

Aspire Early Learning Academy, LLC

PARENT HANDBOOK





Aspire Early Learning Academy, LLC

Bringing A⁺ Quality Learning to Early Childhood!

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Revised:
January 1, 2021

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

Aspire Early Learning Academy, LLC provides quality early childhood education to young children under the age of five. As educators, we believe that it is our responsibility to facilitate an effective environment that is conducive to children learning and developing at a unique pace that is developmentally appropriate. As a team, we strive for excellency as we work together to build a strong foundation for each student enrolled while striving to prepare all students for kindergarten.

Through a variety of experiences in creative learning, music & movement, art, science, and language development, our students will grow to develop self-confidence, and a strong foundation for learning, while striving for success and excellence.

1.1 MISSION STATEMENT

At Aspire Early Learning Academy, LLC, we provide every child with quality learning in a safe and effective environment. Each child will have an opportunity to prosper and develop at a pace that is individually, developmentally appropriate. The academy will support the right of each child to play, learn, and grow in an inclusive early childhood program that will foster kindergarten success. We are committed to ensuring that every child receives the best opportunity to produce a strong foundation for a fruitful, educational experience.

1.2 THE OWNER

Latorie S. Lloyd has over 22 years of consistent experience in the Early Childhood industry. Her leadership and teaching experiences include head start, early head start, public schools, corporate, private, and religious childcare centers. She enjoys working with families to provide a circle of love and education for children. Latorie believes in creating strong foundations for children that will enhance leadership abilities and confidence.

Visit our website to learn more about the owner. Families are also welcomed to contact her by email and/or mail.

Corporate Office mailing address: 116 N. Hwy 52, Suite B, Moncks Corner, SC, 29461.
Email: Latorie@AspireEarlyLearningAcademy.com.

1.3 CHANGES IN POLICY

It is our goal to be consistent with company policies and procedures. However, policies and procedures are subject to change to accommodate state laws/regulations and/or the needs of the academy. We will notify families of these changes by email, printed communication, parent portal, or on the website. Once a policy has been revised, changed, or eliminated, superseded policies will be null.

1.4 FAMILY/CENTER RELATIONSHIP

We believe that it takes a village to educate our children. We encourage families to develop and maintain professional relationships with the academy's personnel. This will show our students that their circle of supporters communicates and care about their wellbeing together. Family-center relationships are imperative to the overall development of a children in their early years.

1.5 GRIEVANCES

Should parents have a concern, you are encouraged to speak with your child's direct teacher first. If your concern is not resolved, or you are uncomfortable speaking with the teacher, we encourage you to address the concern confidentially with your Academy Director. The next course of action would be to contact the owner and/or request a meeting with the owner and director.

1.5 CURRICULUM

The foundation of our education tool is the nationally recognized Creative Curriculum. This curriculum is a practical approach on how to organize the environment to support children's social development and active learning. It is based on researched child development theory. By continually changing and enriching the environment, teachers can support learning and creativity in children. The Creative Curriculum emphasizes establishing partnerships with children and families.

We also incorporate the guidelines of The SC Early Learning Standards which support the readiness of young children through nurturing early care and education environments and developmentally appropriate practices. The standards focus on the development of voluntary guidelines as required by the Good Start, Grow Smart Initiative. The bi-annual assessment tool that we use is the Ages and Stages Questionnaire – 3.

As practical tools for educational and social development, we will also incorporate, the following age-appropriate practices: kindergarten readiness, independence skills, young leadership, organization, etiquette, healthy living, reading, mathematics.

SECTION 2

HOURS OF OPERATION

2.1 HOURS

Aspire Early Learning Academy days of operation are Monday through Friday. The hours for your Academy are provided in your parent packet and on the Academy's website.

2.2 HOLIDAYS

The Academy will close to observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Day after Thanksgiving, and one full week during the Christmas Holiday.

2.3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS

The Academy may close one day throughout the calendar year for professional development. Families will be notified at least ninety days in advance through the parent portal, newsletters, email, and signs posted throughout the academy.

2.4 INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, the Academy will close or release early at the discretion of the owner. The Academy may follow the decisions of the local area school districts. We will notify all families of closings through email, website, social media, and/or the parent portal.

2.5 ARRIVAL TIME

Our team takes great pride in preparing our students for their next endeavor, which will be kindergarten. To be successful, structure and routines are imperative. Children are welcome to arrive at the Academy upon opening and before 9:30am. After 9:45am, children will not be allowed to enter for the day without a doctor's note and/or prior phone call notifying the Director of the child's attendance. We understand that occasionally families may run behind. However, it is the Academy Director's discretion to determine when it becomes excessive.

SECTION 3

ENROLLMENT

3.1 ADMISSION

Aspire Early Learning Academy, LLC enrolls children without regard to race, culture, sex, religion, national origin, ancestry, or disability. Our program will not discriminate based on special needs. The Academy will accept children with special needs if we can provide a safe and supportive environment for the child.

Children are enrolled at Aspire Early Learning Academy, LLC according to available classroom space. Parents/guardians are to complete all forms required by the Academy, Department of Social Services, Department of Health and Environmental Control, Center for Adult and Child Food Program, and possible additional governing agencies before your child starts his/her first day. A copy of at least one of the parent's photo ID is required on file with registration forms. Before your child's first day, it is mandatory that parents

provide the Academy with a current DHEC Immunization form which meets all health requirements. This form must be completed by a physician.

If space is unavailable, your family will be provided the option to be placed on the waiting list. A waiting list intake form will be completed for each child by the Academy Director. To officially secure the next available classroom spot, the annual registration fee of \$80.00 will be required; however, it is not mandatory. To receive a phone call when space is available, a completed waiting list form is only required.

The waiting list provides a general time frame of availability. We are unable guarantee a specific date for an available space, only an approximate date based on your family's need and our projected availability. When space is available, we will contact the families that paid their registration fees first in respect to the submission order, all others will be called according to the date of submission on their form.

3.2 WITHDRAWAL

Families can withdraw from the academy at any time with a documented (written or email) two-weeks' notice to the Academy Director. Families who do not provide a two-weeks notices, will be subjected to collections for the reservation fee of ½ of their normal weekly tuition for two weeks. Registration, tuition, and reservation fees are non-refundable.

The Academy reserves the right to withdraw your family. If we see where the relationship between the child, parent, teacher, and/or Academy is not positive, we will provide the family with a two weeks' notice. Before proceeding with withdrawal, the Academy Director will work with the family to address any challenges that are presented. If the challenge with the Academy-family relationship pose a threat to other children and/or the Academy's team, the family will be asked to leave immediately.

The following grounds for immediate withdrawal are, but are not limited to:

- Behavior of child, parent, family guest, or legal guardian that is endangering to self or other persons, materials, building structure, and/or classroom environment.
- Chronic disruption of a positive learning environment due to a child's behavior.
- Delinquent tuition of one week or more.
- Repetitive delinquent tuition/fees three or more times.
- Repetitive late pick-ups or drop-offs of three or more.

3.3 CONFIDENTIALITY

We recognize the importance of keeping children, family, and employee files confidential. All files are kept locked in the Director's office. Children's files will be accessible to the parent/guardian of that child, owner, director, director's designee, DHEC, CACFP, and DSS Child Care Licensing. Parental permission must be obtained to

use photographs of children in the academy, on the website, on social media sites (Facebook/Instagram), and newsletter publications.

3.4 PART-TIME HOURS

The Academy offers a small, limited number of part-time spots at each academy. If space is available, you may choose three set full-time days. Families are not permitted to continuously switch between full time and part time enrollment statuses. An additional charge of \$30.00 per day will be placed on your account if your child attends an additional day outside of the three set days.

3.5 NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Enrollment is based upon availability of space without discrimination, race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or any other protected characteristic as established by law.

The Academy Director has overall responsibility for this policy and maintains reporting and monitoring procedures, as applicable. Parental and employees' questions or concerns should be referred to the director first. If it is not resolved, then you should refer to the owner.

Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken against any employee of Aspire Early Learning Academy who willfully violating this policy.

SECTION 4

FEES AND PAYMENT POLICIES

4.1 ANNUAL REGISTRATION

The non-refundable registration fee of \$80.00 per family is due upon enrollment and annually. Once paid upon initial enrollment, the next non-refundable registration fee will be due by September 1st of the following year and each year thereafter while enrolled. (*examples: enrollment October 2017 – next registration fee is due September 2018 or enrollment March 2018 – next registration fee is due September 2019.*) The registration fee will automatically be placed on your account on September 1st in the parent portal if your child will be attending for the current academic year. The final deadline to pay the annual registration fee is September 15th.

4.2 TUITION

Tuition payments are due each Monday for the week that you are receiving services. Accounts with a balance at closing on Tuesday, will receive a twenty-five dollar (\$25.00)

late payment fee. The tuition and all fees accumulated must be paid in full before returning the following week.

Effective January 1, 2021, tuition payments are only accepted online through our parent portal. Parents may pay via credit card or e-check. Tuition payments, registration, reservation, and graduation fees are non-refundable.

Adjustments in tuition are not made for sickness, inclement weather, pandemics, holidays and/or any unanticipated situations that would hinder full attendance. If your child will be absent for a full week, then a reservation credit of half of your normal weekly tuition will be credited to your account. Your family will only be responsible for the reservation fee of ½ of your normal weekly tuition rate. The reservation fee must also be paid on Monday to avoid the \$25.00 late payment fee. If your child attends at least one day within a current week, your family will be responsible for the full weekly tuition rate.

4.3 REFERRAL PROGRAM

Families who refer another family to any locations will receive one free tuition weekly tuition credit, for one child. New families must be enrolled for a minimum of three weeks for the referred family to receive the weekly tuition credit. It is the families' responsibility to notify the Director to receive the credit on their account. Credits will remain on the account until the family chose to use it. The referred family will need to indicate who referred them to the Academy on their application.

4.4 VACATION CREDIT

After one full year at the academy, with no break(s) in service, families will receive one free vacation week where they will not have to pay the reservation fee. The child/children must be absent the entire week to receive this credit. It is the families' responsibility to notify the Director, in advance, if they choose to use their free vacation week. It is only available once per calendar year and may not be rolled over to the next year if it is not used.

4.5 TUITION EXCPETION

During the Christmas Holiday, the Academy will close for one full week to provide our team time to spend with their family. Families will not be charged weekly tuition when the Academy closes for the week of Christmas. However, if there is a past due balance on the account at 6:00pm on Tuesday during this week, a \$25.00 late payment fee will be applied to the account.

4.6 SIBLING DISCOUNT

The Academy offers a sibling discount of ten percent to families with two or more children attending within the same household. The discounts are applied to the oldest child's tuition and for full-time enrollment only. If there are two or more children, a ten percent discount is applied to each of the children's tuition after the first child's regular tuition rate.

4.7 TUITION INCREASE

A standard three to five percent annual tuition increase will be effective the 1st Monday in September of each year. Families will be notified of the new rates two weeks prior with the annual renewal packet.

4.8 RETURNED CHECK FEE

There is a \$40.00 fee for all returned e-checks. After two Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF) checks have been received from one family, the family will no longer be able to use e-checks for payment. Debit/credit will be required for payment.

4.9 LATE PICK-UP FEE

The Academy closes promptly at 6:00pm. A late fee will be charged for families who pick up after closing. After one hour, we are required by DSS to notify the proper authorities. More than three late pick-ups within a thirty-day period may result in a notification of withdrawal. The late pick-up fees are due by the end of the week to return the upcoming week. The late fee schedule is as follows:

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 5 -10 minutes | \$10.00 per family |
| 11-20 minutes | \$15.00 per family |
| 21 – 30 minutes | \$20.00 per family |
| 31 – 45 Minutes | \$25.00 per family |
| 46 – 60 Minutes | \$30.00 per family. |

4.10 RESERVATION POLICY

If within one service week (Monday – Friday), your child attends at least one day at the Academy, families are responsible for the full weekly tuition. If your child is absent the entire service week, for various reasons, families are responsible for the reservation fee of ½ of your normal weekly tuition rate. The reservation fee is due on Monday of the respected week to avoid the late payment fee.

4.11 FIELD TRIP FEES

Parents and guardians will be notified well in advance of upcoming field trips and fees. All fees are due on Mondays of the week of the field trip to ensure that their child attends the trip. Field trip fees are not inclusive in tuition cost and registration fees. Field trip fees must be paid separately in the form of cash only.

4:11 ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

It is our goal to be able to offer a variety of enrichment programs for our students. If you wish for your child to participate in one that is offered, there will be an additional fee for this service. The programs and fees will be provided to parents in advance. Payments must be made directly to the program.

SECTION 5

DISCIPLINE POLICY

5.1 DISCIPLINE

Praise and positive reinforcement are the most effective methods of behavior management with children. When children receive positive, nonviolent, and understanding interactions from the adults in their lives, they develop good self-concepts, problem solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief we use a positive approach to discipline and practice the following discipline and behavior management techniques.

It is important to know that at Aspire Early Learning Academy; we DO NOT use corporal punishment of any form to discipline our students.

WE DO

- ◆ Communicate to children using positive statements.
- ◆ Communicate with children on their level.
- ◆ Talk with children in a calm quiet manner.
- ◆ Explain unacceptable behavior to children.
- ◆ Give attention to children for positive behavior.
- ◆ Praise and encourage the children.
- ◆ Reason with and set limits for the children.
- ◆ Apply rules consistently.
- ◆ Model appropriate behavior.
- ◆ Set up the classroom environment to prevent problems.
- ◆ Provide alternatives and redirect children to acceptable activity.
- ◆ Give children opportunities to make choices and solve problems.
- ◆ Help children talk out problems and think of solutions.
- ◆ Listen to children and respect the children's needs, desires and feelings.
- ◆ Provide appropriate words to help solve conflicts.
- ◆ Use storybooks and discussion to work through common conflicts.

WE DO NOT

- ◆ Inflict corporal punishment in any manner upon a child. (Corporal punishment is defined as the use of physical force to the body as a discipline measure. Physical force to the body includes, but is not limited to, spanking, hitting, shaking, biting, pinching, pushing, pulling, or slapping.)
- ◆ Use any strategy that hurts, shames, or belittles a child.
- ◆ Use any strategy that threatens, intimidates, or forces a child.
- ◆ Use food as a form of reward or punishment.
- ◆ Use or withhold physical activity as a punishment.
- ◆ Shame or punish a child if a bathroom accident occurs.
- ◆ Embarrass any child in front of others.
- ◆ Compare children.

- ◆ Place children in a locked and/or dark room.
- ◆ Leave any child alone, unattended or without supervision.
- ◆ Allow discipline of a child by other children.
- ◆ Criticize, make fun of, or otherwise belittle a child's parents, families, or ethnic groups.

Conferences will be scheduled with parents if continuous disciplinary problems occur. If a child's behavior consistently endangers the safety of the children around him/her, then the Academy Director will schedule a meeting with the parents, begin documenting behavior challenges, suggest interventions, and/or terminate services for the family.

Time out will be used as a last resort. If time-out is used, the child will not be isolated from the group. The child will only sit minutes that are identical to his/her age.

Research and history have proven that biting may become a challenge when small children are grouped together. If a child bites a classmate, both parents will be notified by phone. The incident will be documented and both families will receive a copy of the incident report. In respect of confidentiality, we will not provide the names of the children involved to the other family members.

Families of repetitive biters will be conferenced, and a corrective action plan will be created for the biter, teachers, and parents. If the incident continues repeatedly over the agreed documented period, the family will receive adequate notice to withdraw from the academy for the overall safety of all children enrolled.

SECTION 6

ILLNESS, MEDICATIONS, & SAFETY

6.1 CHILD ILLNESS & EXCLUSION POLICY

Our child illness policy is based on the Health Care Policies that were developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Department of Health and Environment.

We understand that it is difficult for parents or guardians to leave work and/or miss work. It is recommended that preparations are made in advance for occasions where children must remain home or be immediately picked up due to illnesses. Exclusion from the center, for a certain period, may become necessary to reduce the transmission and spread of an illness. The center may not be able to adequately meet the individual needs of mildly ill children, it will be determined on a case-by-case basis and may require a note from the pediatrician.

Minor illnesses are common in children; exclusion serves no purpose for minor illnesses if it does not represent any harm to other children.

Children will be excluded from the childcare setting for the following reasons listed below. This list covers most common illnesses, but is not inclusive of all reasons for exclusion:

- Any illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities.
- Illness that results in a greater need for care than our employees can provide without compromising the health, safety, and security of other children.
- Fever that is 100.0 orally, 100 forehead, 100.0 aural (ear), or 99.0 under the arm (without the added degree).
- Diarrhea – More than 2 loose stools within 24 hours; stools with blood or mucus; or uncontrolled stools that cannot be contained in a diaper, underwear or toilet.
- Vomiting – Green or bloody; 2 or more times during a 24 hour period.
- Rash – with fever or behavioral changes (unless written excuse is provided by a physician).
- Purulent conjunctivitis – pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow discharge around the eye; may return 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- Ring worm – may return 24 hours after treatment has begun and soars have crusted over.
- Impetigo – may return 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- Strep Throat – may return 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- Head Lice – may return 24 hours after treatment has begun and all nits are removed.
- Scabies – may return 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- Chickenpox – may return when all lesions have dried and is crusted (appx. 6 days)
- Pertussis (whooping cough) – may return after 5 days of receiving treatment with appropriate antibiotics.
- Hepatitis A Virus – may return one week after the onset of the illness and after immunoglobulin has been administered.

Children who have been excluded due to illness may return:

- ✓ When they are free from fever, vomiting and all other symptoms without the aid of medication, prescription or over the counter, for a full 24 hours.
- ✓ When they have been treated with antibiotics for a full 24 hours.
- ✓ When they can participate comfortably in all usual program activities, including outdoor time.
- ✓ The child must be free of open, oozing skin conditions and drooling (not related to teething) unless a note from a pediatrician specifically states that the child's condition is not contagious and the involved areas can be covered by a bandage without seepage or drainage through the bandage.

For your child's comfort and to reduce the risk of transmission, children are to be picked up within one hour of parent notification. Children are to be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to the Academy. In the case of a suspected contagious illness or continuing symptoms, a note from a pediatrician stating that the child is well enough to return to school may be required to return to the Academy.

If your child is diagnosed with a contagious illness, we request that you notify the Director so that we may inform families and monitor the students for similar symptoms.

Refer to our Pandemic Policy, located on the Academy website for information regarding Covid-19 and other highly contagious virus.

6.2 MEDICATION POLICY

We understand that there may be occasions where medication may need to be administered to a child while at the Academy. We will only administer medication when it is prescribed by the pediatrician to be given three or more times a day.

We will only administer the following medications: prescription medication in the original bottle with a descriptive label, diaper rash ointment, Neosporin, sunscreen, bug spray, and additional similar products. Items such as Neosporin, sunscreen bug spray, etc. must be labeled with your child's name on it and it must be accompanied with a medication form.

We will not issue over-the-counter medication for fever or pain reduction purposes, such as Tylenol or Motrin.

Should medication be administered, the following conditions will need to be met:

- Medications must be left at the Director's office and/or designee for proper handling.
- No medications (including topical solutions, such as diaper creams and sunscreen, etc.) can be left within the reach of children.
- Parents will need to complete the medication form before medication can be administered. A completed form includes times to be dispensed, dosage amounts, last time administered, and signature.
- Medications must be in original containers and labeled with the child's name and current date. We cannot give medication that is not in the original container or is prescribed for someone other than the child. Medicine will be dispensed as directed on the container. We will not administer medication that is more than 90 days old. **The first dose of the medication should be given at home in case there is an allergic reaction.**
- If your child needs special medical procedures (ex: nebulizer treatments), we need a signed note from your physician stating the type and amount of medication to be given, times and any additional information/instruction.

- If your child has severe allergic reactions to certain foods or insect bites, you may keep a prescribed Epi-pen at the academy. Written instructions from the physician on when to administer will be kept on file, as well as written permission from the parent for us to administer it in an emergency. These forms will need to be updated every six months. It is the parent's responsibility to make sure the Epi-pen is not outdated.
- The Director, or designee, will administer all prescription medications.
- Information will be logged immediately following the administration of the medication and a copy will be provided to the child's parent/guardian upon request.
- If there is an error during the administration of medication, parents/guardians will be notified immediately, and it will be documented in writing. If the error requires medical attention, the emergency officials will be called immediately along with the parents and the Department of Social Services- Child Care Licensing.

6.3 SAFETY

The safety of our students is a high priority for Aspire Early Learning Academy, LLC. Doors are always locked from the outside but remain unlock from the inside. Everyone who approaches the building must ring the doorbell to enter. All visitors, including therapist, must sign in the visitor's log upon arrive and sign out upon departure.

Children are tracked hourly though-out the day to ensure that each child is continuously accounted for. The teachers use an assigned DSS approved tracking form to call each child by name and facial recognition.

If someone other than the parent/guardian picks up your child, they will need to bring a state or government issued picture ID. If he/she is not on your approved list (on the enrollment application or parent portal), a parent will be called before the child can be released with the guardian. We request that parents notify a member of management well in advance regarding any pick-up changes.

The academy reserves the right to address a parent/guardian if suspect they are under the influence in which the child's safety would be in danger. We are unable to retain the child; however, we are mandated by law to notify the proper authorities and another parent.

A court-ordered documentation must be on file for families who are experiencing custody challenges. We are not able to legally withhold a child from being pick-up from a non-custodial parent unless a court-ordered document is provided and placed in your child's file. If there is a potentially dangerous altercation, we are required to release the child to the non-custodial parent and notify the local police department and Department of Social Services.

6.4 REPORTING ABUSE & NEGLECT

Along with being illegal, child abuse and neglect interferes with a child's healthy developments and later achievements in life. The State and Federal government requires that all Early Childhood Professionals report any suspected abuse and neglect to our local Child Protective Service office. The law requires reporting the following:

- Any physical injury, sexual or emotional abuse inflicted on a child other than by accidental means by those responsible for his/her care, custody and control (with the exception of discipline including spanking administered in a reasonable manner) shall be construed to be **abuse**.
- Failure to provide by those responsible for the care, custody and control of the child, the proper or necessary support, education as required by law, medical, surgical or any other care necessary for his/her well-being shall be classified as **neglect**.

Parents may not be informed of reporting if such information may hinder a full investigation. The law requires reporting to come directly from the employee who suspects the abuse. Management may, or may not, be aware of a suspected child abuse report/case.

6.5 EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS & EVACUATION PLAN

If an individual medical emergency should occur at the Academy, the following steps will be taken:

1. The Academy's designee will call 911 and the emergency medical team will transport the child to the nearest hospital. We will attempt to reach both parents and take the Emergency Contact Form for the child to the hospital.
2. The Academy Director will go with the child to the hospital and stay with the child until the parent(s)/guardian(s) arrive.
3. The Director's Designee will remain at the facility to remain in charge during the Director's absence.

In the event an environmental emergency should occur at our Academy, the respected evacuation plans are posted in each academy and a general summary is provided below:

1. For inclement weather, the Academy will follow the school district's closing schedule in which the respected Academy is located. Parents are encouraged listen to the local radio station, television station and/or view social media pages for weather updates.
 - a. In the event of an unpredicted emergency, such as a tornado/earthquake, the children will be relocated to the safest location within the building. If we lose power or electronic communication for an extended period and conditions become hazardous; the children will

be relocated to a safer location, a note will be placed on the Academy's front door to inform parents.

2. In the case of fire: We will follow the following steps:
 - a. Children will immediately be escorted out of the building and will line up against the fence that is the farthest away from the building.
 - b. Once all children have exited the building, the Academy Director or designee has safely cleared the building; we will relocate to a safe location together if conditions are not controlled.
 - c. Teachers will account for all children by checking attendance logs/tracking forms and reporting to the director or designee before leaving, upon arrival at the safe location, and every 15 minutes thereafter.
 - d. We will notify parents of our location by phone call, text, and/or email once we arrive safely.
 - e. The Director or Designee will provide first aid as needed.
 - f. We will not re-enter the building until permission is given by the Fire Officials.

6.6 TRANSPORTATION & FIELD TRIPS

Aspire Early Learning Academy, LLC does not provide transportation to and from individual homes. In the event of an off-site field trip, will use state certified buses, with certified drivers, to transport children to and from field trips. Children will be tracked every 15-30 minutes by using the tracking sheet to call their names and verify it is the child through facial recognition.

Parents will be notified at least two weeks in prior to a field trip. Notices will include departure time from the Academy, return time to the Academy, dress attire, and the cost of the field trip. Written parental authorization for field trips is required and must be signed in advance. Payment is due a minimum of two days before the field trip, unless otherwise noted. All children are encouraged to participate in all field trips as this is an important part of the learning experience.

If the children are being transported by school bus, a separate "check on/check off" form will be used. Children will be checked on **each** time they enter the bus and checked off **each** time they exit the bus (either at a field trip site or at the Academy).

A child who does not have written permission to go on a field trip will remain at the academy and be placed in another classroom.

Parents are invited to attend with the children on field trips. Parents as chaperones are not permitted to supervise children alone. Parents may only be alone with their child/children.

SECTION 7

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

7.1 OPEN-DOOR POLICY

We have an open-door policy where parents are welcome to visit the academy at any time during normal operating hours and circumstances. If you believe that your child's learning will be interrupted and/or the learning of the class during your visit, we request that visitations are limited. The Academy Director reserves the right to request limited visitations if it affects the overall learning environment of the classroom.

7.2 VOLUNTEERING

We encourage parents to volunteer in the classrooms and on field trips. Please notify your child's teacher and/or the director if you will be available to volunteer. If someone other than a parent/guardian volunteers, you will need to notify the Director before the person visits the academy/field trip site. Continuous volunteers will need to complete a volunteer SLED/FBI and Central Registry Background check for \$45.00 through the Academy.

7.3 PARENT MEETINGS

Each academic year, we will have one fall Open House for families to drop in and speak with the teachers and Director.

There will be one optional parent-teacher conferences during the Spring for children ages four and five who are preparing for kindergarten. Conferences will be a time for parents to learn about their child's experiences and developmental progress at the Academy. Documentations of your child's progress, developmental checklists, and classroom portfolios will be shared at the conference. Additional conferences may be scheduled at the request of either the teaching team or parents.

7.4 BIRTHDAY PARTIES & CELEBRATIONS

Aspire Early Learning Academy, LLC encourages parents to celebrate their child's birthday at the academy. This brings joy for your child and his/her peers. Classroom celebrations may be held at 3:00pm Monday – Friday. Parents and family members are welcome to attend. We have a No Nut Policy in place, so please be mindful when purchasing your items. Cakes, drinks, and all food items must be store bought. It is required that you notify your child's teacher at least one day prior to the classroom party.

7.5 FUNDRAISING

The Academy will hold two to three fundraising opportunities a year. We encourage every family to participate. Fundraisers provides the academy the ability to purchase and replenish items for the children as well as keep tuition at an affordable cost for our families.

7.6 AFTER HOURS ACTIVITIES

We may host a minimal amount of after-hours activities so that families may attend special events. After-hour activities will be posted well in advance for proper planning. We request that families participate as our team donates their time to prepare for these activities.

SECTION 8

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND REGULATIONS

8.1 FREE AND FULL ACCESS

Parents have free and full access to their children, unless a court order states otherwise and the visit does not disrupt the overall classroom instruction, activities, and/or routines. We encourage parents to schedule court ordered family visits away from the academy as we strive to maintain a consistent environment for our students.

8.2 RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Children will only be released to authorized adults. The parent/guardian will complete a form listing all adults who are authorized to pick up the child from the facility. If special circumstances arise and you need someone to pick up your child that would normally not be allowed to do so, you must notify the center prior to departure, either by phone and/or written notice.

In the event of a parental emergency and we are unable to reach an emergency contact, the individual(s) will be required to provide us a copy of his/her photo identification and/or confirm knowledge of the family code word to the Director. The Director will also call the Emergency Contacts on file to confirm identity if the parents are unable to be reached.

Any additions, changes, or deletions to the authorized pick-up form must be made by the parent/guardian only. Identified biological parents will not be removed from forms or denied from picking up a child unless a court order prohibiting them is provided.

In the event someone arrives to pick up a child who appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, law enforcement will be notified.

8.3 TRACKING OF CHILDREN

All children will be accounted for as they enter and exit the facility, enter and exit a vehicle for field trips, or move from classroom to classroom within the Academy. The location of all children will be tracked through our Tracking Form.

Parents should ensure that when dropping off their children that the caregiver is fully aware that the child has entered the room and that the parent will be leaving. **Please do**

not drop your child off at the front door or classroom door and assume that the caregiver will see that your child has arrived.

8.4 LIABILITY INSURANCE

All facilities are required by law to either have liability insurance or inform parents that they do not carry insurance. Aspire Early Learning Academy, LLC does carry liability insurance.

8.5 PROVISIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Child Care facilities has the choice to participate in provisional employment which is an emergency hiring process. If the facility participates, the parents will be notified that there is a provisional worker at the academy.

The Provisional Employment process means that employees are hired using an internet SLED catch based on date of birth and social security number until such time as a fingerprint-based background check and a check of the Central Registry of Abuse and Neglect has been returned. Employees hired using Provisional Employment cannot be left alone with children until the SLED/FBI and Central Registry checks are complete and results are received.

Aspire Early Learning Academy only uses the provisional hire process in the event of an emergency only if the applicant has previous, confirmed experience in a licensed childcare center.

8.6 CHANGE OF CLOTHING

Parents/guardians are required to provide two change of clothing sets. Clothing sets must be size, and season appropriate for each child. Labeled clothing sets must include shirts, pants, under garments, and socks. While the Academy will strive to keep extra clothing available, we are not required to.

The Academy has the right to refuse service to families who do not provide additional clothing for their child/children while at the academy.

8.7 POLITICS

Aspire Early Learning Academy respects everyone's freedom of speech. However, it is in the best interest of all parties that we refrain from the discussion and/or debate of political favors and/or viewpoints while on the Academy's premises. We are to maintain the integrity of a neutral environment for our children, families, and the Aspire team.

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ASPIRE EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY, LLC

Acknowledgement of Parent Handbook

I am signing below to confirm that I have received the Parent Handbook for Aspire Early Learning Academy, LLC and it is my responsibility to review it. I am also confirming that I am aware that the Parent Handbook is located on the company's website.

Enrolled Child's Name

Parent/Employee's Name

Parent/Employee's Signature

Today's Date