Parent Handbook

A Little Schoolhouse Christian Academy

Welcome!

I am pleased to welcome all of our families to A Little Schoolhouse Christian Academy! Since 2007 we have provided quality preschool programs to the Parrish community. As a commitment to the highest standards of excellence, the program was accredited by the Florida Association of Christian Colleges and Schools in 2009.

We are blessed with a team of teachers and staff who have committed their lives to Jesus Christ and to teaching young children. We are blessed with a bright and beautiful facility where children are excited to learn and make new friends. We are also blessed with amazing families who have placed a priority on their child's learning—both academic and spiritual.

We are proud that you have chosen our school for your child. I know your child will have a positive experience as they learn and grow during the coming school year. I hope that this handbook helps answer any questions that you may have about A Little Schoolhouse. Please feel free to stop by the office at any time, my door is always open.

In Christ's love,
Natalie French
Director

Our Program

We are a Christian early childhood program serving children 3 to 6 years of age. Parents may choose from a two day (T/TH), three day (M/W/F), or five day a week program. Classes are held Monday-Friday 8:45 am-12:30 pm. Children participating in the State of Florida Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten program (4 years old as of September 1st) must attend five days a week. We have a limited number of traditional VPK spots. The state of Florida covers 3 instructional hours a day. (8:45 am- 11:45am). Those attending our VPK plus program will have a lengthened day (8:45 am-12:30 pm) and are responsible for covering the cost of the extended day. If spots allow we could also offer an afternoon Free VPK class.

Tuition

Tuition is due the first of each month. After the 7th of the month a late fee of $20 will be added to your bill. If your account is still past due at the beginning of the following month, your child will not be allowed to attend classes until all accounts are paid in full. Failure to pay tuition in a timely manner may be means for dismissal. There will be no reduction in tuition for absences, nor for holidays as fees are based upon a yearly tuition divided into 10 payments. The annual program fee is due for all families regardless of their date of enrollment.

Stay and Play

To meet the needs of our families we also offer an extended day (until 2:30 pm). If selecting the Stay and Play option, you must sign up for the number of days that your child will be attending school. You cannot opt to do partial amount of days for extended hours.

Proper Dress

Please send your child to school in clothes you don't mind getting messy or possibly stained. We will make every effort, but cannot guarantee that your child will go home as clean as when they arrived. Please have your child wear closed-toe, rubber soled shoes to school. We want children to be safe while at school and on the playground. Parents will be asked to send a full change of clothes to be left in the classroom in case of accidents.

Teachers

Classroom teachers have completed all requirements by the State of Florida and the Department of Children and Families. Lead teachers have a CDA or Bachelors degree and have completed First Aid and CPR courses. All employees of A Little Schoolhouse are committed Christians and have submitted to local, state, and national fingerprinting and background checks. Teachers are prohibited from entering outside employment relationships with current ALSH parents and transporting children to/from school per our employment handbooks, and for the safety and protection of our students and teachers.

Birthdays

Birthdays are an important time in the lives of children and we are glad that we get to help them celebrate their special day. Birthdays will be celebrated during the last week of each month. Parents are welcomed to sign up to bring a healthier snack such as muffins, fruit kabobs, dipped strawberries, fruit/jello cups etc. Please no cakes or candy. We will celebrate birthdays during class time with a birthday crown, song, and special snack. Summer birthdays will be celebrated during the last weeks of school. Children at this age are particularly sensitive .Please do not pass out invitations or bring gifts for children to school.

Items from Home

Please do not allow your child to bring items from home unless prior arrangements have been made with teacher. Toys, money, candy, and "loveys" could pose a risk to other children, may get lost, and are likely to cause a distraction to your child and their classmates.

Attendance Policy

We miss you when we do not see your smiling faces! Please call or email and let us know if your child will be absent from school. Children participating in the State of Florida VPK program are required to follow the VPK Attendance Policies mandated by the State. Your cooperation is required to maintain your placement In VPK.

Christian Education

A Little Schoolhouse is a private Christian school which believes in a biblical worldview and model of education. Bible lessons, prayer, religious holiday focus, and Christian music are all an integral part of our curriculum and mission.

Technology

We live in a technology centered age, and current early childhood curricula often utilize available technologies to supplement classroom lessons. At A Little Schoolhouse, age appropriate computer software, educational videos, or other tools may be used as part of our curriculum on a limited basis. Our focus will always remain on hands-on, age appropriate learning opportunities.

Lunch

All children should bring their own lunch from home. Lunches should include a drink, napkin, and utensils. No candy or gum is allowed in school. We do not have means for refrigerated lunches, so please be sure to use an ice pack and include items that will remain fresh and safe.

Newsletters/Calendars

Monthly newsletters will be emailed home to keep you informed of what your child is learning about, and of important classroom dates and information. An annual school calendar is available which includes all school holidays and important dates A sample agenda is also available in your child's classroom.

Discipline Policy

We make every attempt to ensure that the classroom is a safe and positive environment and aim to teach children self-discipline. Staff will never use corporal punishment nor will it be tolerated in any way. Teachers will implement our **"3-R's Policy"**. 1.) REMIND the child of the correct behavior. 2.) REDIRECT the child to another appropriate activity. If the behavior persists the staff member will 3.) REMOVE a child who continues a hurtful or harmful behavior. A child will have to stay by the teacher's side, or with the school Director while a teacher tends to the needs of the remaining students, until it is shown that they can self- regulate their own behavior and make positive choices. A Behavior Report will be placed in your child's cubby which must be signed verifying that you have been notified of any behaviors that warranted disciplinary action by teacher. We believe that parents are their child's most important teacher and therefore communication is a priority so that teachers and parents are aware of disciplinary issues. When a teacher sees Biting, Hitting, Kicking, Name Calling, Putting Hands on another child in a hurtful/inappropriate way or other behavior which could harm another child or teacher, it will not be tolerated at school. This type of activity will be documented, and parents will be notified by and required to sign a Behavior Report. Recurrent behaviors or unwillingness of parents and children to adhere to the Discipline Policy that protects the children and staff may warrant dismissal from the program.

Non-Enrolled Children

Non-enrolled children may not be allowed in the classroom during school hours other than quick drop off/pickup times for siblings. This is due to State mandated teacher:student ratios, liability, and supervision issues.

Mandated Reporter Notice

A Little Schoolhouse Christian Academy and its employees are mandated reporters for any suspicions of child abuse or neglect. The State of Florida Abuse hotline and/or the Manatee County Sheriff's Department will be notified if the administration feels it is warranted.

Scholarship Opportunities

A limited number of scholarships may be available to families who qualify. Parents may request a scholarship application from the director at any time. Families may be asked to submit further financial/tax information to the Board of Directors before eligibility can be determined. It is our desire that every family, regardless of financial situation, be able to attend our programs.

Non-Discrimination

A Little Schoolhouse Christian Academy does not discriminate based on race, color, national and ethnic origin in admissions policies, scholarship opportunities, or employment. The school does reserve the right to refuse admission to families whose spiritual and moral life is inconsistent with biblical teaching, or which may compromise the spiritual testimony and educational ministry of the school.

Sick Policy

Please do not send your child to school if they are sick. **If your child has had a frequent runny nose, severe cough, has vomited, had a fever (unmedicated) within the past 24 hours, or has a suspicious rash DO NOT BRING THEM TO SCHOOL.**

We will contact you if your child presents any of these symptoms while at school and you will need to come and pick them up immediately. We do not want your child, nor any of our children exposed to any more germs than necessary. Because we are a part time program, it is our policy not to administer medication to students. **If your child has a medical condition or allergy it must be noted on your registration paperwork.**

Security & Emergency Procedures

Persons authorized to pick up your child from school must be listed on the enrollment form, or authorized by note or phone call to the director. Persons will be verified by photo identification. In cases involving legal custody, we must have legal documentation if we are to prevent a child from being picked up by a parent. We cannot prevent a parent from picking up their child if it is not legally documented.

In the case of a Natural Disaster, or other local, state, or national emergencies, we will operate under a lock down situation.

The preschool will be locked and all persons will be required to show identification and sign that they have picked up their child.

In cases of severe weather we follow the Manatee County School board's decisions for closings.

Guest Speakers

We are excited to have special guest speakers and performances throughout the year. These guests allow our students to experience first hand some of the lessons we are covering in the classroom. We will make the best attempt to alternate these guest visits on M/W/F or T/TH. We will post the dates and times in advance. If the event falls on a day your child does not regularly attend classes, we invite you to escort them and join us during the times posted. **Parents are always welcome in the classroom and at these events! If you have a talent, hobby, or job that you would like to share please see the director!**

Communication

Teachers are available for a conference whenever you feel that you have a need or concern about your child. Please communicate with your child's teacher in a professional manner using written email/notes or face to face. Social media is not an appropriate platform to reach a teacher during non-work hours. Please take the time to make an appointment to sit down and talk with them as teachers are responsible for their class during drop off and pick up times and are not available to discuss issues at length during these times.

Annual conferences are available in the Spring in order to discuss their child's progress reports and allow them to make decisions for the following school year.

We believe that parents and teachers must work together as a team for the child's best success. Please let the teacher know if there is something that you are concerned about or would like to have your child be observed for.

PLEASE READ EVERYTHING YOUR CHILD BRINGS HOME!

Registration Process

All paperwork and annual program fees must be turned in prior to a space being held for your child. A Florida Health Form and Shot Record and our notarized emergency care release must be turned in prior to your child's first day of school. Your child may not begin school until these documents are on record!

Admission is granted as space is available. Currently enrolled families and their siblings receive priority registration, then member families of WestCoast church, and then registration is open to the community. Children are assigned to classrooms based on age and developmental progress.

Accreditation

A Little Schoolhouse Christian Academy is accredited through the Florida Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (FACCS). In the education community accreditation is the standard of quality, integrity, and excellence. By choosing to seek accreditation in FACCS our school is required to complete a self-study as well as on-site visits by other Christian school administrators to assess the educational and spiritual ministries of our program. Our goal is to continue to maintain accreditation by implementing a biblical philosophy of education and the highest standards of excellence at all times.

Pick Up/Drop Off Procedures

Parents are expected to pick up and drop off their child in a timely manner. Parents are asked not to linger inside the classroom as teachers have a set schedule for activities.

A $10 per 10 minute late fee will be assessed for parents picking up their children after the end of the school day. These fees are due at the time of pickup. Please call the office if you are running late. If you have not picked up your child within 10 minutes of pick up time it is considered late. If we cannot reach you or someone on your approved pick up list, we are required to call the Sheriff' s Department and/or the Department of Children and Families. We never want to do this so please make an effort to be on time.

Volunteers

We believe that parents and teachers make a great team! We welcome volunteers in our classroom and during special events. If you would like to volunteer at A Little Schoolhouse, you may be required by State Law to submit to a fingerprint and background check. Please see the Director if you have a desire to volunteer.

Building Security

The safety of your children is our utmost concern. All visitors must check in at the front desk before being escorted into the classroom areas. Teachers, and staff persons have submitted to national level fingerprinting and background investigations.

Our parent entrance is equipped with a key code for security purposes. This code may change throughout the year if deemed necessary. DO NOT GIVE THIS CODE OUT TO FRIENDS OR VISITORS. DO NOT HOLD OPEN THE PARENT ENTRANCE DOOR FOR ANY UNKNOWN PERSONS-EVEN OTHER PARENTS. We would rather be overly cautious than put any of our children at risk.

A Little Schoolhouse Christian Academy
941.776.1973 www.ALittleSchoolhouse.com
11740 US Hwy 301 N
Parrish, FL

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