



Berea Early Learning Academy  
16779 Lucas Ferry Rd  
Athens, AL 35611  
[mybela.org](http://mybela.org)

# **BEREA EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY**

## **Parent Handbook 2023-2024**

**Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 8:00 – 3:30**

**16779 Lucas Ferry Rd  
Athens, AL 35611**

**Ph: 1-256-530-4332  
Website: [mybela.org](http://mybela.org)**



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## Mission of Berea Early Learning Academy

Berea Early Learning Academy is a Christian based preschool focused on providing children opportunities to succeed. Our mission is to develop young leaders with a Christ-centered education at an early age. Every child has a special place in God's plan and our students will learn that God loves and cares for them.

## Non-Discrimination Policy

Berea Early Learning Academy (BELA) does not screen applicants (students or staff) based on any creed or color requirements. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality, ethnic origin, gender or religion in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, and other school-administered programs.

## Children's Curriculum

Your child will be learning from the Abeka curriculum. For over forty years, schools and homeschooling families have trusted Abeka. Abeka's preschool curriculum features a traditional approach to teaching and learning, cross-subject integration, spiral review, and plenty of hands-on activities.



## Communication With Teachers

It is the policy of BELA that staff members are not allowed to give parents their cell phone numbers or personal email addresses. If you want to communicate with your child's teacher, you may do so in one of the following ways:

- call the front desk at 256-530-4332 and ask that a message be sent to your child's teacher
- email the teacher at the appropriate address (Provided by teachers)

If a message is urgent, please call the front desk – that is the quickest form of communication. If your message requires a reply, the teacher will get back to you as her schedule allows, usually during naptime. Our teachers do not have a free period embedded in their day, so replying to emails or texts is not part of their daily classroom routine.

## Student's Health

Please do not send children to school when they are sick. A child who shows signs of a fresh cold, fever, diarrhea, or any other contagious condition must not be brought to school. Please help us keep our children healthy and prevent spreading infections by using good judgment before sending a sick child to school. Children must be free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for a minimum of 24 hours (without medication) before returning to school. Conditions that are highly contagious may require a note from a physician indicating when the child may return to school. It is strongly requested of BELA that any medication, whether prescription or nonprescription, be given before or after school hours by the child's parent/guardian. It is against our policy for staff members to administer any medication to a child while in our care. However, if a child needs asthma or emergency medication (Ex: EpiPens) and it is essential that the student receive the



medication during school hours, we will need you to complete the medical authorization form.

COVID-19: If a staff member or student tests positive for COVID-19, we will alert all of the families enrolled in the program. We will also inform the parents if the staff member or student is in the same classroom as their child.

For current information on CDC isolation guidelines, please visit:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html>

## Classroom Management

The teachers of BELA will handle discipline problems in a loving, positive manner. We want to develop young leaders that maintain discipline and self-regulation so the children learn to problem solve for themselves. This allows the teachers to spend less time policing behavior and more time turning everyday situations into learning opportunities.

Our mission at BELA is school readiness and for that reason, we expect our students to enter our school ready to learn. This means they are able to listen and follow their teachers' instructions, able to listen to a story, and able to get along with the other students. Our expectations for the children will be age appropriate. We know they have short attention spans and are still developing social-emotional skills. However, we will work diligently to help children with challenging behaviors

to adapt to their classroom and learn to self-regulate. This may involve meeting with the parents to work on implementing the same strategies in the home that we use in the classroom. However, if we are unable to get the child's behavior under control, that child may be asked to withdraw from the program.



We must consider the safety of the teachers and other children when making these decisions. It is not fair for one child to disrupt the rest of the class and prevent them from learning or feeling safe.

We have to do what is best for the entire school rather than one individual child. It is our goal for all children to have a positive experience at school. We believe that parents and teachers working together will provide the best experience for all of the children.

### Biting Policy

BELA recognizes that biting may occur as an unacceptable behavior when young children are in a group setting. Teachers will give immediate attention to the injured child and in these incidences, both parents will be notified. An incident form will be completed by the teachers and will require the parent's signature to acknowledge the incident. Information regarding the incident will be considered confidential.

Teachers will work with children and parents on techniques to address the biting behavior, but BELA reserves the right to deny, suspend, or cancel a child's enrollment if it is deemed in the best interest of the child or the school.

### Naptime

Our curriculum includes naptime from 1:00 PM -2:30 PM. This is an important component of our program since growing children need lots of rest in order to be at their best for learning. We recognize that not all children require a nap, but we do expect the children to lie quietly on their cots and not disturb their classmates. If the non-napping child is unable to lie quietly and consistently disturbs the other children who are trying to nap, we may ask you to pick your child up after lunch.



## Dress Code and Personal Items

All children should be dressed comfortably for preschool. We provide many opportunities during the day for active play with projects that include paint, water, playdough, clay, and other “messy” activities.

Closed-toed shoes, such as tennis shoes, are required. Open-toed sandals, flip flops, crocs, etc are a climbing, tripping, running, hazard and are not allowed. Children should be able to put on, fasten, and take off shoes by themselves or with minimal help, for this reason, high-top canvas shoes and tie shoes are strongly discouraged.

Each child is required to provide a full change of clothing to be left at the preschool in case of an accident. All children must have a complete change of clothes that includes underwear, pants/shorts, socks and shirt to be kept in a ziploc bag with the child’s first and last name in the event there is an accident. Children are encouraged to bring a labeled jacket or sweater that can be left at preschool during the cooler months. All clothing must be marked with child's name.

## School Property

It is the parents’ responsibility to take care of school property damaged by your child. If your child loses or destroys BELA property, you will be charged to replace the damaged property.



## Nutrition Policy

BELA provides a snack daily consisting of items such as cereal bars, yogurt, string cheese, applesauce, and milk. The parents are required to pack a lunch for their children. We cannot heat up food, so please pack lunches that do not require heating. Please pack healthy lunches that include foods such as a sandwich, fruit, and a drink such as water or 100% fruit juice. Our staff is required to refrigerate meat or dairy products. In the event that a child forgets his/her lunch, BELA will provide a pre-packaged lunch with water. If a child does not bring lunch on a regular basis, the Director will contact the parents to discuss remedying the problem. A charge of \$5.00 per lunch may be assessed to parents who continually do not send a lunch with their child.

## Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures

**Morning Drop Off:** Arrival will be between 7:45 am and 8:15 am. We are limiting the number of people entering the school, so parents will not be allowed in the building unless absolutely necessary. We are asking parents to park and bring their child to their assigned door outside of the school building. Parents may park in in the school's parking lot. The child will then be escorted to their classroom.

**Pick Up (Full Time Student):** You will pick up your child at their assigned door outside of the school building between 3:15 pm – 3:30 pm.

**Pick Up (Part Time Student):** You will pick up your child at their assigned door outside of the school building between 12:15 pm – 12:30 pm.

If you arrive early to pick up your child, please call the front desk (256-530-4332) so a teacher can meet you at their assigned door. Do not call until you have arrived at the school, so the teacher is not waiting for you.





Please make sure the person picking up the child is on the authorization form you gave us. Any pickup person other than yourself will be asked for identification. We want to protect your child as if he or she were our own. For the child's safety, we ask that you update your list of authorized pick-up persons as needed. We are not able to update this information over the phone – it must be done in person.

### Parking

Please park your vehicle in the parking lot, until the pickup line is ready.

### Late Policy

There will be a \$20 late fee (per child) if you have not picked up your Full Time Student by 3:30 pm and Part Time Students by 12:30 pm. You must pay this fee at the time of pick up or by the next business day, at the latest. Your child will face expulsion if you are continually late to pick up or if you do not pay the late fee in a timely manner. Please call us if you are going to be late for pick up. It is YOUR responsibility to pick your child up from school every day.

### Tardy Policy

If a child is tardy to school more than 3 times in a month, on the fourth time they are late the parent will be asked to take their child back home. A child is considered tardy after 8:30 a.m. We realize that sometimes circumstances arise

that may cause a child to be late to school, but consistent tardiness affects the entire class and is not fair to the teacher or other students. The main goal of BELA is to prepare both the students and their families for kindergarten and part of that preparation includes the importance of getting to school on time.



### Tuition Rates

\$60 per week, 8:00 AM – 12:30 PM (Days: Tue / Thr) – 2K Only

\$85 per week, 8:00 AM – 12:30 PM (Days: M / W / F) – 2K Only

\$135 per week, 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM (Days: M / W / F) – 2K Only

\$135 per week, 8:00 AM – 12:30 PM (Days: M - F) – 2K, 3K & 4K

\$150 per week, 8:00 AM – 3:30 PM (Days: M - F) – 3K & 4K Only

BELA reserves the right to adjust tuition costs each school year. Payment by credit card is preferred method of payment to ensure there are no issues for late payment. Tuition is due weekly, with the day of payment determined prior to each academic year. Tuition will be considered late if not paid within 3 business days of the scheduled day. There is a late fee of \$20.00 for late tuition payments. These fees, along with the registration fee, are non-refundable. If at any times you have concerns about your ability to pay, please contact the Director (256-530-4332) for a confidential discussion.

### Screen Time Policy

Screen time is defined as the use of television, videos, video games, tablets and computers. Screentime will be offered as a free choice and limited to no more than a total of 1 hour per week. Screen time is prohibited during meal or snack time. The use of computers/tablets will be limited to no more than 20-minute increments. All screen time will be educational and will be used to enrich the theme or letter of the week. On occasions, screen time will be used in the rainy-day activity room for physical activities when the weather does not permit outdoor play.



## Physical Activity Policy

Every child shall have an opportunity for the appropriate amount of active play each day. Active play shall take place outdoors when weather and environmental conditions permit. When the weather and or environment do not permit outdoor activity, active play shall take place indoors. Children who exhibit out of control behavior during active play may be given a time-out.

## Birthdays

Birthdays are a special time in a child's life, so if your child has a birthday during the year and you would like to celebrate it, please notify the teacher about the arrangements. You may bring cupcakes, cookies, ice cream or some other type of treat to school for the children to have at lunchtime. These treats need to be at school by 11:45. We do not allow balloons or gifts to be brought in.

## School Closings

The scheduled dates for closing are listed in our school calendar on our website (mybela.org) as well as in the back of this handbook. In the event of inclement weather, please check our Facebook Page for closing and/or early dismissal information. In the event of advance notice for school closing, due to inclement weather, BELA will follow both, the Limestone County and/or Athens City Schools notifications for school closings.

## Fire and Tornado Drills and Evacuation Plan

Fire, tornado and other safety drills will be conducted at regular intervals set by the BELA director. We encourage our families to practice these at home as well.



## Child Abuse Policy

BELA believes that all children, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, language, racial origin, or religious beliefs have the right to protection from abuse. The staff and volunteers of BELA are required to report any suspicion of child abuse, including but not limited to, physical, sexual, emotional, verbal, or mental. The staff and volunteers will report any suspicion or allegations of child abuse to the Director and all suspicions and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.

The staff and/or volunteers, at all times, will be aware of the safety, dignity and well-being of the child and will not act in an accusatory manner toward any persons who may be involved. Should a child be in immediate danger, it will be reported to the local police department and the Department of Human Services.

## Tobacco / Vaping Policy

BELA is a smoke free facility. Smoking, vaping or any form of tobacco is prohibited at all times, anywhere on the campus.

## School Contacting Parents

There will be times throughout the school year when the Executive Director or your child's teacher will need to be able to contact you by phone. This may include severe weather events, sickness, discipline problems, etc. It is imperative that your contact information is kept up to date. We have contact update sheets upon request. If your phone number changes, you must contact the school in order to give us the correct number to call in case of an emergency. If we attempt to contact you and are unable to do so, you will be given one warning to update your contact information. If we are unable to contact you again after the first warning, you and your child could face dismissal from the program. This is for the safety of your child!



## Immunization

At BELA, we prioritize the health and safety of all our students. To maintain a secure and nurturing environment, we require that each enrolled student has up-to-date immunization records on file. Immunizations play a vital role in safeguarding our children from preventable diseases, and we appreciate your cooperation in ensuring a healthy learning environment for everyone.

### Immunization Record Submission

Parents and guardians are kindly requested to provide the following information before their child's first day of attendance at BELA:

**Proof of Immunization:** A complete and up-to-date record of your child's immunizations, as recommended by the Local Health Department / Medical Professional, must be submitted to the preschool office. This record should include the child's name, date of birth, immunization dates, and healthcare provider's signature or stamp.

**Required Immunizations:** We follow the immunization guidelines set forth by the Alabama Department of Health to ensure the protection of all children. These guidelines are designed to prevent the spread of contagious diseases within our community. The list includes:

- must be age-appropriately vaccinated against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, measles, mumps, rubella, Haemophilus influenzae type b, polio, and chickenpox.

Source: <https://www.adph.org/immunization/assets/alimmrequirements.pdf>

Immunization records should be kept current throughout your child's enrollment at BELA. As new immunizations become due, please promptly provide the updated records to the preschool office. This practice helps us ensure a safe and healthy environment for all children in our care.



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## Confidentiality and Privacy

All immunization records will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and privacy. Access to these records will be limited to authorized personnel only, and they will be stored in compliance with applicable privacy laws.

Thank you for your cooperation in helping us maintain a secure and healthy environment for all students at BELA. If you have any questions or need further clarification regarding our immunization requirements, please feel free to contact the preschool administration.



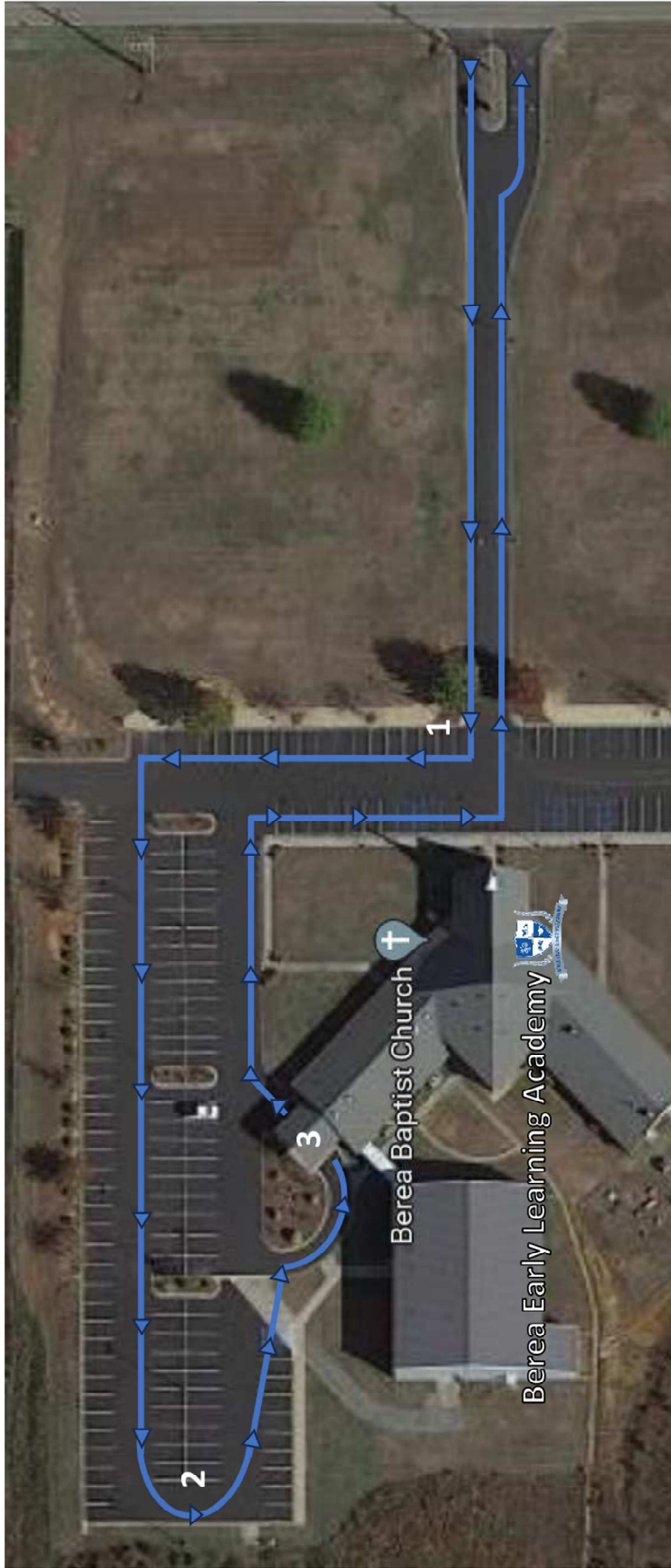
## 2023 – 2024 School Calendar

August 09, 2023	First Day for Students
September 04	Labor Day
October 9 - 13	Fall Break
November 10	Veterans Day
November 20 - 24	Thanksgiving Break
December 18, 2023 - January 3, 2024	Christmas / New Year Break
January 04	Students return to class
January 15	Martin Luther King Day
February 16	School Closed
March 25 - 29	Spring Break / Good Friday
April 26	School Closed
May 16	Last day for students
May 17, 2024	Graduation



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## BELA Carline Directions



### Directions:

1. After entering driveway, turn right at entrance of parking lot.
2. Circle the end of the parking to enter canopy
3. Pickup for your child under the canopy, exit canopy after your child is properly secured.





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## Preschool Handbook Guidelines Acknowledgement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby acknowledge that I have received and read the Berea Early Learning Academy (BELA) Handbook, and I understand and agree to comply with the guidelines and policies outlined therein. I recognize that it is my responsibility to be familiar with the contents of the handbook and to ensure that my child abides by these guidelines while attending BELA. I understand that failure to comply with these guidelines may result in appropriate actions being taken by the preschool administration.

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this signed form to the preschool administration within the first week of the academic calendar year. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated in ensuring a safe, nurturing, and enriching environment for all children at BELA.

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