolls, receive a \$25 discount off their tuition for every family referred.

We have investigated some of the SSO programs with the State of Georgia, and intend to cooperate with GASSO—the Georgia Student Scholarship Organization began in January 2014. www.georgiasso.us

Weapons

Adults who work in jobs that require the carrying of a weapon (such as police officers) may carry weapons that are secured in a holster into the school to drop off and pick up children. No other weapons can be inside school premises—no knives, guns, tasers, etc. Children may not bring weapons (including air rifles or BB guns) for show and tell. If there is a special project that requires bringing dangerous items into the building, a consult with the director is required.

School Contact Information

School Building Address

Kingfisher Academy
5073 LaVista Road
Building A/2nd Floor
Tucker, GA 30084

School Mailing Address

P.O. Box 2372
Tucker, GA 30085

Phone:

(678)-615-2313

Electronic Mail:

debbie@kingfisheracademy.org