



# STUDENT AND FAMILY HANDBOOK



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **WELCOME**

## **MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY**

## **SCHOOL DAY**

- HOURS
- ATTENDANCE
- PICK-UP AND DISMISSAL
- BEFORE AND AFTERCARE
- OUTDOOR PLAY

## **TUITION AND FEES**

- TUITION
- FINANCIAL AID
- EARLY WITHDRAWAL
- DISCOUNTS
- ACCOUNTS IN ARREARS

## **COMMUNICATION**

- FOLDERS
- REPORT CARDS AND PROGRESS REPORTS
- METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

## **TEACHERS AND PARENTS**

- TEACHER AVAILABILITY
- PARENT VISITS
- PARENT INVOLVEMENT

## **HEALTHY LIVING AND LEARNING**

- LUNCH
- HEALTHY CHOICES
- BIRTHDAY TREATS

## **SAFETY AND POLICIES**

- MEDICINE ADMINISTRATION
- ILLNESS POLICY
- NATURAL DISASTER AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS
- SCHOOL SAFETY
- CANCELLATION POLICY
- SCHEDULING
- BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS AND MANAGEMENT
- PETS

## **CURRICULUM/PROGRAMS**

- MOVEMENT BETWEEN SCHOOLS & TEACHER/CLASS CHOICE
- SPECIAL EVENTS
- ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS
- BENEFITS OF MULTIAGE CLASSROOMS
- PRESCHOOL AND PREKINDERGARTEN
- LOWER SCHOOL
- UPPER SCHOOL

## **WELCOME!**

### **We are so glad you have joined our Learning Academy community.**

The purpose of The Learning Academy's Student and Family Handbook is to ensure that each student and his or her family is fully informed of the policies, expectations, and privileges provided to Learning Academy students. In so doing, it is our hope that parents, students and faculty will have a smooth, successful, and enjoyable school year together. When questions arise during the school year, please consult your handbook.

Of course, there is no way every situation can be addressed. Questions left unanswered by the policies contained within will be left to the discretion of the board of directors. If parents have a concern or issue, please contact the person or people closest to the situation. If an issue cannot be resolved at the lowest level (directly with teacher or office staff), then it should be brought to the attention of the board for resolution. Open communication and ongoing dialogue between home and school are necessary to the development of honest relationships that are necessary for the optimal education of our students. Thank you for your continued support and cooperation. Have an excellent school year! 😊

### **Mission and Philosophy**

At The Learning Academy, we believe in encouraging the strengths of all learners so they may gain confidence in themselves and their abilities and take pride in the outcomes of their efforts. It is our belief that by offering small, multi-age classrooms, our students are offered the optimal learning environment and the utmost individualized attention. Our curriculum is designed using a hands-on, integrated approach to learning that allows students to make connections to their own lives and the world around them. We work to create classrooms that model a community where each member contributes to creating an environment of respect and support. We understand that there is an opportunity to learn and discover in each moment and that all students should have the opportunity to share and reflect, to make choices about their own learning, to self-evaluate and use mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow.

## **SCHOOL DAY**

### **School Hours**

School begins at 8:30am and ends at 3:00pm. Our doors open at 7:30am (see below).

### **Attendance and Tardiness**

School begins promptly at 8:30am for all classes. Coming to school on time is very important to your child's day, as is attending daily. Please avoid tardiness and unnecessary absences. If space is available, preschool students may attend on days that they are not enrolled by paying a full-day drop-in fee of \$60. TK-Grade 7 drop-ins are \$75/day.

### **Pick-up and Dismissal**

Preschool parents, please pick your child up between 2:45-3:00 pm. TK-Grade 7 students may be picked up from 3-3:15pm. If you have students in both age groups, please pick up as close to 3pm as possible. Use the pull-through in front of the building, pulling as far forward as you are able to and remain in your vehicle. Your child will be sent out to you. If you need to enter the building, please park on the north side of the

building. PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE YOUR VEHICLE UNATTENDED IN THE PULL THROUGH. If your preschool aged child has not been picked up by 3:00pm, they will be sent to our after school program. TK-Grade 7 students will be sent to aftercare at 3:15pm.

### **Before and After Care**

There is a \$5 before care charge for any drop-off between 7:30-8:00am. Our after care program runs from 3:00-5:30pm Monday-Friday and includes a healthy snack at 4pm. The cost of this program is \$16/day.

### **Outdoor Play**

Students will be playing outside daily, even during the winter months. Please make sure to send your child to school with appropriate clothing and footwear for the weather. All students are required to attend each recess. If you wish for your child to be kept indoors for any reason, please notify your child's teacher to excuse them.

## **TUITION AND FEES**

### **Tuition**

Tuition is due the 1st day of each month. Please pay on or before the 1st to avoid a late fee of \$25.

### **Financial Aid**

We offer financial aid to families in grades K-8. Please inquire for more information about how to apply.

### **Early Withdrawal**

Early withdrawal of your student before the completion of the academic year includes a penalty of an additional month's tuition and the forfeiture of your deposit. Early withdrawal of any student receiving financial assistance will require repayment of the aided amount for the months the child was in attendance.

### **Discounts**

A discount of 10% is available for families with multiple children attending in grades K-8. The first child will pay full tuition. Discounts may not be combined for families receiving financial aid, a grandfathered rate or for those attending on a limited schedule.

### **Accounts in Arrears**

Your account is considered delinquent if you have missed one or more required payments. If your account is delinquent by more than two months, your student will be unable to continue attending. If you are delinquent and also receiving financial aid, you will forfeit your aided amount and be expected to pay full tuition for the balance owed.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **Folders**

We provide all of our students with a plastic folder to transport schoolwork and teacher notes back and forth between home and school. Please check this folder nightly, take out and keep anything on the "keep at home" side and return it to your child's

backpack. Additionally, please ensure that your child has a backpack that is large enough to enclose all of their belongings.

### **Report Cards and Conferencing**

Students in grades TK-8 work on a trimester system. There will be report cards and conferences at the completion of each trimester, with conferences at the completion of trimesters one and two. If you wish to conference with your child's teacher at a time other than those offered, please contact your child's teacher directly. Preschool students will receive one progress report in the spring.

### **Methods of Communication**

The majority of our communication with you is done via email and teacher newsletters. Please provide a valid email address and check our website and your mail frequently to ensure that you are receiving all information that is being sent home. You may also check your child's classroom blog and our website. Some important information will be sent via our emergency text notification system.

## **TEACHERS AND PARENTS**

### **Teacher Availability**

Your children's teachers love talking with you and always want you to feel that they are available, however, they are extremely busy in the morning and immediately after school. Please attempt to make an appointment with them if you feel that you may have an extended conversation so that they can give you the time you need. Thank you for remembering that there are some conversations regarding your child that are best held privately with a teacher rather than with the child present.

### **Parent Visits**

If you are interested in becoming a classroom volunteer, please contact your child's teacher directly.

### **Parent Involvement**

The Learning Academy is a non-profit organization. We have a Parent Teacher Volunteer Organization (PTVO) who works to plan and organize fundraisers and student-centered events throughout the year. They meet on a monthly basis. While your participation in any school sponsored event is optional, we do encourage you to donate of your time, energy and expertise when possible. Working together in support of our children and our school creates a sense of community and strengthens our school financially and as a collaborative unit.

## **HEALTHY LIVING AND LEARNING**

### **Lunch**

Please provide your child with a bagged lunch, two snacks and a water bottle daily. We ask that preschool students be sent with meals that can be eaten cold or heated easily, the kitchen is available to our older students for heating leftovers. Thank you for helping to reduce waste and single-use plastics by using reusable bags and containers!

## **Healthy Choices**

Healthy snacks and lunches are invaluable to your child's learning and behavior, as is eating a balanced breakfast. Please do not send "treats" to school with your students. Sugar can be a detriment to your child's behavior and affect their ability to concentrate during class time. Also, please ensure that your child is getting plenty of sleep, a tired child can exhibit behavior and learning difficulties.

## **Birthday Treats**

We celebrate your child's special day with a birthday crown, birthday songs and a special privilege that will be decided by each individual teacher. Thank you for not sending food "treats" to school. This is a protection for children with special diets, food sensitivities, and allergies.

# **SAFETY AND POLICIES**

## **Medicine Administration**

If your child requires medication to be administered during the school day or in the event of an emergency, please complete an Authorization for the Administration of Medicine form in the office.

## **Illness Policy**

If your child is ill or has been within the past 24 hours, please do not send them to school. This includes, but is not limited to, vomiting and/or diarrhea, thick and/or green mucous, sore throat, cough or fever. If your child has been diagnosed with head lice, we do require a signed clearance from the District 7 Health Department before your child may return to school. While we understand that this can be difficult for working parents, please consider the health and welfare of all of the children and teachers at school when making the decision to keep your child home.

## **Natural Disaster and Emergency Preparedness**

We are a licensed childcare provider through the State of Idaho. We have procedures and supplies in place in case of an emergency. We require you to send your child to school with a full change of clothing in a labeled Ziploc bag that can be added to the emergency bins that equip each classroom. Clothing will be returned at the completion of the school year.

## **School Safety**

For the safety of all on our school campus, alcohol, tobacco, firearms and explosives are not permitted on school property at any time.

## **Pets**

We welcome well-behaved pets in our school, but for the health and welfare of our students, please bring your pet into the building on a leash and enter through the front door.

## **Cancellation Policy**

The Learning Academy does not follow the public school's cancellation policy. We cancel in the event of unsafe or impassable roads or if the temperature is dangerously low. If

the forecast looks to improve significantly, a late entry of 10am is possible. If conditions are deteriorating and school is in session, an early release may take place. If school is cancelled or there is a late entry or early release, there will be information emailed and texted to you, posted on Facebook and announced on Local News 8 (cancellations only). There are additional hours built into our school calendar to cover up to 7 cancelled days.

## **Schedules**

Students who are 3 years old at the onset of the school year may choose a two-day schedule. All students 4-5 years old at the onset of the academic year are required to choose a 3-5 day schedule. Students in grades K-8 may attend on a limited schedule as discussed at the time of enrollment.

## **Behavior Policies**

At the Learning Academy, we strive to educate the whole child, placing great importance on growth of character, self-reliance, accountability and behavior. We encourage students to make good choices and take increasing degrees of responsibility for their own learning and actions. Following is a list of school behavior policies:

- Students will keep hands, feet and objects to themselves (i.e. students will not utilize aggressive behavior or initiate a physical confrontation).
- Students will speak to and act toward adults and peers in a courteous and respectful manner (including voice tone and body language). Students will refer to all staff, parents and visitors in the building using Ms. or Mr. preceding the adult's first name.
- While in the classroom and walking throughout the building, students will generate no noise that could disturb or disrupt the learning of others while keeping hands, feet and objects to themselves.
- Students will listen to and follow the instructions or directions of all school staff the first time asked.
- All school facilities and equipment will be used in an appropriate and safe manner at the appropriate time.
- Students may not bring toys, trading cards, or electronic devices of any kind to school. Exceptions include outdoor toys such as balls, jump ropes, sleds, etc.

## **Behavior Management**

- Students will be given a place to reflect on their own behavior and to plan for better future choices.
- Severe behaviors, such as swearing, biting, spitting, hitting, name-calling or other physical or emotional cruelty, or any form of sexual inappropriateness will warrant a phone call and/or meeting with parents.
- In certain circumstances, students may also be sent home or spend the remainder of the school day working in the office.
- In recurring cases, students may be dismissed from The Learning Academy.

# CURRICULUM AND PROGRAMS

## Movement & Teacher Choice

The community at The Learning Academy is integrated and inclusive. Students work collaboratively with each other and their facilitators. Our programmatic designations separate children into groups in order to best meet their intellectual and social maturities and needs at different developmental states. We strive to make movement between “schools” fluid and determined by a child’s readiness, but in general, preschool ranges from ages 3-5, the lower school is students ages 5-8, and the upper school is ages 9-14. You may request a teacher/classroom for your child, but the ultimate decision will be that of the administration of the school. This may include movement mid-year, if seen as a benefit for your child.

## Special Events

The Learning Academy holds many special events for our students and their families. These may include: Back-to-School Night, Halloween Carnival, Thanksgiving Feast, Holiday Program, Mad Hatter Tea Party (Valentine’s Day), Art Night, Year End Celebration and more.

## Enrichment Programs

In addition to core subjects, students may have access to physical education and wellness, music, drama, Spanish, community enrichment, monthly field trips and outdoor education, winter sports, performing arts, public speaking, culinary arts, and mindfulness classes. Enrichment programs vary from year to year.

## Benefits of a Multi- Age Classroom

- Students may progress at their own rate and developmental stage, learning on a continuum that is uninterrupted by grade level or curriculum requirements.
- There is allowance for active, cooperative student learning, child centered practices and authentic assessment tailored to the individual.
- Students interact with peers of varying abilities, interests, personalities and ages, promoting involvement, respect and accountability.
- Emphasis on individual differences in small, flexible groups.
- Instruction is designed to develop character and life skills as well as meet academic goals
- Integrated curriculum is shared by all grade levels using varying instructional strategies and methods of inquiry

## Preschool

Our Preschool programs combine the early learning of letters and sounds, numbers and science concepts with imaginative play and focused discovery. Students thrive in an atmosphere where they are free to engage their curiosities and find their love of learning while in a comfortable, yet structured environment. Art projects, science experiments, motor-skill development, letter-centered activities, games and self-exploration fill your preschooler’s week and enrich their young minds.

A peek into the preschool area will show you a world of hands-on activities and free-choice play. Most activities are Montessori-based and each activity opens a door for your child to explore. They may become a princess from the dress-up rack, a pirate on



the high seas aboard the indoor ship, a builder of blocks, a musician on the chimes, bells, drums and whistles, a sorter of beans and bugs, or a mommy or daddy in the kitchen! Teachers introduce our scholars to a world of books and the letters and sounds that create these stories. They whip out the paints, crayons, scissors, paper and glue to set creative minds to work and can be found making volcanoes and geysers erupt with little scientists or bread with our little bakers.

## **Lower School**

Transitional Kindergarten, Kindergarten, first, second, and third grades make up our lower school. This program combines both the learning and enhancement of reading, writing and spelling skills, math concepts, science, geography and exploration of the world around us through focused discovery centers, group and individual lessons. Students also have regular Spanish, physical education, art, music, drama, and mindfulness classes. Students are given the tools they need to be successful learners and thinkers and often achieve well beyond their grade level due to the uninterrupted continuum with which they are allowed to work.

A glimpse into our lower school will reveal students who love reading so much that they are buried in books in their fun reading areas like James's peach and the bathtub! Hands-on math games and manipulatives are splayed on the floor with anxious number crunchers gathered around. Students are on computers, playing learning games, and writing stories. You might catch them playing their recorders or creating art that coincides with their read-aloud. Whatever place you find them, you are guaranteed to find them learning!

## **Upper School**

Our upper school program consists of grades four through eight. These classes delve deeply into all subject areas with a focus on independence, critical thinking and doing one's best work. Core curriculum includes social studies and history, literature, language arts, mathematics and science with a focus on developing writing and public speaking skills. Spanish, music, art, drama, culinary arts, mindfulness, health and wellness, environmental studies, and physical education classes enrich the core curriculum. Classes include technology as a part of individual subjects and with computers available right in the classroom, students can work individually at their own pace on designated tasks and projects.

Students can be found wading in streams to find macroinvertebrates, working on large group projects, taking trips to California, Arizona, Washington and Virginia, Massachusetts and Maine, writing plays and books and journaling from the perspective of a colonist in the New World. You may find them in Teton Canyon gathering information for their local guidebooks, giving a speech for their presidential election campaign or painting like Vincent Van Gogh. These older students gain respect for themselves, others and the world around them through the myriad of lessons, field trips and projects they encounter.