

Policies and Procedures

Welcome to the Lighthouse Academy. We are excited to have you embark on this journey of discovery with us. You will find our program goals, policies and the many practical details that combine to make each school day a happy and successful one. Please read this and keep it for reference, as you will find the answers for many questions.

Statement of Philosophy

Lighthouse Academy welcomes families of all faiths, creeds and ethnic origins to our center. Our goal is to provide a rich, stimulating environment, with a focus on each child's ability to learn both independently and cooperatively. Children learn best in a safe and secure world, where they can stretch their imaginations, expand their horizons, take a chance with the unknown, and reach for greater, deeper, and richer understanding. Lighthouse Academy is a "Safe Sanctuaries" facility adhering to safe standards guidelines specified by the United Methodist Church.

Our Program

Our curriculum is multi-faceted. It is faith-based and developmentally based. Our new curriculum, **Pyramid**, is based on the newest brain research. We know that when the environment offers structure, the child's brain is activated and the child learns to discover patterns. Once the brain discovers structures and patterns, it uses this information to find new structures and patterns. Therefore, the better we structure the environment, the higher the level at which they can learn new information. For this process to work, Pyramid is based on four cornerstones which form the foundation for this curriculum: nearness, distance, child's initiative, and the teacher's initiative.

Lighthouse Academy, at this time, serves children aged 8 weeks through 5 years of age. We have plans to expand this in the future, to include Kindergarten and a before and after school program.

Another aspect of our program that makes us unique is the low child to staff ratio. At this time, we maintain the following ratios:

1:4 ratios for infants;

1:5 for ones;

1:6 for two's;

1:12 for three's;

1:10 for Pre-K

These low ratios are essential to a high quality curriculum, such as Pyramid. Only with these ratios can we offer the individualization, the teacher support, and the extended learning that is an integral part of Pyramid.

Calendar

Although we follow the Cobb County School schedule to a certain extent, we do not close for all the days that they do. We realize that parents still have to go to work, and we are here for you. A copy of our calendar is located at the back of this handbook.

Meals

We provide breakfast, lunch, and a morning and afternoon snack each day. Our menu features nutritious meals, including fresh vegetables and natural fruit juices; all meals meet or exceed USDA guidelines.

Milk	½ cup
Eggs	½ oz.
Meat or meat alternative	½ oz.
Juice, fruit or vegetable	½ cup
Enriched or whole grains	½ cup
Bread	½ slice
Cereal (cold)	¼ cup

Lunches

Our well-balanced lunches meet the following USDA guidelines:

- *Protein Source: (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cooked dried beans or peas, and cheese)
- *2 vegetables, 2 fruits, or 2 fruit and 1 vegetable
- *Grain: cereal, whole grain or enriched bread product, crackers or pasta
- * Dairy Products

We will provide milk for all children, for the morning snack and lunch. If your child is lactose intolerant or is allergic to dairy products, you must provide a written statement for our files; you can supply milk, alternatives for your child. Children are served whole milk.

Water is always available for children.

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Tuition Policy

Tuition is due whether your child attends, is ill, or on vacation. All tuition is due in advance on each Friday for the coming week. If tuition is not credited to your child's account by 7:00pm on Monday evening, your child may not return to Lighthouse Academy on Tuesday. Teacher salaries are dependent upon the prompt payment of tuition. Tuition payments may be made with a personal check (except in line with the return check policy noted below) or money orders. No Cash Payments please.

If you choose to withdraw your child from the Lighthouse Academy a Two (2) week notice is required. If you choose to withdraw your child prior to that time, **Tuition is still due!**

Return Check Policy

There is a return check fee of \$35.00 for any check returned by the bank. This is the fee that they charge us. If your checks are returned, all future payments must be made by certified check or money order.

Holidays Policy

Our holiday and school closings are provided to each parent under separate cover. Please note that tuition is still required during our holiday closings, sick days, and snow days.

Tuition is due each week, as noted above. This applies even if your child is ill or on vacation. If you know that you will be away when tuition is due, please plan accordingly and take care of it before you go away.

Families are given 1 week during the summer for vacation; no tuition will be charged for that period. If you choose to withdraw your child for the summer. Your child will be placed on the waiting list for the fall.

Provided his or her space is still available, an additional registration fee will be required.

Nap Time Policy

We provide a quiet rest or nap-time for all full-time children. Some children may need sleep; others may only rest. We strive to accommodate each child's sleep patterns.

*** Each child needs to bring a blanket for nap time**

Children with Special Needs

Lighthouse Academy will not discriminate against children with special needs. We will work closely with you to insure that your child's needs are met. We will continuously work with parents to ensure that we are able to provide the optimal level of care and referrals that will be best for your child.

Discipline Policy

We view discipline as a natural part of everyday activities. Children have conflict as a normal part of play. We treat it exactly like that. Two children who have a conflict can resolve it themselves without adult intervention, other than to ask them to sit down and resolve their dispute. They may not cover everything, but they will resolve the dispute in an amicable way, and they will be friends quickly.

Children are not born with an innate sense of right and wrong, of how to maintain control over their bodies, or how to problem solve in the event of a conflict. It is our job to assist them in this process, through guidance rather than punishment. When you draw attention to a negative behavior, the result is to increase that behavior. Similarly, when you draw attention to a positive behavior, you increase that behavior. It's easy to see which behavior we will **choose** to "recognize". We want to encourage children to become creative, independent, responsible, and socially mature individuals. This means learning to make choices, and solving problems where they exist.

If we are faced with an on-going situation that we are experiencing repeated difficulty with, we will conference with the parents to develop a behavior plan. We will work with parents, in the best interest of your child, to follow through with your child.

*Naturally, no corporal punishment is allowed!

Discharge Policy

Lighthouse Academy reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child for the following reasons:

- Non-payment of tuition
- Failure to observe the policies and procedures of the Academy
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff by a parent

Chapel Time

We will attend chapel with the children one morning a week. This is a time for quiet, but also for prayer, music, stories, and other ways to talk to young children about God.

Inclement Weather Policy

Please watch WXIA 11 Alive for school closings.

Parent Conferences

Parent conferences are scheduled with your child's teacher. We conduct both formal and informal assessments, of each child's level of development. Each conference is your opportunity to sit down with your child's teacher and exchange information concerning your child's abilities, needs and progress. But don't wait: if you have any concerns, you can speak with your child's teacher or the Director **at any time**.

Treasures and Possessions

Each child has a specially marked "cubby" for jackets, extra clothes, nap blankets, and special projects or papers. Please check your child's cubby each day to take home items that should not be left at the center.

Sometimes, children need to bring special toys or new-found treasures to the center to serve as a "bridge" between home and school. On these occasions, we will work with you to make it a positive sharing experience. In addition, we will have a weekly sharing day on Friday of each week.

There are four things that must remain at home: guns, gum, candy, and money. Any items that encourage aggressive play are never welcome in our center. We are trying to build an atmosphere of cooperation and concern for each other. Items that promote aggression, competition and hostile feelings have no place here.

Thank you for your cooperation with this policy.

Labeling Policy

Please label all bottles, cups, toys, books, and clothing with your child's name. This is necessary for two reasons. First, so that teachers can determine ownership (for infants & toddlers); second, it helps a child to take responsibility for his/her own possessions.

Birthdays

If a birthday is to be celebrated away from the center, and the entire class is not invited, please mail the invitations. If the entire class is invited, feel free to bring the invitations to the center. Please be considerate of our children's feelings and comply with this request.

Parents are welcome to celebrate their child's birthdays at school. Birthday treats are optional. If parents choose to bring a birthday treat, we prefer a small cake, accompanied by a nutritious and healthy snack, such as melon balls, raw vegetables and dip, carrot cake, etc. The teachers can help you with other ideas. Parents are always welcome at their child's special day.

Health Policy

You are the best judge of your child's health, and we trust you not to bring a sick child to the center. If your child becomes ill while at the center, we will call you to pick up your child. The following criteria will be used:

- fever of 100 degrees or more
- eye inflammation
- vomiting
- diarrhea more than once
- Communicable disease or contagious illness (strep throat, ear infections etc.)
- Unknown rash

If your child is sent home due to illness, be sure that he/she is free of symptoms for 24 hours before he/she returns to the center. It is your responsibility to notify the center if your child has a communicable disease, or contagious illness, such as measles, mumps, chicken pox, or ear infections etc. Your child may return when he/she is free of the disease or in the case of a contagious illness after the child has been on anti-biotic over 24 hours.

Minor injuries will be treated with approved first Aid procedures. Our Staff are First Aid and CPR trained. Should there be a serious accident, parents or others listed on the emergency form will be contacted.

Please notify us in writing of any dietary restrictions your child may have. If it is necessary for your child to be given medication while at the center, the medicine must be given to the teacher, along with the completed “Request to Give Medication” form, indicating the exact dates, times and amounts to be given. Once the course of treatment is completed all medicines (prescription and Over the Counter) must be **removed** from the school. **Do Not Put Medication in your child’s lunch box or back pack.**

Hand Washing

Frequent hand washing with soap and running water is necessary to prevent the spread of disease. Children and adults must wash their hands before preparing or eating snack, before and after water play, after handling animals, toileting, coughing, and wiping noses. Set a good example and teach your children how to clean their hands.

Emergency Plans Policy

The following emergency plans are posted on the parent board for parent viewing. We do have regular fire and disaster drills at school. We urge each family to plan what you will do, if disaster strikes during the day when you are at work. The children are taught to listen to the teacher’s instructions when there is an emergency. We will assemble everyone, give aid and comfort as needed, and remain with the children until picked up.

Medical Emergencies

All medical emergencies require a 911 call. If CPR is required, it will be administered by a staff member who is trained in CPR and First Aid. We will call 911, then the parent. All medical emergencies will be handled by the Kennestone hospital.

Fire Escape Plan

1. The alarm will be sounded by the Director or person in charge, who will also call 911.
2. At the sound of the alarm, all activity will stop.
3. Teachers will have children line up; do head count and roll call.
4. Teacher will pick up emergency bag (containing roll book, roster and emergency records)
5. Children will be guided toward the nearest exit. (Rear exit near kitchen for rooms 119, 121, 118, and 120; rear exit by office for rooms 113, 115, 117, and 116). (Cribs will be rolled outside as needed).
6. Once children are safely outside, teacher will do another roll call and head count.
7. Upon arrival of the Fire Department, the Director will notify them of the head count Re-entry into the building will be determined by the Fire Department...
8. If no re-entry is allowed, parents will be called to pick up their children immediately. If a parent can not be reached, Director and staff will remain with the children in the gym at Sedalia Park Elementary School.

Child Wanders Away from the Center

1. The teacher would inform the Director that there is a missing child. The Director will search the building and grounds. If the child is not found within the first 10 minutes of the search, 911 will be called.
2. Parents will be called.
3. DHR childcare licensing will be called.

Structural Damage or Loss of Utilities

1. In the event of structural damage or physical plant problems, such as power failures, we will follow the rules that apply to the Fire Escape Plan. If the building has suffered major structural damage, we will move the children to the gym at Sedalia Park Elementary School. Teachers will being roll call and emergency information, in order to contact parents by phone.
2. In the event of a loss of utilities, the Director will call the local utility office to determine how long the power will be off. If utilities are expected to be off for more than 2 hours, parents will be called to pick up their children.

Serious Injury or Death Plan

1. Teacher will administer CPR and/or First Aid. Teacher will call the Director.
2. Director will notify the Associate Pastor, who is the Safe Sanctuary Coordinator, and call 911, and then attend to the child until paramedics arrive.
3. Director will call parents.
4. If child is transported to the hospital, Director will accompany the child and remain with the child until the Parents arrive.
5. The Director will carry the complete child application, which includes the Emergency Medical Authorization, which is signed by the parents.
6. If death occurs, the Director will notify the proper authorities, including child care licensing and the consultant attached to this center.

Severe Weather Plan

1. The Director will listen to emergency weather radio, in church office, for directions.
2. Director will sound the alarm. Teachers will stop all activities, line up the children, do a roll and head count. Teacher will report a child not present with the group. The Director will locate the child and return them to the group.
3. Taking roll and emergency information, teacher will guide children into the hallway. They will await instructions from the Director, depending on the type of emergency. The teacher will remain calm.
4. Teachers and children will remain in severe weather position, until the Director informs them that it is safe to return to the classrooms.
5. Each teacher will do a roll and head count after returning to the classroom.