

Meadow Oaks Academy

Parents Policy Handbook

Welcome to Meadow Oaks Academy. We hope your whole family will enjoy the Center and the friends you will make here. This handbook has been written to describe our programs, goals, policies, and the myriad of practical details that go into making each school day as happy and as successful as possible. Please study it and keep it for reference, as it will answer many of your questions.

Parents are encouraged to visit the center with their children prior to the first day of childcare. This gives the staff and child an opportunity to meet and get to know one another. It makes separating on the child's first day a little easier for both the parent and child. Please feel free to talk to your child's teacher* or the director at any time. We are committed to working closely with parents toward the welfare of the whole family.

*Please observe the policies concerning talking to your teacher during class time (page 9).

Our Program

- The children are introduced to a balanced program of interaction with friends in both teacher-directed and child-directed experiences. The daily schedule includes free choice of time spent in learning centers, group times for creative movement, music, storytelling, and dramatization.
- Our professional staff encourages exploration and growth in a well planned and equipped environment that is stimulating, safe, consistent and nurturing. The program we pursue is geared toward helping children develop habits of observation, questioning and listening. It gives each child an awareness of one's own feelings, sometimes channeling them into more appropriate means of expression. The children learn that they are free to make choices as long as they stay within the limits of consideration for other people and things. Children are treasured for their uniqueness and individuality and are encouraged in self-expression. Such as open-minded program prepares children utilize their intellectual and creative abilities for future learning tasks.
- Our curriculum program is bias-free, child centered, developmentally-appropriate and based upon the belief that play is the best way for children to learn. Our approach is individualized to meet each child's needs and interests, focusing on the individual child's social, emotional and intellectual needs.
- Each classroom is organized with centers for creative art, literature, science, pre-math, dramatic play, block play, tactile experiences and music. These centers encourage reenactment of life's roles. The environment is planned to stimulate imagination, creativity, socialization, exploration, and discovery while challenging the use of muscles important to developing bodies. Opportunities are provided for each child to master tasks that are appropriate to his or her individual level of development.

Hours of Operation

Meadow Oaks Academy is open Monday through Friday, 6:30am to 6:00pm, except holidays. A list of holidays is presented annually.

Registration and Tuition Registration Procedures and Policies

A **registration card** must be filled out and registration fee paid before your child is officially enrolled.

The **registration fee** is NON-REFUNDABLE.

There are two **registration fees each year**.

*A registration fee for the school term (September through May).

*A registration fee for the summer program (June through August).

A child's **enrollment card, medical examination, immunization records, tuition agreement and policy book agreement** must be returned to the school before the child attends.

***Any change or addition to the medical or shot records must be given to the office immediately.*

Tuition Programs and Policies

Upon enrollment, you chose to pay your fees weekly, semi-monthly, or monthly.

We accept CHECK or MONEY ORDERS ONLY.

Weekly fees are due Monday in advance for the week and are late on Tuesday at 9am.

Semi-monthly fees are due on the 1st and 16th and are late on the 2nd and 17th.

Monthly payments are due on the 1st and are late on the 2nd.

Holiday, weekends or illness do not delay or excuse your obligation to timely pay tuition.

Late payment charges: A late fee of \$10.00 is assessed each **Tuesday at 9am** if there is any outstanding balance on your account.

NSF Charge: There will be a \$25.00 charge on all returned checks. If we receive 2 or more returned checks on your account, you will be required to pay with a money order.

There is no discount when the school is closed for holidays or bad weather days. When the school is closed for holidays or bad weather days, all children pay full tuition for that week. This is necessary because our staff, teachers and bills must still be paid.

Late Pick-Up Charge: We close at 6:00pm. If you are late picking up your child, you must pay a late fee of \$5.00 per 15 minute period, or part of a 15 minute period per child. ***THIS IS DUE AND PAYABLE IMMEDIATELY.*** Please give the person caring for your child a check for these charges when you pick your child/children up. If you pay by money order please have the money order for us when your child is dropped off the next day.

Holiday Policy

When Meadow Oaks Academy is closed for holidays, all children pay full tuition for the week. There is NO DISCOUNT in your tuition price when the school is closed for holidays.

Inclement Weather Policy

When the school closes due to inclement weather, there is NO DISCOUNT in your tuition. Closings will be broadcast on television Channel 4.

Vacation / Illness Policy

After your child has been enrolled for **twelve consecutive months**, you may receive two weeks of vacation at half price per year.

If your child has been enrolled for less than one year or less than twelve consecutive months, you do not receive any discount for vacation.

Vacation time must be taken by the week. **Your child must be gone for five consecutive days to receive vacation credit.** It may NOT be taken by the day.

There is no illness credit.

Public School Children

If your child is enrolled in before and/or after school care, special policies apply to you.

Before and/or after school children are **financially responsible for all days enrolled.**

-If your child is **absent** on any of these days you are still responsible for tuition.

-If one of these days falls on a **holiday** you are still responsible for tuition.

-If a public school child is absent **Monday through Friday** (1 entire week) you pay half price.

-When your child attends Meadow Oaks Academy for a **full day because of a public school holiday** there is an **extra charge** to cover the full day's care. This will include a hot lunch and two snacks. (Check price list for extra fee amount).

-If your child attends Meadow Oaks Academy during a **public school holiday week** your tuition for the week will be **\$120.00**. This will include lunch and two snacks.

-If your child attends Meadow Oaks Academy for **ANY PART of a public school holiday week (even if your child attends only one day)** you are responsible for payment for the entire week because we staff and order supplies for you.

Public School Delivery and Pick Up

Your children will be delivered and picked up from school in the school van / buses by qualified drivers.

Proper bus behavior is a **must**. Parents will be notified of improper bus behavior.

Children are required to wear **seat belts** at all times.

If your child is not to be picked up on a particular day you must call the office by 1:30pm.

This is a **MUST!** If we do not know this the bus driver with a bus load of children will sit and wait for your child. You **MUST** let the office know if your child will not be picked up from school. A \$5.00 fee will be assessed if we are not notified by 1:30pm that your child will not be picked up from school.

Super Summer Club

During the summer we offer Super Summer Club a fun and exciting summertime day camp at Meadow Oaks Academy. We enjoy custom thematic units including arts, crafts, field trips and special event days.

Special policies apply to SSC and are explained in your summer enrollment information.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

When you arrive at school please park in the designated spaces. If you wish to take advantage of our valet service you may stop in front of the door and someone will come to your car to receive your child.

Valet service is offered in the morning between 6:30am and 8:30am, and 3:30pm to 6:00pm. If you arrive at school at any other time during the day please park in a designated parking place and escort your child inside the building or come inside to pick up your child. Always remember to hold your child's hand while in the parking lot for his/her safety.

If your child is to be picked up by anyone other than a parent, he/she must come in and show ID. Your child will not be released to anyone except those listed on your registration card. These cards **MUST** be kept up to date. If you need someone whose name is not listed to pick up your child you must call the office and let us know.

Meals and Snacks

General Food Policies

If you must send food to school with your child please make sure it is wrapped in a sack clearly labeled with your child's name.

Wrapped food will be placed on the teacher's counter to be eaten at the appropriate time.

Candy, gum, sodas, chocolate milk, fast food and donuts are not allowed at school. Excessive sweets such as cookies and cupcakes are discouraged.

Food from home may **NOT** be refrigerated or warmed for your child due to staffing and refrigeration limitations.

Arrangements may be made with the office to provide a special snack for birthdays.

Breakfast

A breakfast snack of fresh fruit and/or fruit juice and toast or muffin is given to all children between 8:00 and 8:30am.

Lunch

Lunches are well balanced to meet the nutritional requirements of young children. Menus are posted in the office and a monthly menu is available for you to take home. Children are allowed to bring a lunch but we follow strict guidelines about appropriate foods to send with your child. Sodas, chocolate milk, candy and gum are **NOT** allowed at school. We encourage you to pack a nutritionally sound lunch for your children keeping in mind that your little ones need premium fuel for their bodies. Lunches may not be refrigerated or warmed.

Snacks

A snack is given to all children in the afternoon between 2:30 and 3:30pm.

Health

You are the best judge of your child's health and we trust you will not bring a sick child to the center. However, if in the opinion of the administrative staff your child is sick we will call you to come and pick up your child. The following criteria will be considered in determining if your child must go home:

*fever if 100 degrees or more

*vomiting

*communicable disease

*frequent coughing

*inflammation of the eyes

*more than one incidence of diarrhea

*unknown rash

*excessive nasal discharge

If your child is sent home due to illness he/she cannot return to childcare until he/she has been free of symptoms for 24 hours or a doctor's note. This is to allow your child ample time to recover and to help to stop the spread of illness to the other children.

Illness / Medication Policies

When your child is ill or absent for any reason please call the office and notify us of the illness or reason for the absence. This courtesy keeps us informed of anything contagious to which our children might be exposed to.

If your child becomes ill at school, we isolate your child and call you immediately. Arrangements must be made to pick up your child as soon as possible.

If public school has sent your child home we cannot keep the child until he/she is able to return to public school.

If your child is out because of a contagious illness please be sure the child is no longer contagious before returning to school.

If you are going to be out of reach for the day, or for any part of the day you must give us a phone number where you can be reached or give us alternate emergency contacts.

If your child develops a temperature of 100* or more or has two or more episodes of uncontrollable diarrhea or vomiting you will be called to pick your child up from school. You should make arrangements to pick your child up immediately. After an illness a child must be free of fever, diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours with no assistance from fever reducing, diarrhea controlling medications (Tylenol, Kaopectate, etc.) before returning to Meadow Oaks academy. If you feel that your child is not contagious yet still has a fever or loose stool your child may return to school only with a doctor's note of release that states the non-contagious cause of the symptom.

If your child wakes in the morning with a temperature and you give the child medication to bring the fever down, **YOUR CHILD IS STILL CONSIDERED TO HAVE A TEMPERATURE**, and may still infect other children in the center. We cannot keep a child in this situation. If you have any doubts, please call before bringing your child to school.

Medication

Please read this section very carefully. All laws are set forth by the Texas Department of Human Services.

Do not put medicine in your child's bag. If no one knows it is there your child or another child could get a hold of it which could prove catastrophic. Hand all medications salves and drops to the office personnel.

Medication administration times are 11am and 3pm.

We can give medication only if the parent signs the medical authorization sheets daily. Office personnel cannot sign in medicine for you. You may sign each day's medicine sheet on Monday in advance for the week. Please use a separate line for each medication. Do not sign two medications in the same line.

Prescription medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's name, date, directions, and physician's name. The office must administer the medication according to the label directions and cannot administer the medication after the expiration date. Doses must be spaced appropriately. **If the directions say give twice a day, we can only give it once.**

Non-prescription medications must be labeled with the child's name, the date the medication is brought to school, and must be in the original container. We must adhere to label directions. If a parent requests that a non-prescription medication be given to a child of 4 years and the label states "*Consult physician for children under six*" we can not give the medication unless we have a written authorization from the physician stating the child's name, age, medication and dosage.

Toys / Items Brought From Home

Children should not bring toys to school. Toys from home cause problems in the classroom. Children fight, argue and exhibit jealousies when another child brings a toy from home. The toy may get lost or broken which can be devastating to the child.

Books and videos may be brought if they are clearly labeled with the child's name. Videos will only be shown if they have a direct correlation with the curriculum unit of study and if they are appropriate in content for young children. Videos will only be shown at school if they are rated G and contain no offensive language.

Sheets are provided and laundered in-house. Unless your child must have his/her own article to sleep with please don't let your child bring these to school. This is to help them down head lice. If your child has a security item, we must allow for this. If you slowly discourage this dependency at home you and the office will not have to keep up with the items. It can be a hassle for you and us and frustrating for your child. If lost, it can be traumatic.

We can not emphasize enough the importance of labeling your child's items. Shoes, socks, underwear, pants, shirts, hats, jackets, sweaters, blankets, toddler cups, diapers, wipes, ointment, etc. should all come to school labeled with your child's name. We are structurd but with over 100 children in a school items can get mixed up and duplicate items are common. If an item ever gets misplaced we can find it easier if it is labeled with your child's name. It may even be returned to

you before you noticed it was missing. When you notify us of a misplaced item our first question to you will be **“Does it have your child’s name on it?”** Please be able to always answer **“Yes!”**

Nap time

After lunch, children in Pre-K and younger have a nap period, and are awakened at 2:30pm.

The school provides a mat and sheet. Sheets are laundered in-house.

Unless pillows, blankets, etc. are necessary security items please do not bring them. If you decide to send a pillow or blanket please make sure it is small as our cubbies are about 12”x12”.

What to Wear to School

Children should wear comfortable play clothes that can get dirty. We use paint smocks but that is no guarantee that paint will not get on clothes. We also mix paint with soap for ease in laundering. If paint gets on clothes we recommend using a stain remover such as Spray & Wash or Shout. Please remember that early childhood is all about exploring our world. We plan many exciting, stimulating, educational, messy activities. Please do not send your child in a valued outfit. T-shirts, shorts, sweat pants, sweat shirts, etc. is appropriate.

Please send clothes that are easy to get in and out of to encourage independence in dressing: elastic waists instead of buttons, pants and tops instead of rompers. We discourage tights for little girls. If you send your daughter in a dress please have her wear shorts underneath for modesty during active play.

Footwear is important. Children should always wear sneakers. Cowboy boots are *not allowed*. They bruise when a child is kicked; they slip easily and are awkward on our play equipment. Sandals and jellies expose little toes to stubbing and getting stepped upon.

Discipline Policy

At Meadow Oaks Academy, we view discipline *not* as a means of punishing a child who has acted inappropriately, but rather as a means of teaching a child. Positive discipline teaches children where limits are set, how to maintain control over their bodies and how to problem solve in the event of conflict.

Discipline is most effective when it follows logical consequences. The consequences for behavior have to make sense to the child. If a child is throwing sand outdoors, it is logical to tell the child that the sand stays in the sandbox and that if it gets thrown again the child will have to find somewhere to play. We won’t leave it at that though. We will get the child involved in a discussion about what would happen if all the sand was thrown out of the box. If the child was simply told to leave the sandbox, he/she would not have learned much about the experience.

We work with the child to develop internal control of his/her behavior. Our goal is to encourage the children to become creative, independent, responsible and socially mature human beings. This involves learning to make responsible choices and accepting the consequences of such choices.

Since the purpose of discipline is to teach, more verbal children will be encouraged to talk to their peers when a conflict arises (i.e. a child who was struck by a peer should be encouraged to tell the

peer that he/she does not like to be hit and that it hurts). We will encourage the child to “Use your words” to get these feelings across. This helps children develop empathy for one another’s feelings and really see the results of their actions. We do not ask a child to apologize for his/her actions. Generally, they are not sorry for what they did. If they are truly sorry they will apologize on their own.

The use of time-out shall be limited. A time-out is an opportunity for child who is out of control and at risk of hurting him/herself or others, to calm down and gain control once again. A time-out shall never be demeaning (forcing a child to sit in a corner and put his head down). Again it is an opportunity to gain control over oneself so that the child can discuss the situation and a more appropriate action may be taken.

Any on-going situations will be discussed with the parents to ensure a cooperative approach. Please feel free to discuss any questions or concerns.

No corporal punishment will be allowed. This is defined as the use of negative physical touching (spanking, slapping, pinching, etc.). No unusual punishment will be allowed, such as humiliation, ridicule or threat.

Inappropriate behavior shall be viewed as exactly that. Children shall NEVER be referred to as naughty or bad. We always address the behavior as the problem not the child. A teacher is expected to give unconditional acceptance of the child as a good person trying to learn about life.

Chronic Disruptive Behavior

We will make every effort to work the parents of children having difficulties in child care. We are here to serve and protect all of our children. Children displaying chronic disruptive behavior which has been determined to be upsetting to the physical or emotional well being of another child may require the following actions:

Initial Conference

The director may require the parent(s) of any child who attends Meadow Oaks Academy to meet for a conference. The problem will be defined on paper. Goals will be established and the parent will be involved in creating approaches towards solving the problem.

Second Conference

If the initial plan for helping the child fails, the parent(s) will again be required to meet with the director. Another attempt will be made to identify the problem, outline ne approaches to the problem, and discuss the consequences if progress is not apparent.

Suspension

When the previous attempts have been followed and no progress has been made towards solving the problem, the child may be suspended from child care indefinitely. The director may immediately suspend a child any time the child exhibits behavior which is harmful to him/herself or others. A parent may be called from work any time the child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that cannot be modified by the child care staff. That parent may be asked to take the child home immediately. Suspension from the child care program may vary from a few hours to an indefinite period.

Discharge Policy

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

- *non-payment or excessive late payment of fees
- *not observing the rules of the center as outlined in the parent handbook
- *child has special needs which we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns
- *physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by a parent or child

Extra Clothing

An extra set of clothing (well labeled) including underwear, socks, pants, and shirt must be left at school permanently in case of accidents. An extra sweater or jacket at school is also recommended since the temperature often changes noticeably.

Conferences

All parent conferences are welcome. Please schedule a teacher-parent conference through the office. Feel free to call and discuss ANY questions that might arise. Please call immediately, not weeks later.

Since it is necessary for the teachers to devote their time during the school day to the children, we ask that you please do not spend more than a moment speaking with your child's teacher in the classroom. Little children have "big ears" and discussions of the child should be held in the office not in front of the child. You may have a conference with your child's teacher at any time. Please ask the office.

Please direct all notes of concern to the director not the teacher. That way the director will be aware of those requests or concerns and will be able to make sure they are handled properly.

Parent visits during the school hours are welcomed and encouraged. There are many opportunities during the year for parent help in projects and field trips. Sometimes it can be very helpful to plan your classroom visit with the teachers but of course you are welcome to visit any time you wish.

Child Development Planning Reports

Developmental reports for 18 months through pre-kindergarten are sent out in January and again in May.

Children with Special Needs

Our center will try to accommodate children with special needs (physical, behavioral, cognitive, etc.). Close communication with the parents is essential to providing quality care. Meadow Oaks Academy will not discriminate against children with special needs. We will admit any child with special needs on a trial basis of one to two weeks, after which we will require a conference with the parent(s). At this conference, we will assess whether we are able to adequately care for the child within our current staffing patterns, If we are not able to meet the child's needs within our current staffing patterns, we will give parents the time and assistance needed to find more appropriate care.

Withdrawal from School

A two-week advance notice in writing should be given to the school if it is necessary to withdraw your child. You will be held responsible for weekly tuition up to the written expiration date.

Referral Credit

Word of mouth is the best advertisement! If you refer another family to our school and they enroll their children we will in appreciation give you a referral credit of \$25 NOW and 3 months later you will get the other \$25.00. Be sure the new family points out that they were referred by you.

Parent Bulletin Board

A bulletin board is available with announcements for you to view and read. Please take time to scan the parent board regularly to keep informed of the center happenings and announcements. Home Connections, Menus and other important information can be found here.

Thank you for sharing your children with us!

Meadow Oaks Academy School Holidays

Meadow Oaks Academy will be closed the following days:

Memorial Day – Monday, May 25, 2009

Independence Day – Friday, July 3, 2009

Labor Day – Monday, September 7, 2009

Thanksgiving Day and the day after-
Thursday and Friday, November 26 & 27, 2009

Christmas Holiday – Christmas Day and the day after-
December 24 & 25, 2009

New Years Holiday
December 31st, 2009 Early Release (4 PM)
New Years Day January 1, 2010

I HAVE READ THE PARENT
POLICY HANDBOOK FOR
MEADOW OAKS ACADEMY.
I AGREE TO ABIDE BY
SUCH POLICIES AND RULES

Child's Name

Mother's Signature

Father's Signature

Date

Please sign and return the above statement. The statement must go on file at Meadow Oaks Academy upon enrollment of your child.