I AM ACADEMY

Inspiring Adventurous Minds

Handbook

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**"We're not just another school, I can promise you that."**

**Mission**

**Rooted in Christian faith, we provide a safe, self-driven environment for children to learn and grow to their full potential. We aim to partner with all families to provide an individualized learning path and hands-on, project based, educational experience to prepare a well-rounded future leader.**

**Vision**

**To revolutionize education in order to cultivate life-long learners with a self-driven approach. We are molding future leaders that are critical thinkers and problem solvers with a vision and mission of their own. Rooted in the Christian faith and planted in this vision we believe that we will not fail, we will grow.**

**Goals**

* **To help students develop their self-confidence through the existence of a positive nurturing environment that encourages persistence**
* **To develop a strong academic foundation**
* **To develop and refine life skills that will establish independence and self-discipline**
* **To create a clear set of school expectations to encourage responsible safe behaviors and freedom within limits**
* **To empower students as stewards of their environment and active community members**
* **To focus on building a strong foundation, grounded in proven methodology while limiting mainstream distractions in the educational environment**
* **To Instill grit into the daily mindset of each student in order to build courage, resolve, and strength of character.**
* **To create an all-encompassing environment that will foster personal drive, passion, and perseverance.**
* **To foster a deep, resilient Christian faith that will stand the test of time.**

**"We're not just another school, I can promise you that."**

**I AM Academy’s curriculum will focus on the whole child through a hands-on teaching style. Hands-on learning is a proven way to keep students more engaged and increase retention.**

**"curating critical thinkers, problem solvers, & self-motivated learners."**

**I AM Academy will feature low teacher-to-child ratios so students can safely learn through trial and error. Sensory-based and self-directed learning through exploration is a major component of our programming, in addition to learning practical life skills. Please refer to the following categories for specific information:**

**Assessments/Student Progress**

**At the beginning of the year, all students will be informally assessed to help teachers determine student needs in math and reading. Throughout the year, students’ progress is monitored through curriculum assessments and teacher observations. Students' work is graded, but there are no formal report cards. Students can work above or below grade level based on their ability. Parent conferences provide an opportunity to talk about student progress. Conferences are held in January and by appointment at the end of the year. Students will be working towards accomplishing the state standards appropriate for their level.**

**Curriculum**

**I Am Academy uses homeschool-based curriculum for reading, math, history, and English. A list of curriculum books will be given out for purchase prior to the start of the school year. Books will not necessarily get completed each year because students are working towards mastering skills, and they will not be “pushed forward” if they are still working on a specific skill.**

**Communication**

**Primary teachers will use the weekly newsletters that include the major topics being taught that month. The older grades will be required to use a planner, and they will be learning to organize their work. Teachers can also be contacted by email.**

**We will also be using the Remind App for text message blasts in the event of inclement weather, school closings, Field trip cancellations, emergencies, etc. You can find more info on our website.**

**Homework**

**We strongly believe that children should have time after school to be with family and to enjoy outdoor play. There will be homework if students do not complete certain work in class, and there will also be assignments at times (especially in the winter months) to help reinforce certain skills. When the weather is beautiful, we encourage families to get outside and enjoy nature.**

**Outdoor play/education**

**A benefit of I Am Academy is our daily access to outdoor time. Students will go outside rain or shine, so we ask that parents help their students dress accordingly. We encourage students to bring winter gear throughout the cold months. Recess is not an option; it is necessary. Kids will be outside if the weather is 20 degrees or above. When the weather is nicer, students will have the opportunity to eat lunch outside as well. We occasionally take walking trips to the park which is located 1 block South of Amazing Love Church. A Park permission form is available on our website.**

**Field Trips**

**Throughout the year, there will be frequent field trips that parents are required to attend unless they have made arrangements with another family. These trips could include museums, plays, nature walks, zoos, etc. A benefit of I Am Academy is enjoying these learning experiences with your child.**

**Field trip forms will come out prior to the events and will also be available on our website.**

**Special Events**

**Throughout the year, parents will be invited to special events, holiday parties, social activities, and student presentations. For example, last year our parents were invited to family skate nights, a special Christmas program, holiday parties, a Mother’s Day tea, and even a school-wide family overnight trip to Lake Geneva. We encourage our school families to be part of a great community.**

**School supplies/purchase of books and materials**

**Students will be given a list of books and supplies needed to start the school year. These should be purchased before the school year begins. Throughout the year, parents are encouraged to help provide supplies for unit projects and themes. A quarterly supply list will be sent to parents by email. We need everyone to work together to help our projects and themes come to life.**

**Birthdays**

**We will celebrate all birthdays. We encourage you to think creatively and provide any food or entertainment you would like that day. Please ask if there are any allergies you need to be aware of before bringing in food.**

**Lunch**

**Students need to bring a nutritious lunch each day at school. The younger students will also be provided a short snack time.**

**Discipline**

**Often when kids are engaged and enjoying their learning, discipline problems disappear. This is our goal. However, if kids are off-task or disrespectful, we use a three-strike system. Students are given two warnings, and if warned a third time, they are asked to contact their parents and return home for the remainder of the day. A note of apology is required to return the next day. At recess and lunch, students are asked to stay in certain areas and be respectful and kind to adults and kids. Demotivating comments or bullying are immediately corrected, and students may be asked to go home and think about their behavior. We ask that parents work as a team with our staff so that we can always encourage the kids to be loving, kind, and respectful.**

**Sick Policy**

**Children who are ill should not be brought to school. This includes any child/ren who have received fever-reducing medication within the last 24 hours. Sick children will be isolated within sight and hearing and made as comfortable as possible. Children should be picked up as soon as possible, within 1 hour. If a student is not picked up within one hour, the emergency contact person on the child's enrollment form will be called. Children may return to school when they are fever and symptom-free, have been appropriately treated, or have received medical approval to return to school.**

**Amazing Love Church also maintains a Well Child Policy which we are held to. Please see Appendix for Amazing Love Church Well Child Policy**

**Faith Component**

**Christian education plays a role in weekly instruction. Students are able to participate in a faith-based lesson twice a week, as well as listen to a short devotion from a pastor from Amazing Love Church. They also get to enjoy worship songs and lessons from the Grow Curriculum that is used at Amazing Love on Sundays. Superbook videos are often shown to present bible stories. Students are encouraged to grow in their faith in God. Parents can choose to opt out of this instruction, and their child will then be given an alternate activity.**

**Technology**

**We use technology when it is appropriate to enhance learning. Students have occasional access to research topics using computers, laptops, iPads, and other learning devices. Most learning is hands-on and is not done in front of screens.**

**Dress Code**

**Junior K-8 Students should come to school dressed in clothing that is comfortable and allows for large motor activity. Please consider that students will be involved in many hands-on activities and spend most of their time daily outside exploring, and they may get dirty or wet. During the wetter season, feel free to send an extra set of clothes that can stay in the backpack in case it is needed. All clothing and other belongings brought to school should be clearly labeled with your child’s name. If you do not wish to label items directly on the tag, please label them with a piece of masking tape. We do a great deal of exploring the outdoor environment and therefore ask that a pair of rain boots/old shoes also be present at school during all months when there is no snow on the ground and it is wet out. Snow boots and snow pants will be required for snowy days.**

**Inclement Weather**

**Any extreme weather closings will be announced on our Website home page no later than 6:00 am the morning of closing. We will also send out a notice via The Remind App.**

**Lost & Found**

**With so many children working on their independence skills, it is sometimes difficult to keep track of clothing and other belongings. It is important that each article of your child’s clothing and all personal belongings are clearly labeled to prevent losing items.**

**A lost and found area will be located on the front desk outside of the office. Items that are not claimed after a reasonable amount of time may be kept for school use or donated.**

**School Hours/Breaks**

**8:30 to 11:30 will include core class time in reading, math, English, and writing. 11:30 to 12:30 includes lunch and recess. 12:30 to 2 will include project-based learning and themed units. This time is often full group or multi-age groups. Please refer to the school calendar for school breaks and holidays. However, I AM Academy is a homeschool community, so families are encouraged to take family trips and family outings whenever they would like throughout the year.**

**The School calendar can be found on our website.**

**Project-based learning**

**I AM Academy uses a teaching method where students learn by actively engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects. Students work on projects over an extended period of time and demonstrate their knowledge and skills by creating a public product or presentation.**

**As a result, students develop deep content knowledge, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills. For example, in the past year, students presented an Egyptian museum, created Christmas trees around the world, worked on a human body unit, and put together a Mother’s Day event. Active learning is the best kind of learning.**

**Parent volunteer expectations**

**At I AM Academy volunteering is a get to do, not a have to do. We want parents, grandparents, family members to come to I AM Academy with the heartfelt intention of serving because they want to be here and not because it is a requirement. We understand that not everyone is available to come in and volunteer, but we do ask that you make the effort to try to volunteer. I guarantee it will change your kid’s lives!!**

**Withdrawal**

**Parents must give a 30-day written notice of their intent to withdraw their child/ren. Parents will be responsible to pay for services for those 30 days whether or not children continue to attend (if applicable). All outstanding fees must be paid. Parents will be asked to fill out a questionnaire to help us better understand their reasoning for withdrawing their child/ren. If both I AM and parents decide to discontinue enrollment, a 30-day notice prior to discharge and a written agreement must be signed by both parties. Parents will be required to pay for those 30 days whether or not children continue to attend. All outstanding fees must be paid (when applicable).**

**Appendix**

1. **Amazing Love Church Well Child Policy**

* **Fever: Child is fever free without Tylenol or other fever reducing medicine for 24 hours.**
* **Pink Eye: Child has been on antibiotics for 24 hours or the doctor has determined he/she is no longer contagious. This includes lack of mattering or drainage from the eye and child can keep from touching their eye.**
* **Diarrhea: Child has not had an episode for 24 hours.**
* **Strep Throat: Must be on antibiotics for at least 24 hours, or test results returned with negative results.**
* **Rash: Do not bring a child that has a rash, unless a doctor has determined it is not to be contagious.**
* **Chicken Pox: Do not bring child until all spots are scabbed over.**
* **Lice: Do not return until 24 hours after treatment and child is lice and nit free.**

**Sun Safety**

**Sun safety is crucial for the well-being of students and staff at I AM Academy. Exposure to the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays can lead to various health issues, including sunburn, skin cancer, and eye damage. To ensure the safety of everyone on campus, here are some sun safety guidelines for I AM Academy:**

**1. \*\*Wear Sun-Protective Clothing:\*\***

**- Encourage students and staff to wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and wide-brimmed hats to cover exposed skin.**

**- Choose clothing made of tightly woven fabrics that provide better UV protection.**

**2. \*\*Use Sunscreen:\*\***

**- Apply broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 to all exposed skin.**

**- Reapply sunscreen every two hours, or more frequently if swimming or sweating.**

**3. \*\*Provide Shade:\*\***

**- Create shaded areas in outdoor spaces using umbrellas, canopies, or shade structures.**

**- Ensure that students and staff have access to shaded areas during breaks and outdoor activities.**

**4. \*\*Promote Sun-Safe Behavior:\*\***

**- Educate students and staff about the dangers of excessive sun exposure.**

**- Encourage the use of sunglasses that provide 100% UV protection to protect eyes.**

**- Emphasize the importance of seeking shade during peak sun hours (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).**

**5. \*\*Hydration:\*\***

**- Stay well-hydrated by drinking water regularly, especially when spending time outdoors.**

**- Dehydration can increase the risk of heat-related illnesses when exposed to the sun.**

**6. \*\*Outdoor Activities Timing:\*\***

**- Schedule outdoor activities and physical education classes in the morning or late afternoon when the sun is less intense.**

**7. \*\*Sun-Smart Policies:\*\***

**- Implement policies that encourage sun-safe practices, such as allowing students to wear hats and sunglasses during outdoor activities.**

**8. \*\*Regular Skin Checks:\*\***

**- Encourage students and staff to perform regular self-examinations of their skin to detect any unusual moles or changes.**

**9. \*\*First Aid and Emergency Plans:\*\***

**- Have a well-equipped first aid kit on hand in case of minor sunburns or heat-related issues.**

**- Educate staff on recognizing signs of heat-related illnesses and provide a plan for responding to emergencies.**

**10. \*\*Community Involvement:\*\***

**- Involve parents and the local community in promoting sun safety by providing information and resources.**

**11. \*\*Lead by Example:\*\***

**- Staff members should serve as role models by following sun safety practices and encouraging students to do the same.**

**12. \*\*Regular Review and Updates:\*\***

**- Periodically review and update your sun safety guidelines to ensure they align with the latest recommendations and best practices.**

**By implementing these sun safety guidelines, I AM Academy can create a safer outdoor environment for students and staff while promoting lifelong habits of sun protection.**

**Parent Handbook Acknowledgement**

**I have read and agree to all guidelines & rules indicated in the parent handbook.**

**Child’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Parent’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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

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