



○ ○ ○ ○

HOLY FAMILY ACADEMY

BACK TO SCHOOL EDITION

8/14/25

Upcoming Important Dates

- 8/24/25: 2-4 PM, Back to school picnic
- 8/25/25: First day of school for grades 1-8 (starts at 9 AM Mass). Afternoon extended care begins after school
- 8/26/25: Morning extended care begins at 7 AM.
- 8/29 & 9/1: No School, Labor Day Weekend
- 9/2: First day of school K & PREK-5 day program/ Gardner Busing Begins for eligible students
- 9/3: First day of school PREK 3 day program
- 9/26: Non-uniform day and ½ day dismissal at 11:30 AM

[Click Here for the 2025-2026 School Calendar](#)



Back to School Details

Dear Parents/Families,

We know there is **A LOT** of information that parents have to digest as we get ready to head back to school. The purpose of this separate memo is to give back to school details in one resource, which we will pin in Digital Academy for your reference. For our returning families, much of this will be familiar but we still need you to read this....all of it please. Our school's growth is beautiful and it means we've needed to update some of our routines. Much of this information is also updated in our [student/parent handbook](#).

Back to School Picnic

The back to school picnic is held the day before the first day of school for grades 1-8. This year, this is Sunday, August 24th from 2-4 PM. Families and students may drop off school supplies and mingle with other HFA families. The PTO provides light snacks and water. The ice cream truck will also visit for anyone who wishes to purchase an ice cream, and the business owner generously donates a portion of the proceeds to HFA.

Teachers will be in their classrooms from 2-3 PM to accept supplies and say hello! Teachers will join families outside at 3 PM. Please RSVP to Mrs. Cormier by 8/21 at tcormier@holyfamilyacademy.org and let her know how many family members will attend.

Supplies and Summer Reading



Grade level school supply information can be found here. Summer reading information is located here. Yes, there is still time to get that reading done!! Thank you for your support!

First Day of School



The first day of school is so exciting! We also know that it can come with nerves and jitters, but we're here to help. An overview of our first day of school each year is available here. ***This year, our first day of school for grades 1-8 is Monday, August 25th. The first day of school begins at 9 AM Mass. Our regular, 7:45 AM drop off time begins on the second day of school.*** Parents/families are invited/encouraged to attend Mass with their HFA students. If you or a family member are unable to attend Mass with your students, we have an amazing community of classmates/parents that are willing to help and we ask that you ensure your child has a designated adult to sit with at Mass. At the end of Mass, teachers will call their class up name by name so we can wish each class well as they head over to the school together.

We welcome our littlest students in the PREK & Kindergarten classes a week later. **This year, PREK 5 and K students will join us on Tuesday, September 2nd. Our 3 day PREK program begins on Wednesday, September 3rd.**

Gardner Busing



For K-8 families living in Gardner who requested bus transportation and are deemed eligible for bus transportation by the bus company, please be aware that bus service does not begin until Gardner Public Schools starts school for the year. **Gardner Public Schools begins school on Tuesday, September 2nd this year.** The HFA office will send bus route information as soon as available. PREK students are not eligible for busing.

Extended Care



Before and after school care general information and rates can be found here. The entrance to extended care is behind the school with access from the Regan Street entrance. Please pick up and drop off children to/from the program from this entrance. Afternoon extended care begins for grades 1-8 students on Monday, August 25th. Morning extended care begins for grades 1-8 students on Tuesday, August 26th. PREK & K can join extended care as early as their first day of school.

Due to the increase in enrollment, grades 4-8 afternoon extended care will begin with a homework club and area for reading and quiet board games until approximately 4 PM when they will join the main extended care area.

The extended care parking lot will close in the morning after 7:30 AM to prepare for school drop off. If you need to drop off at extended care during this short timeframe, please park on Regan Street and walk your child up to the extended care entrance.

Extended care registration forms will be released via email. It is also important to notify your child's teacher if your child will attend extended care so he/she can plan dismissal accordingly.

School Drop-Off: Changes Made



The school doors open at 7:45 AM each morning. Students should not be dropped off and left on school property without supervision before this time.

The primary location of school drop off is Nichols Street. All drop off during the week of August 25th will take place on Nichols Street. Due to the beautiful growth in enrollment, the following **changes to school drop off will begin the week of Tuesday, September 2nd** when PREK & K join the school year:

- **Families with a student in grades 4-8 only who live outside of Gardner are assigned to drop off behind the school on Regan Street during the regular drop off period of 7:45 AM-8AM.** HFA worked with the City of Gardner to update the street signs. A staff member will be on Regan Street during this 15 minute period to assist as students use the stairs to enter the HFA property.
- All tardy arrivals, which is after 8 AM, should be dropped off on Nichols Street. A parent/guardian should walk the student into the school and sign the student in.
- Families who live outside of Gardner who have a grade 4-8 student and a younger sibling(s) should still use Nichols Street for drop off.
- The parking lot behind the school will be closed off after 7:30 AM to prepare for student arrivals walking up the stairs to school.

Regardless of where you are assigned to drop off, it is critical that we are good neighbors to our residential, fire department, and business community members:

- Do not block driveways
- Please pull over to allow your child to safely get out of the car while also helping the flow of traffic continue
- Obey the speed limit. Gardner PD will spot check our arrival/dismissal traffic.
- Please be courteous. Mornings are rushed and hectic for everyone. Let's work together to make the start of our day positive.

Parents are expected to drop students off at the front or church side door to help establish routines and independence. We realize the first few days of school can be challenging for our young PREK & K students. If necessary, teachers will work with parents to allow parents to help young students transition to the classroom door for the first few days of school. After this time period, teachers will help students and parents at the entrance to the school. Parents/visitors should not go up to classrooms or other school areas unless they have signed into the office and been issued a visitor pass.

Dismissal: Changes Made



We made minor adjustments to our dismissal process to help with congestion at the end of the day.

- **PREK classes will begin dismissal at 2:30 PM and end their dismissal at 2:45 PM.** A PREK student who is not yet picked up by 2:45 PM will be brought to extended care.
- **K-4 classes will begin dismissal at 2:40 PM and end their dismissal at 2:50 PM.** Any K-4 student who is not picked up by 2:50 PM will be brought to extended care.
- **Grades 5-8 classes begin dismissal at 2:45 PM.** Any grades 5-8 students not picked up by 2:50 PM will be brought to extended care.
- The main office will page classrooms for dismissal and call students attending extended care or going home via school bus at the appropriate time.

Dismissal Locations:

- PreK - Front door
- Kindergarten -Side door between the School and Church
- 1st Grade- Front door
- 2nd Grade- Side door between the School and Church
- 3rd Grade- Front door
- 4th Grade- Front door
- 5th-8th Grade- Students are dismissed out the playground side door (boys bathroom side of the school) and will meet parents/guardians behind the school or walk out front.

Students in grades PREK-4th grade need to have a designated parent/guardian meet them in the school yard at dismissal.

Medication



Nurse Kathy is here to help should your child need medication available at the school! She is holding office hours on the following dates/times to drop off medications and forms:

- Monday, August 18th: 10AM-2PM
- Wednesday, August 20th: 10AM-2PM
- Thursday, August 21st: 8AM-12PM
- Friday, August 22nd: 12PM-4PM
- Sunday, August 24th: 2PM-3PM

Please [click here for a letter from Nurse Kathy](#).

Please [click here for medication forms](#).

Hot Lunch



HFA will begin offering optional hot lunch for purchase on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in mid-September. The date will be confirmed once our vendor sets their menu and start date. Our 8th grade class will offer hot dog Tuesdays, which supports the class trip and graduation costs of the upcoming graduates.

All hot lunch orders need to be submitted and paid for by 8AM on Friday the week before the meal service. Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate late orders.

Milk



Milk order forms are included in the beginning of year forms with information about the date milk service will begin.

Daily Items Needed By Students

- Lunch (or an ordered hot lunch on applicable days)
- Snack
- Water bottle
- Appropriate outerwear
- Any papers or assignments sent home for completion
- Teachers may communicate with parents regarding other needs for special events etc.

While the handbook contains more complete information, please see this overview of items that should not be sent to school with students:

- Dunkin Donuts, Starbucks, or other restaurant ordered drinks
- Food or drinks containing nuts, including coconut, hazelnut etc. Please be extra mindful when packing snacks such as granola bars or electrolyte juices/drinks. HFA has a strict nut free allergy policy.
- Video game devices such as Gameboys, Nintendo Switch etc.
- Electronic tablets
- Pretend weapons
- Smart watches



Cell Phones



Students are not allowed to use cell phones at HFA while in school, attending extended care, on a field trip, or attending an event such as a middle school dance. Students who have cell phones when they arrive to school are required to drop off the cell phone in the locker outside of the Principal's office and they may pick up their phone at the end of the day. If a student brings their cell phone to classes, the teacher will confiscate it and give it to the Principal. The phone will need to be picked up by a parent/guardian. Students may be issued school discipline for not following our cell phone policy.

Uniform Information



It is important that students are in the appropriate uniform and follow our dress code on both uniform and non-uniform days. We know that summer is fun with bright nails, wild hair, all the jewelry, and flip flops, but the dress code is part of our whole child development and curriculum. Please ensure to review the uniform and [non-uniform dress code here](#). We will handle any uniform compliance issues respectfully and discretely with the expectation that parents/guardians will support adhering to the policy. Teachers will notify their classroom families of their scheduled gym day so you can plan uniforms accordingly.

We're Here to Help: Communication



Should you need to connect with your child's teacher, the best outreach is email. Our teachers are happy to help, but please remember they are leading classes throughout the school day so they are not readily available via phone unless there is an emergency. Teacher email addresses will be posted on the school website. Teachers will also begin to send their classes information via email as we near the start of school.

Please contact the main office for any urgent needs regarding your child that may impact the school day.

The main office contact information is as follows:

Mrs. Amy Hardersen, Administrative Assistant: 978-632-8656 x213

Mrs. Colette Goguen, Principal: 978-632-8656 x250

Mrs. Angela Aro, Director of Enrollment, 978-632-8656 x219

Nurse Kathleen Herrmann: 978-632-8656 x218

Beginning of Year Forms

Please complete the beginning of year forms sent out by email before the first day of school. This information is important to be updated for the wellbeing of your students while in our care at school.



Last, but never least: thank you! We are so grateful for your partnership to support your child's education. We feel blessed to work with your family and watch your children grow. Please reach out if there is something we can help with.

**“The mission of schools and teachers is to develop an understanding of
all that is true, good, and beautiful.”**

~Pope Francis, 2017

Wishing you a peaceful and fun-filled end of summer!

~Mrs. Goguen
Principal

