

# Parent Handbook

## 2010-2011



600 East Veterans Drive  
(931) 528-AKID

Cookeville, TN. 38501  
[www.earlyscholars.com](http://www.earlyscholars.com)

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Dear Parent,

Welcome! We are honored that you have chosen us to be the provider of your child's education. We promise to provide you a high quality educational program where learning is fun and school is an enjoyable experience.

Our program is designed to teach your child how he/she learns best. We believe that every student is unique and that students have their own personal way of learning. Our goal is to provide an educational program that will use your child's strengths in order to overcome his/her weaknesses. We believe that when a child is taught in the way that they learn best that they develop a love of learning that will remain with him/her through school, career and life.

We practice an open door policy. Parents are encouraged to visit the Academy at their convenience and to share in daily and extra-curricular activities. We also encourage open communication. Please feel free to advise us if there are ways we may better provide for the development and guidance of your child and assist your family.

I assure you that we are committed to providing the best possible experiences for you and your child. Our staff looks forward to working together and sharing in your child's growth and development. Accepting your child for enrollment means we have a commitment to your family.

Working with you,

Jamie Jones, Director of Education  
Sylvan Prep Academy



## **Mission Statement and Program Vision**

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We value and respect the individuality of children, staff, and parents while celebrating their uniqueness. It is our mission to provide a safe and nurturing environment to meet each student's educational, social and emotional needs. When children feel that they are loved and accepted for who they are and develop a sense of self worth, all aspects of their life will fall into place. We provide the opportunity for parents and students to learn and understand how learning occurs and how each person has their own individual learning styles.

Our program vision is to provide an educational program designed to meet the individualized needs of all children. Our Academy is the only private school in the Upper Cumberland with an approach as unique as the students that attend. Our Academy goes beyond the mandates to create a safe environment for optimal learning that focuses on the individualized needs of all children.



## **Program Philosophy**

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The Academy's learning program enables students to learn about different learning styles and how to maximize their own learning potential by unlocking and using their strengths. We follow a path that has been developed by Dr. Mel Levine, a developmental pediatrician, and his colleagues at the University of North Carolina based on scientific research and over twenty-five years of clinical experience. They provide us with a comprehensive framework for understanding how kids learn.

We've learned that this approach increases the likelihood that every child will be able to learn in a way that reduces frustration right away and ensures a greater success in life. Our programs facilitate greater success in school, build greater self-confidence and self-esteem, and restore hope to students and their families.

Every mind is uniquely endowed. As a result, our emphasis on the different ways individual kids learn and find success in their lives has relevance for all kids. Every student - not just those who are struggling- can benefit from having a greater understanding of his own strengths and weaknesses- a picture of how his mind works- along with insight and a plan for optimizing learning and performance.

## Goals of the Academy

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The goals of the Academy are:

- To provide a safe, nurturing, healthy, educational environment where children feel loved, cared for, and secure in their own abilities.
- To help parents and students to acknowledge and appreciate their strengths and weaknesses.
- To promote and encourage positive feelings of self worth in each student by valuing their individuality and uniqueness.
- To provide an individualized program curriculum that is developed to enhance the growth and development of the whole child including opportunities in the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive areas.
- To educate and strengthen families so that they can better understand and facilitate in the education of their child.
- To provide life long learning linked to needs and abilities of all students.



## Admission Information

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Children 5 years through 18 years of age may participate in the Academy. When the Academy is at full capacity, students will be placed on a waiting list. Enrollment requirements are:

1. An application for enrollment, completed by parent.
2. An orientation visit prior to child's scheduled enrollment date.
3. A medical emergency release form must be signed for our files.
4. A current immunization record must be completed and returned prior to and not later than the child's beginning date of enrollment. The immunization and/or physical must be authorized with a signature or stamp from the

Health Department or physician. Parents are responsible for keeping these current.

5. Parents should have all questions regarding policies outlined in this handbook answered prior to enrollment.
6. A non-refundable registration and equipment fee for each child. The registration fee is renewable at the beginning of each school year.

**Registration** - Upon enrollment of every child, we require a fee that helps to cover annual student materials costs. This materials and equipment fee is renewed at the beginning of each school year.

**Tuition** - Tuition arrangements will be made prior to enrolling into the Academy. Tuition is by monthly payments using a debit/credit account or direct debit of checking account or a Sallie Mae tuition student loan.

**Vacation & Holidays** - There is no reduction in fees due to absences, illness, or inclement weather. The Academy will remain open when it snows. We will post any closing of the Academy on the major television networks and radio stations.

Please see attached current academic calendar.

**Additional Fees** - We appreciate parents being on time to pick up children. In the event you cannot pick up your child by 5:00 pm, a late fee will be charged.

**After school Tax Records** - As a courtesy, we provide computerized records showing your total payments for the year.

## Parental Involvement

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Parents are valuable assets to our program. We encourage you to come to the Academy when you have free time to play with your child, share an art activity, eat lunch together, or just check on your child.

Parent meetings are designed to develop parenting skills and activities that encourage family time will be provided. If there is a topic you would like more information on, please let us know. Keep us informed as to skills you wish us to help

your child acquire. Parent/teacher conferences for our School Age Scholars are held once per nine weeks at mid term. We encourage you to attend these conferences so you can better understand your child's strengths and weaknesses.



## **Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)**

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**Purpose Statement** - The Parent Teacher organization (PTO) quarterly meetings are open to all parents and staff. Its purpose is to raise parent awareness of Academy curriculum, share concerns, and be actively involved in Academy activities. A main function of the PTO is to develop and carry out an annual staff appreciation plan and vote on the annual fund-raiser to be conducted in the spring of every year.

Parent support and involvement are recognized as important aspects of each child's development and are essential for the successful operations of the Academy. Parent involvement takes many forms such as:

- Helping with field trips (you are required to participate with at least one trip per year), volunteering in the classrooms, or sharing your job and/or a special talent with the children.
- Becoming a resource for classroom supplies (i.e., home living supplies).
- Attending annual meetings (i.e., positive discipline, learning strategies, and general parenting skills).
- Participating in annual special events such as: Fall Festival, Open House, Christmas program, Book Fairs, Spring Fling, family picnics, fund raisers.
- Completing a written semi-annual parent evaluation of our staff.



## **Class Field Trips**

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Field trips are an important and fun part of learning about the world around us and are planned to go along with the weekly learning theme in your child's classroom. Your child will have many opportunities to join classmates for enjoyable field trips.

We require your permission for your child to accompany us on a field trip. The Academy will notify you in advance of all excursions. **You are required to participate in at least one field trip per year with your child.**



## **Illness, Accident or Emergency Care**

Your child's health is important to us. Children who are extremely ill should be kept home. Infectious diseases spread quickly among young children. We understand your dilemma when you have a sick child, but bringing him/her to the Academy just creates the same dilemma for other parents. We appreciate your cooperation. Children who have a fever may not be brought to the Academy. The health of your child is important to us, as well as the health of all the children enrolled. That is why we ask that you help us maintain a healthy environment.

**If your child: 1) is vomiting, 2) has diarrhea, 3) has a fever of 100 degrees or more, or 4) has any other communicable disease, please do not bring him/her to the Academy on that day.**

Parents will be called if any of these symptoms develop during the day. If your child is ill, please call us. Parents are required to notify the Academy anytime their child is out, but particularly when they are absent due to illness.

In the event of a medical emergency or accident requiring a doctor's treatment, we will contact you immediately. If we cannot make contact with you, the emergency contact and the child's physician will be contacted. If no one can be reached and the accident is serious, the child will be taken to Cookeville Regional Medical Center emergency room. A signed emergency medical authorization is required from the parent to assure emergency medical measures are taken.

When children are brought inside the facility, be sure the teacher knows the child is present and that the child is receiving supervision before you leave. Health and safety is our top priority, yet young children are often testing their physical limits. They occasionally suffer a minor injury during the day, either self-inflicted or peer-inflicted. If this should happen, you will receive an accident report at the end of your child's day. Please understand that these things can happen even when children are closely supervised.

## Allergies and Medications



Parents should notify staff if their child has any known allergies. If foods served are not appropriate, the parent may choose to send special foods for their child or other arrangements can be made. Parents will be notified of contagious diseases that occur within the Academy. Information regarding causes, symptoms, and cures will be provided. At times, it may be necessary for your child to be given medication while at the Academy. A medication consent form must be completed and signed by a parent or guardian.



## Immunizations

It is the parent's responsibility to keep immunizations current. Center staff will monitor health forms. Due notification will be given to parents for children who have deficient immunization to update their records. The recommended immunization schedule issued by the Tennessee Department of Health for normal healthy children is indicated in the table below.

Vaccine	DTP	Polio	MMR	HIB	HEP B	VAR
2 Months	✓	✓		✓	✓	
4 Months	✓	✓		✓	✓	
6 Months	✓			✓	✓	
12 - 15 Months	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
4 - 6 Years	✓	✓	✓			
DTP/DtaP - Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis Polio - Polio Vaccine MMR - Measles, Mumps, Rubella			HIB - Hemophilus Influenza Type B HEP B - Hepatitis B Var - Varicella (chickenpox)			



## Attendance & Dismissal Procedures

A school age student cannot succeed academically without regular school attendance. Please encourage your child to attend school. Students are excused from school for the following reasons:

- 1) Sickness (doctor's note required for 3 or more consecutive days absence)
- 2) Death in the family

### 3) Recognized religious holidays

Any work that is missed during an excused absence must be made up as soon as possible. Failure to complete made-up work will affect the student's grades. Incomplete work will not be carried over from one nine weeks to another nine weeks. Schoolwork missed due to an unexcused absence will receive a zero.

In order for an absence for the above reasons to be excused, parents must send in a written note or call the office to report the absence. When possible, absences should be excused in advance by notifying the teacher when the absence is planned.

A school age student is considered to be truant if:

- 1) The student is absent without parental knowledge.
- 2) The absence is for more than 5 days with parental knowledge and/or the reasons for the absence do not fit one of the excused categories listed.
- 3) Truant officer for Putnam County will be notified in each case of truancy.

Students will be allowed to leave school for the same reasons that excused absences are granted. A parent or guardian must check the student out by signing a checkout sheet in your child's classroom. A student may be allowed to leave school early with someone other than the parent or guardian if the parent on the Student Information Sheet names the person. The entrance code to the door will be provided only to the parent or legal guardian of the student. This code will be changed periodically for security purposes. You will be notified one week prior to the new code being established.

School age students arriving after 8:30 AM are considered tardy. Students having 6 or more tardies or checkouts during the school year will not be eligible for perfect attendance awards. Tardies and checkouts are recorded on the child's official school attendance records.

## **Nutrition, Menus and Personal Hygiene**

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All children who regularly attend will be served meals. The meal schedule is available at the front desk. We will provide nutritious meals that meet the guidelines for the USDA Food Program. Monthly menus will be provided at the beginning of each month. Birthdays are special. If you would like to bring a special treat for your child's birthday, please do so. We encourage good personal health

and hygiene habits at the Academy. We require that the children and staff wash their hands before meals and after toileting and at other appropriate times.



## **Dress Codes**

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The Academy enforces a dress code. It is as follows:

- Student dress shall be expected to meet community standards of cleanliness, healthfulness and safety and shall not disrupt the educational process.
- No person shall wear clothing that contains pictures and/or writing referring to sexual references, profanity, illegal drugs, or the promotion of alcoholic beverages and/or tobacco products in the school building during the school day.
- No male student shall be permitted to wear any headgear (cap, hat, etc.) other than for religious or medical reasons during the school day. Female headgear shall be left to the discretion of the classroom teacher or Director.
- Any clothing that denotes gang involvement or affiliation shall be prohibited.
- Community standards dictate that clothing shall not be obscene or suggestive. Halter tops, tank tops, or cropped tops that reveal a bare midriff and short skirts/shorts shall not be allowed.



## **School Portraits**

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Each year your child will have one or more opportunities to have school pictures made. An experienced studio will provide you with a professional package of photographs at an attractive price. Purchase of photographs is optional.



## **Visitors/Volunteers**

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All visitors/volunteers must report to the office upon entering the school building, sign in and receive a visitor's badge. When leaving, visitors must sign out and return the visitor's badge. Parents are welcome to visit the Academy at any time. However, to avoid interrupting classroom instruction, please make an appointment. Teachers cannot conference with parents during instructional time.

## **Severe Weather, Disaster and Fire Drills**

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The Academy has a well-defined plan for both fire and weather/disaster evacuation. Fire drills are held regularly. Should an emergency requiring evacuation of the Academy occur, you would be notified immediately. If it is necessary to close the Academy due to severe weather, it will be announced on a radio station designated by the Principal.

You will be expected to keep information current as to whom, other than yourself, is allowed to pick up your child. If someone who is not listed on your enrollment form is to pick up your child, we will request prior notification by phone or a written note. Otherwise, we will contact you prior to releasing your child. If you cannot be reached, your child will not be released. The custodial parent or guardian is the only person allowed to pickup the child unless permission is given.

Please watch for notices posted in your child's room on the parent board. You will also find useful information in the front foyer concerning upcoming special family events. Guest speakers and subject matter experts will be scheduled based on family needs as determined by our advisory committees. You will be expected to keep the Academy informed as to changes in phone numbers, worksites and addresses. This is for emergency purposes.

## **Discipline and Cell Phone Policy**

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Each classroom will be using the Assertive Discipline behavior management system. This is a very effective system that uses rewards and consequences to promote appropriate behaviors. Each class will have a list of rules, rewards and consequences posted in the classroom. Each teacher will send home a Behavior Management packet that will explain the rules for their classroom and how their system works. The Academy does not enforce physical punishment of any kind.

All Students and their parents are required to reimburse SPA in the event that textbooks are badly damaged, destroyed, or misplaced while assigned to the student.

Electronic devices such as Cell Phones, CD Players, electronic games, etc. are NOT ALLOWED at school, unless requested by the teacher for a specific project. Such items create a distraction to the learning process and will be CONFISCATED. Cell phones should be left in the student's vehicle. All student cell phones should be turned off before they are brought into the building by a student who doesn't drive, and they should be out of sight at all times. A phone is available in the office for students who become sick and need to call home. ("Off" means off, not "Vibrate.")

Consequences for violating cell phone policy are: (1) First Offense: 3 days of after school detention—phone confiscated and meeting held with parent / guardian to return phone (parent should call for appointment). A phone confiscated during the school day will not be returned until after school. (2) Second Offense: 5 days of after school detention—phone confiscated and meeting held with parent / guardian to return phone (parent should call for appointment). Phone will be returned after detention has been completed. (3) Third Offense: and each subsequent offense the phone will be held for a 20 day period. If the parent refuses the confiscation, the student will incur a 3 day out of school suspension period.



## Faculty and Accreditation

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The Academy faculty members have been carefully selected not only for their educational background and experience, but for their love and sensitivity for children, their desire to grow and gain knowledge in the field of education, as well as their capabilities for maintaining consistent dispositions and handling the day to day needs of children in a calm manner. The Academy believes our teachers are the foundation for excellence in programming. Our staff receives extensive staff development in curriculum, classroom management and detailed operational procedures from one of our in-house trained management staff. All teachers have background and reference checks and maintain CPR, first aid and infection control certification. Faculty members are encouraged to be active in local professional and national educational associations. Academy staff is required to participate in 20 hours of continuing education annually. Get to know your child's teacher. A parent-teacher relationship contributes highly to your child's feelings toward school.

We are proud to be accredited by AdvanceEd, the parent organization of the Southern and Northern Associations of Colleges and Schools (formerly SACS and NACS).



## Licensing

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The State Department of Education licenses private schools with child care programs. A license ensures you that the Academy has met minimum standards for health, safety, program, physical facilities, and staff. Re-licensing occurs once a year. Licensing counselors visit periodically during the year to spot check for non-compliance. Fire inspectors, health and environmentalists, and food service personnel also do a yearly inspection. Licensing certificates are posted.



## Non-Discrimination Policy

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The Academy does not discriminate against persons on the ground of race, color, or national origin. They will not be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any programs or activities. No qualified handicapped individual (parent, child, or staff) by reason of his/her handicap will be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

**If you have any questions regarding the information in the handbook, please feel free to call or visit the Academy.**

# Notes