

Parent Handbook

**The Westside School
2024-25**

General Information

Welcome to The Westside School! At The Westside School, each child will thrive and grow through discovery, exploration, and play. We are dedicated to providing a strong foundation that encourages lifelong learning in a safe and nurturing environment for all children. This handbook will cover guidelines and procedures for the learning center. Please review this handbook carefully. If you have any questions concerning the handbook, please feel free to talk with the director.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

Our team is so excited about being a part of your child's educational development. We believe that every day, every child should have the opportunity to discover, explore, and learn at his or her own pace. Our goal is to prepare children with the foundational, social, language, cognitive, and motor skills necessary to be successful in future educational and social settings. The Westside School will create a safe and nurturing environment that fosters the development of the whole child.

GOALS:

- To develop a positive view of themselves and others.
- To develop a love of learning.
- To develop an appreciation for the differences among people and how to celebrate those differences.
- To develop the basic skills preparing them for the next level of learning.
- To develop a sense of autonomy, self-confidence and competence.
- To have a wide range of developmentally appropriate experiences to foster learning, creativity, and problem solving in all areas - language, writing, Pre-reading, mathematics, music, art, gross and fine motor, health and safety.
- To develop a natural curiosity about the world, to seek new knowledge, to explore, and to question.
- To provide a well-qualified and caring staff.
- To provide a safe and nurturing learning atmosphere throughout the center

COMMUNICATION:

The Westside School has an open line of communication with parents. If you have a problem or concern speak with the director or a member of the leadership team. Please give leadership the opportunity to rectify the situation.

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ENROLLMENT POLICY:

The forms listed below must be filled out before your child can start. Some of these forms will be updated annually.

- Enrollment Packet (Child's Record) Health History
- Medical Emergency Statement
- Pictures and Video Form
- Authorization to Dispense External Preparations Food Program (Income Eligibility Form)
- Form 3231 (Immunization: all students)

IMMUNIZATION:

We require all children attending our center be immunized. It is the parent's responsibility to provide and keep a current certificate of immunization for their child / children. Upon enrolling, parents must provide the **Form 3231**. Each time your child is immunized, please bring a revised copy of the certificate of immunization, Form 3231. Vaccinations are one of the best ways to put an end to the serious effects of certain diseases.

STATE LICENSED:

The Westside School is licensed and regulated by Bright from the Start: GA Department of Early Care and Learning. Annual unannounced inspections of the center are conducted to ensure all state standards, policies and procedures are met. A copy of the state rules and regulations along with and a copy of our most recent licensing review are available in the front office.

CONFIDENTIALTY:

All family information is confidential and is not provided to any other agency or individual without written parental consent. Access to a child's file is limited to protect the privacy of children and parents. Relevant documentation may be released to state and federal licensing agencies upon request with parent permission. Relevant information may also be released to a hospital and /or physician in an emergency with parent permission. All children will have a signed release authorizing the center to obtain medical assistance in an emergency when parents cannot be reached. All information remains confidential and remains in a locked file cabinet.

OPERATING HOURS:

The Westside School operates year-round. The academic school year begins in August and ends in May. June and July are summer camp months.

The hours of operations are Monday-Friday except for holidays and teacher-professional development days, between the hours of 6:30am – 6:00pm. Students must be dropped off for school by 9:00am daily. Please make sure your child is picked up every day by 6:00 pm. If your child is picked up after 6:00 pm, you will be charged a late fee. *The late fee is expected at the time of pick-up and is paid directly to the staff person that volunteers to stay late.*

TUITION AND LATE PAYMENT:

Full tuition is due on each Friday before the week of attendance. A late fee of \$30 will be applied to tuition accounts not paid in full by Monday. *All tuition is expected to be paid on time, there will be no payment arrangements made.*

REGISTRTION AND SUPPLY FEES:

A \$75 annual registration and supply fee (per student) will be billed to tuition accounts each school year.

VACATION WEEKS:

The Westside School allows two weeks per school year, one per semester, for children to be absent and have tuition waived. Otherwise, tuition is due regardless of attendance. The Westside School does not waive tuition for absences due to illness or for holiday breaks.

HOLIDAYS/SCHOOL CLOSURES:

Refer to the school calendar for holidays and school closures.

WITHDRAWAL:

Parents are to notify the center two weeks in advance of withdrawal, should that be necessary. In addition, parents are obligated to pay two weeks tuition. If not paid, the parent's account will be turned over to a collection agency for collection. All interest and fees will be the responsibility of the parent.

If your child misses two weeks from school, and the center has not been notified, your child will automatically be withdrawn. If space is available, you must re-register and pay another registration fee before returning to the center.

OPEN DOOR POLICY:

Parents/guardians are permitted access to all parts of the center at any time their child is present. If needed, come by anytime to check on your child. (Please, keep in mind that most young children are accustomed to a certain routine, so if you come by, please note that your child may act differently than they normally would, don't be alarmed.)

The Westside School has an open-door policy, however on the child's first day of enrollment we ask that you stay no longer than 20 minutes. We also ask that during your child's initial 2 weeks of enrollment that you give him/her time to transition into their classroom before visiting for extended periods of time.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PARENTS:

We expect all parents to model appropriate behavior when on campus. We expect parents to treat teachers and other parents in a way they would like to be treated. We expect all parents to be role models. We expect all parents to work with their child's teacher when it pertains to behavior and development. We expect parents to be active participants in their child's learning. We strongly believe in the importance of home, school, and community collaboration.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

This center does not discriminate in the enrollment of children. Children and their families will be admitted to the center regardless of the basis of race, color, creed, age, religion, sex, national origin, handicap, or status as a veteran and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Westside School is committed to serving all children regardless of their level of need and will make every reasonable accommodation. In the event your child has a special need that requires extensive support; we must assess our ability to provide quality care to your child. If we do not have the resources at our center, we will guide you through the referral process with your local educational agency.

As the parent/guardian, it is critical that you partner with us to provide the best care for your child. It is expected that you will adhere to all center policies and support your child's education. In the event you are unable to partner with us in this regard, we will request that you terminate your services with our center.

INCLUSION:

Inclusion refers to children with classified disabilities learning in a classroom with children who have not been classified. We offer a full inclusion program that keeps all children together for all subjects. We believe ALL children are uniquely gifted.

Every effort is made to successfully include children with special needs in the most integrated setting appropriate to meet their needs and in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). Children with special needs will be accepted into the center and linked to Babies Can't Wait or to the local educational agency special education program.

ROUTINES FOR ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE:

Bring your child to the classroom door and see that he/she is under the supervision of their teacher before leaving the premises. Children will not be allowed to enter or leave the facility without being escorted by their parent(s), person authorized by parent(s), or facility personnel. Sign your child in and out each day.

Your child is going to miss you while you can't be with them. This is a very *normal reaction*. All children respond differently. Some are hesitant while others cry. It is normal for your child to cry on arrival, especially for the first few weeks. Try not to get upset over their crying; it will stop within a few minutes after you leave. If your child does a significant amount of crying at drop-off time, please make your stay brief. It is harder on the child when you prolong your stay with too many hugs and kisses. A quick hug and kiss and let them know you will return is a great way to comfort them. Usually within 5 minutes after a parent leaves, the children start to play with one another.

If you are worried, please feel free to call and check on your child as often as you like. If we can't console your child, we will notify you. If your child is just starting to attend preschool, it could be challenging for them. We will use best practices and employ patience, nurture and engagement.

PICK UP AUTHORIZATION:

The Westside School can't allow children to leave with anyone except the individuals listed on the emergency contact list. Any exception for persons picking up must be written and signed by parent/guardian.

DRESS CODE:

Please send your child in clothes they can play in. We will be working with messy materials (such as paint) throughout the day. Children should arrive dressed for play. We also spend a lot of time outside. Children need to have on closed toe shoes to navigate the playground. Clothing should be comfortable for outdoors. Make sure to include hats, mittens, boots and coats for cold weather. Each child must have two sets of clothing in case of an accident.

Please clearly mark your child's name on all articles of clothing, including shoes, so we can help prevent loss.

SUPPLIES: (Please review the lists below):

Infants: Diapers, wipes, pacifier, labeled bottles (name and date and correct tops for the bottles), formula, bibs, and a complete change of clothes (as they get soiled we will leave them in a plastic bag in your child's cubby to be taken home and cleaned).

Toddlers & Preschoolers: Diapers, pull-ups, wipes and a complete change of clothes (as they get soiled, we will leave them in a plastic bag in your child's cubby to be taken home and cleaned).

TOILET TRAINING:

Let us know when you start *toilet training* with your child. Once you start training at home, we will start working with your child at the center. Please send your child in easy to remove clothing while they are toilet training. We will be consistent with our routine. We will take them to the restroom every hour when first starting to toilet train. We will place all soiled items into a plastic bag in your child's cubby or book-bag. Please replace any clothing sent home the next day. During toilet training time, please supply at least 3 sets of clothing including socks. As your child starts getting the hang of toilet training, you will want to remove the pull ups and start using training pants, underpants or panties.

DIAPERING PROCEDURES:

It is mandated that every teacher follow the proper diapering procedures to ensure the safety and quality care for every infant:

1. Begin by washing your hands thoroughly with soap and water.
2. Set up a clean and safe diapering area with all necessary supplies within reach.
3. Gently place the child on the surface ensuring their safety and comfort.
4. Removed the soiled diaper and use wipes to clean the child's diaper area, being gentle and thorough.
5. Properly dispose of the soiled diaper in a designated diaper pail or trash receptacle.
6. If needed, apply diaper cream or ointment as per parents' instruction.
7. Put on a clean diaper, making sure it fits snugly but comfortably.
8. Wash your hands again after completing the diaper change.
9. Record the diaper change in the child's daily log, including the time and any relevant notes.
10. Ensure open communication with parents about their child's diapering routine and preference.

CURRICULUM/ASSESSMENTS:

The Westside School uses the Georgia Early Learning Developmental Standards (GELDS) and Creative Curriculum. Progress is discussed in December during Parent/Teacher Conferences. Assessments are informal by way of classroom observations and "classwork/play". The teachers will use a developmental milestone checklist to highlight your child's strengths, weakness, and emerging skills.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT/PARENT MEETINGS:

The Westside School has an annual parent meeting, in August, to kick off the new school year. Parent meetings are a time to meet the teaching staff, visit the classrooms, and learn more about the curriculum. A meeting with teaching or administrative staff can be requested at any time.

MEALS:

Our monthly menus will be posted in the front on the information board.

Infant's Parents: Parents are asked to complete a feeding plan for all infants. It is imperative that infant bottles are pre-made. In addition, names and dates should be on your child's bottles each day. Parents/guardians of infants (not on table food) are responsible for bringing their child's formula or use the center's formula (Similac). Baby cereal (Gerber) is provided by the center. It is our belief that infants should be fed on demand. If parents have another feeding schedule in mind, we will need to discuss, so that the infant's needs will be adequately met.

NUTRITION POLICY:

The Westside School believes in creating the healthiest environment for the children in our care. Children who eat well and are physically active are healthier and learn better. Our policies are based on best practices for healthy eating and physical activity. To set our children up for success, we will incorporate a birthday celebration policy. We have a healthy snacks list for all birthday and party celebrations.

QUIET/ NAP TIME:

All children have a rest period from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. daily. No child is forced to sleep. However, they must remain quiet, and they must remain on their cots during nap time. A quiet activity will be provided for students that don't nap. Please try not to schedule pick-ups or visits during this time. Rest time is very important for the development of young children. It is a state requirement that all children have a rest time every day.

ILLNESS:

Please do not bring sick children to school. Sick children need additional care that the center cannot provide. If your child has a fever or diarrhea, he/she must be free from those symptoms for 24 hours to return to school. Children who have symptoms of a contagious disease will not be permitted to attend without a signed statement from a physician indicating that the child is cleared to return to school. Please respect other children who are well. In addition, keep the director abreast of your child's sickness or illness so other parents can be notified.

ILLNESS:

The following illness policies will be strictly enforced for the health, wellbeing, and safety of all concerned.

If your child presents the following symptoms keep them home from school.

1. Fever (102 F. higher)-Child needs to be fever free for 24 hours
2. Nausea or vomiting
3. Diarrhea: runny or watery stools, or 2 or looser stools within last 4 hours.
4. Sore throat, loss of voice, hacking or continuous coughing, runny nose with colored discharge
5. Runny and/or Crusty Eyes: Watery, matted, and/or red/pink eyes are not acceptable in childcare
6. Unexplained Rash, Ringworms
7. Lice (may not return child to care until no more nits are spotted)
8. Communicable diseases (chickenpox, roseola, conjunctivitis, mumps, measles, influenza, hand foot and mouth disease, etc.)

HANDLING OF ILLNESS/INJURY:

If your child gets ill during the school day, a parent will be notified. If your child is injured at school, an incident report will be completed, and a duplicate copy will be sent home. Parents will also be notified via Procure message, phone call, or text message immediately after care is administered.

DISPENSING MEDICINE:

Before any medication is dispensed to a child, the parent/guardian must provide written authorization which includes date, name of child, name of medication, prescription number, dosage, and date & time medication is to be given. Medication must be in the original container with the child's name marked on it. Parents must complete and sign the medical authorization form.

DISCIPLINE:

The Westside School believes in keeping students actively engaged. Positive reinforcement for good behavior, combined with redirection will yield positive and acceptable behavior. No form of physical punishment is ever permitted.

SUSPECTED CHID ABUSE:

The State of Georgia requires that all members of The Westside School be on the lookout for, and report to the State, all cases of abuse to a child. Therefore, the directors and teachers are obligated to report to the State any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect.

NO COMPETING POLICY:

We do not allow staff members to keep The Westside School clients on their personal times as this is a conflict of interest.

NO HAIR BEADS POLICY:

To ensure the safety of our children, we ask that students do not wear beads or any small hair accessories in their hair. These small accessories may come off the hair and be placed in children's nose or swallowed.

CHECKOUT:

If you bring your child to school and then check them out, he/she **can't** return to school for the day without a written excuse.

SOILED CHILDREN:

If your child arrives to school soiled, please park and change your child in our designated area.

EMERGENCY PLANS:

Emergency plans for weather, tornado, fire, and physical plant problems are in the Director's office and posted in the lobby. Each employee shall be trained on procedures for fire and emergency weather drills.

SEVERE WEATHER PLANS:

Our first goal is to keep children calm and safe. If the weather becomes severe, the teacher will quickly move the children to safety. In the event of a tornado or other severe weather, the children will get in position in accordance with the severe weather plans posted in the lobby.

TORNADO WATCH WARNING:

All children will assume the tornado drill position until the "all clear" siren has been sounded by the police or local weather channel.

SNOW AND ICE:

In the event of inclement The Westside School will open and close in accordance with Atlanta Public Schools.

THE WESTSIDE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION