



Parent Handbook

2026-2027

SHADES CREST EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY
SHADES CREST BAPTIST CHURCH
452 PARK AVENUE
BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA 35226
205-824-9050

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(Addendum A)

Welcome

Welcome to the Shades Crest Early Learning Academy (ELA)! We look forward to serving you and your family and are thankful you have chosen our program for your child's preschool experience. It is our hope that you will find this handbook a helpful resource in answering all your questions about our program. Our calendar follows the calendar plan set by Hoover City Schools, with the exception of start and end dates, Good Friday, and early closings or delayed openings as deemed necessary by HCS.

Our Mission

Shades Crest Baptist began offering preschool classes as an outreach to the community in 1974. Our mission is to provide a loving, Christian environment that also strives to achieve the highest potential in early childhood education and development. Our program is rooted in the core values of Shades Crest Baptist Church-Worship, Spiritual Growth, Great Commission, and Community of Faith. It is our prayer that we will demonstrate and share God's love in the administration of our program and nurture the foundation for an enduring relationship between God and our students.

Our Theme and Priorities- “Everyday Greatness”

- Create and maintain a safe environment – Our priority every day is to be great at protecting every child in our program. Protect them from themselves, protect them from each other, and protect them from internal and external influences and threats.
- Create and maintain a loving environment – Our priority every day is to be great at loving every child, every co-worker, and every parent unconditionally, sacrificially, and generously.
- Create and maintain a nurturing environment – Our priority every day is to be great at helping every child develop spiritually, physically, emotionally, academically, and socially.
- Create and maintain team camaraderie – Our priority every day is to be great in supporting and encouraging our co-workers.
- Create and maintain respect for the shared use of our facility – Our priority every day is to be great in caring for our facility and do everything within our power to set up the church staff for success in the performance of their ministry responsibilities.

Staff

Our administrative team consists of:

- Director: Meagan Weed
- Assistant Director: Lydia Cromey
- Aftercare Director: Heather Davis

Our teaching and caregiving team is a dedicated and experienced group of individuals who view their role as a ministry first and a job second. Each one is committed to creating a safe, loving, and nurturing environment where every child feels welcomed and encouraged to grow. All staff members must meet the Alabama DHR guidelines for employment in an exempt childcare program.

Admissions Policy

We welcome children of any race, color, creed and religion. The school does not discriminate based on race, color, creed or religion in the administration of its admissions policy. Children in our 3's and older classes must be of the appropriate age for each class by September 1st to be admitted for that class and must be fully potty trained. Please be aware that children with special needs and/or developmental delays will be considered individually. The Director will make a final decision based on the

level of the child's needs, the abilities of the staff and the facility's capacity to accommodate those needs.

DHR Exemption and Adult to Child Ratios

Our Early Learning Academy (ELA) Ministry strives to provide the highest quality preschool education for the children we serve. We are license-exempt under the Department of Human Resources Child Care Licensing Standards. However, we do utilize criteria set by the Department of Human Resources Child Licensing Program and the National Association for the Accreditation of Young Children to help us set benchmarks for our quality of care. We adhere to the policies set forth by the Health Department as it pertains to Child Care Centers and also comply with DHR and Health Department standards regarding classroom adult to child ratios.

Babies 1:5

Younger Toddlers 1:5

Older Toddlers (18+ months) 1:6

2 year olds 1:8

3 year olds 1:11

4 year olds 1:16

Curriculum and Class Structure

With our focus on being an early education program rather than a childcare program, we incorporate the Alabama Standards for Early Education and Development and will implement practices and curricula (Learning Without Tears) that best enable us to achieve those standards. Those standards focus on the following four domains of learning:

- Relationships and Connections (designates those skills and expectations that are built from children's relationships with peers and adults, their own self-knowledge, and their connections to family and the community in which they live)
- Exploration and Critical Thinking: Developing STEM Skills (the skills and strategies children use to learn through exploration and problem-solving in the areas of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics)
- Communication (children's language and literacy development as well as the way they communicate through the arts such as music, movement, dramatic play, and visual arts)

- Physical Development and Health (the way in which children develop coordination, strength, and control of their bodies and develop the knowledge about how to stay healthy).
- As a faith-based early learning program, we will include a fifth domain in which Spiritual Development is fostered (introduce an awareness that there is a God who created them, who loves them, and who has a plan for their lives through weekly chapels, scripture memorization, music, and Bible stories).

Classroom routines are designed to provide consistency and predictability for our children. Each day our students enjoy committed times to group interaction, individual instruction, and independent play. In addition, children experience weekly enrichment classes. We also have a special Chapel experience sharing our Bible focus for the week.

Example Daily Class Routine

9:00-9:15 Arrival and Table Activity
 9:15-9:30 Group Time
 9:30-9:50 Specials class (Art/Music/Spanish)
 9:50-10:10 Snack
 10:10-11:00 Play Centers/Clean up/Restroom
 11:00-12:00 Playground
 12:00-12:30 Lunch
 12:30-12:55 Read books/puzzles
 12:55-1:00 Pack up and leave for carpool

Because of our daily class structure, children need to be at school at 9:00. If you are going to be late please email or call by 10:00 am and let us know so we can have an accurate count for AM or PM care. Your child may not just come for AM or PM care.

Extended Care

We offer extended hours for parents needing additional childcare in the morning and afternoon. Our morning care is 7:15-8:55 am, and our afternoon care is 1:00 pm-4:15 pm. In the afternoon children will play, nap, and have a snack. Extended Care is available in a fixed five-day (Monday through Friday) or a fixed three-day (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) option. Drop-In Care is also available on an as-needed basis with prior administrative approval. Each option has a different rate, with drop-in being higher. These days will stay the same every week and a fixed amount will be added to their monthly tuition every month.

Because staff salaries and work schedules depend on the number of children registered, we must adhere to the following guidelines for extended care:

- You must be dropped off by 10:00am to participate in extended care.
- If you miss your regularly scheduled day, it cannot be “made up” on another day.
- If emergencies or weather cause a delayed start or an early dismissal, we do not prorate charges for those days.
- Parents may request to make changes to their regular schedule. We appreciate a 30 day notice which must be approved by the director.

Attendance

If your child will be absent, late, or gone for an extended period, such as a major illness or family trip, please notify your teacher or the ELA office.

Enrollment and Tuition

Enrollment

Enrolling your child reserves a space for your child in the classroom for the upcoming school year. Enrollment begins in late January and placement will be determined on a first come first serve basis with priority given in the following order: currently enrolled children and new siblings, new children of Shades Crest Baptist Church Members, and new children from the community. Special requests will be considered. However, no guarantees are made that your special request will be met. Registration is done online and your enrollment is confirmed when your registration form, enrollment fee, and up-to-date immunization form are received. In the event that we are unable to meet your request, you will be contacted. Please note that your enrollment form is also your tuition agreement for the 10 month school year.

If you have any questions, please contact the ELA Office at (205) 824-9050.

Orientation

Every new parent is required to attend the new parent orientation held before the beginning of the new school year. Information will be sent home at the end of July providing the date for this meeting.

The following documents will be submitted by the parents at this meeting. They must be on file before your child's first day of school.

- Health and Safety form
- Current/Updated Immunization form
- Parent Pledge
- Photo/Directory/Carpool Release

- Parent/child form of Affidavit
- All About Me
- Infants only- Nap and feeding Routine

In addition to these forms, we require the following

- August Tuition payment
- Update SmartCare account information
- Supply Fee payment

Tuition and Fees Overview

Our school uses SmartCare software that provides an app for families to use to retrieve tuition account balance and payment information. Shades Crest ELA only uses the banking option for payment. We accept check or cash tuition payments; we do not accept credit card or debit card payments.

Tuition payments are due on the first day of the month. Checks should be made payable to Shades Crest ELA. There will be a late fee of \$25.00 added to your account if the payments are made after the 10th of the month. Payment must be received before the next month begins. Should your account become delinquent, you will receive a written late notice. If you do not call the weekday office to make arrangements for payment, you will receive another written notice with the date that your child will be dropped from enrollment. Annual tuition is prorated monthly. Tuition is divided evenly between the months; therefore, months with holidays have the same rates as other months August through May. There is a \$25 charge for all returned checks. Alternate payment plans/arrangements can be made by contacting the ELA Office. *Parents who are holding an infant slot until their start date will be required to pay the full tuition each month, beginning in August, to hold the slot until the child starts.*

Drop in Fees

- AM care- \$20
- 9-1 preschool- \$50
- PM Care- \$30

*Deductions cannot be made for sickness and absences.

Change Fee

Any changes that are requested to be made to your registration status (days coming, adding/dropping AM or PM Care) must be provided in writing at least **30 DAYS** prior to the change request. Changes made will also incur a \$75 administrative fee.

Supply Fee

The supply fee is a semester fee due in August and January. The supply fee will not be prorated based on date of enrollment.

Registration Fee

A registration fee is collected upon enrollment. This fee is non-refundable, non-transferable.

Withdrawal Policy

The Shades Crest Early Learning Academy reserves the right to withdraw any child whose social, physical, or emotional needs are beyond the resources and training of our current staff. If for some reason the program is unable to continue services for a child, you will be notified in writing of our intentions two weeks before the last day of service. If possible, we will provide assistance in referring you to other programs. If the school requests the withdrawal of the child, fees are refunded on a prorated basis. If the parent withdraws the child at any time during the year, fees are not refunded. We respectfully request 30 day notice of intent to withdrawal.

Health Policies

Potty Training

All children in a 3K class or older will be required to be potty trained upon entry to that class. In the event your child has a medical issue and needs to still be in pull ups, please provide us with medical documentation and we will be glad to work with you to achieve the desired goal. If your child has more than 3 accidents in one week – we may ask you to take a week off from school to talk with your pediatrician and to work on going to the potty.

In the event your child manipulates their stool in any form other than appropriate, (ex. pulling it out of their pants) we may ask you to take a week off from school to work on appropriate behavior with bathroom procedures. When potty training in the 2 year old class, please be mindful that children need to be willing to use the potty and parents need to work with teachers to make potty training successful.

These policies are for the health, safety, and well-being of your children and our staff. We will be happy to provide you with documentation of the accidents or events so you can discuss them with your pediatrician.

Immunization Records

In light of recent vaccine-preventable disease outbreaks and in compliance with the JCHD regulations, Shades Crest ELA has updated our immunization policy. To attend Shades Crest ELA, all children must have an up-to-date Immunization Record showing age appropriate vaccinations. These forms have expiration dates and are required to be updated throughout the year. These forms may be obtained from your child's physician. Having our students vaccinated will protect the children under the recommended vaccination age, our students and adults with compromised immune systems, pregnant mothers and staff. Requests for exemption for religious and/or other purposes will be denied.

Children with Illness

In order to help prevent the spread of disease or infection and keep our children and teachers as healthy as possible, the preschool requires adherence to the JCHD health and wellness regulations for Childcare Centers

- Children with fever (above 100.4) or visible signs of illness such as stomach issues or rashes will not be admitted to school. Children exhibiting signs of illness such as diarrhea, upset stomach, fever etc, will be removed from their classroom and parents will be called for pick up.
- When a communicable disease has been introduced into the school, parents will be notified. Parents are urged to notify the school when their child is known to have been exposed to a communicable disease. If your child has illnesses such as the flu or hand, foot and mouth, please keep children home until all symptoms have subsided and they are eating, playing and resting normally.
- If a child is too sick to go outside to play, he/she is too sick to attend school. To maintain adequate teacher/child ratios, we are unable to keep a child from outdoor play so please refrain from sending your child if he or she is unable to play.
- Your child must be symptom-free without the aid of medication for 24 hours before returning to school.
- An illness that requires the use of antibiotics should be given 24 hours to respond to the medication before the child returns.
- Any child treated for head lice must have no evidence of nits in the hair before returning to school.
- If you are called to pick up your child, please do so as soon as possible and within one hour. We separate sick students from their class, and it can be very

distressing for the sick child to sit in the office and wait. Your child will be welcomed back no earlier than 24 hours after pickup.

Medications

The preschool will administer first-aid including antiseptics and wound cleansing unless otherwise advised. We will not administer any fever reducing or pain relief medication. We will not administer any type of prescribed or over-the counter oral medication. A signed Administering Medication Form is required to be kept on file in the office to use diaper cream. If your child does have a life threatening allergy, we will keep emergency medication (i.e. Benadryl, EpiPen) in the ELA Office as provided by you. An Allergy Action plan must be on file and signed by your child's physician in order for us to administer this.

Food Allergies

Food allergies are more common than ever in our classrooms. In the best interest of a child's safety, we retain the right to prohibit certain foods from the classroom. Parents of that classroom will be notified at the beginning of the year. Our teachers try very hard to remind children not to share food with classmates and to be vigilant at snack and lunchtime; they cannot absolutely guarantee that your child will not come into contact with food items to which they may be allergic. If your child has a severe allergy, please discuss this with your teacher and the director. Be sure to provide us with the necessary documentation for treatment and reactions from your child's physician.

Head Lice

The Jefferson County Department of Health has issued the following advisory concerning treatment for head lice: "Even though it is sometimes difficult and time-consuming, all nits must be removed to insure complete treatment. Lice products do not kill all the nits (do not be fooled by manufacturer's claims to the contrary) and survivors will hatch into crawling lice within 7-10 days. This causes a continuing cycle of lice infestation." If your child has lice, he or she may not return to school with nits in evidence in his/her hair. Children may not return to school until 24 hours after lice treatment. Following nit removal, a daily check is advisable for at least 10 days following treatment. We will work with parents to keep all children lice free.

Hand Washing and Sanitization

We promote handwashing in the classroom. Children are taught to wash their hands in the water for at least 20 seconds with soap and dry thoroughly. We do not use the alcohol-based hand sanitizers in the classroom.

Safety Policies

Safe People List

On your child's Health and Safety Form there is an area for you to list the contact information for your child's "Safe People". These are people who are emergency contacts and people who will be dropping off and picking up your child. Please mark appropriately on the form the level of information that these people are privileged to regarding issues with your child. Please inform the people on your list that they should bring a photo ID when picking up your child.

Security

For the security of your children, we require that all doors to the church be locked during the day. If you need to enter the building, please use your code or buzz in through the back door entrance at the ELA Office. Please DO NOT share you code.

Accidents and Injuries

Staff members are required to be CPR certified as part of their teaching responsibilities. The paramedics for the Hoover Fire Department are only moments away and will be called in case of an emergency. Parents will be notified as soon as possible of any injury involving their child.

Classroom Emergency Procedures

Drills

Monthly drills for tornado, fire, and lockdown will be announced on the school and monthly calendars.

Preparedness

Each teacher is required to have an Emergency Preparedness Tote. This Class Tote will always travel with the class. The following items will be included in the tote each day:

- A list of the current day's attendance
- First Aid Kit – containing gloves, band aids, wipes

- Flashlight
- Binder with Health and Family Contact Information for each student enrolled in the class.
- Book and/or activity for children in the event of a tornado or prolonged emergency situation.
- Anything else that the teacher may need on the playground or away from the classroom to serve the needs of the children.

Emergency Communication

The ELA uses wireless radios to ensure the convenience of notifying staff of any emergency situations. Teachers are required to keep the radio in their Class Emergency tote bag and/or where they can hear the radio at all times.

In the event of an emergency, teachers are to state their name, location and emergency. Nearby teachers may respond if necessary, as long as their class is properly supervised by another teacher.

General Security

General safety policies are needed as best practice. Shades Crest Baptist Church will follow these procedures for the safety of the Early Learning Academy children:

- All perimeter facility doors will be locked during preschool hours
- The doors at the end of the ELA hall will be locked during preschool hours
- All visitors to the church will enter through the magnetic entrance doors near the church office.

Tornado

- Teachers will proceed to their assigned area of safety.
- Take Emergency Preparedness Tote (See previous note for what is included in Preparedness Tote)

Fire

Each class has a primary escape route and an alternate. Teachers will use the primary route unless there is an actual fire, and smoke is seen coming from that direction. In that case, teachers would use the alternate route.

- Teachers' escape plan should always be posted on the wall near the door so that substitutes can easily find it.
- When exiting for a fire drill, teachers should take the classroom emergency tote including attendance record and emergency contact information for each child. When outside with the children, teachers should check roll and count and display red or green card for director to know immediately if all children are present
- If children are with a specials teacher when we have an alarm, teachers will exit the building in a safe manner and then go to their children.

Lock Down

In the event that the preschool needs to enact a lockdown for the safety of staff and children, teachers will follow the following procedures.

- Remain in the classroom.
- Close the doors– cover windows and lock doors.
- Seat children away from the view of the door and remain calm.
- Have Emergency Preparedness Tote
- If in another part of the building, will find a classroom or small room to secure children following the same procedures as stated above.
- No one will be allowed in or out of the building while in lockdown.

Inclement Weather Policy

- In the event of severe weather that results in school closings, we will notify you of any changes in our regular schedule or procedures via email, Facebook, text, and direct communication from your child's teacher. Our regular school hours are 9 am-1 pm. Delays and Dismissals will be based on these times when the entire school is present. School may be cancelled if our start time is determined to be too close to our 1 pm regular dismissal time.
- We will make every attempt to follow Hoover City Schools. If severe weather or a national emergency causes Hoover City Schools to delay the start of school or dismiss early, please check email or Facebook regarding official start and closing times.
- If an early dismissal is necessary, be prepared to come to the school immediately to pick up your child. Be advised PM Extended Care may be canceled or shortened if an early dismissal is called.
- If Hoover City Schools calls for a delayed start, there will be NO AM Extended Care. In most cases, our start time will be later than Hoover's to allow our teachers time to drop off their own children in the Hoover Public School system and ensure we have adequate staff for our ELA classes.

Discipline

General Behavior Issues

An important part of our curriculum involves teaching appropriate personal and social behavior. Minor incidents like pushing, scratching, or pinching others can be expected as a part of this learning process and are not unusual in children of this age.

We view discipline as a learning opportunity. Our discipline philosophy is positive in nature. When an incident occurs, we take appropriate steps to protect other children and teach proper behavior. Our process:

- We begin with techniques such as redirecting (“Since the tower keeps falling, let’s play with the dinosaurs instead”) and offering positive alternatives (“When you want a turn with the toy, you may ask your friend instead of hitting him”). The teacher will also explain why the behavior is inappropriate and then suggest a positive and acceptable behavior.
- As inappropriate behavior escalates or continues, we may use time-outs. A warning will be given and if the behavior continues the child will have to sit in “time out”. Time out means that the child is required to sit quietly in a designated area that can still be monitored by the teacher and miss out on certain activities for a brief period of time. Time is determined by the child’s age. 1 minute per year of age. So, a three-year-old would sit in time out for three minutes.

If we feel the safety of other students is in jeopardy or that the child requires a change of environment, the child will be sent to the Director’s office. At this point, we may call the parents to pick up the child or return the child to the classroom depending on the situation. A conference may be scheduled if deemed necessary by the teacher and/or director. Parents are also encouraged to schedule a conference if they feel it is needed.

Our primary concern for every child enrolled in our program is their safety and welfare. We may, in extreme and very rare cases, terminate a child’s enrollment if it is determined that they pose an immediate and continuing danger to themselves, other children, or school staff or if there is a continual disruption to the educational process. Lack of parental cooperation with the preschool to help resolve the behavior issues also qualifies for dismissal.

Biting

Biting is another common behavior issue that occurs in toddlers. While we acknowledge that biting is largely a developmental phase, we will be proactive in our attempt to prevent biting incidents and require cooperation from the parents in addressing this behavior. Attention and care will be given to both students involved in any biting incident. Both sets of parents will be notified that an incident occurred through a report sent home in the child’s bag. If it is determined that further communication is necessary, the director or teacher will contact the parents to create an action plan. Parents may be called to pick up a child who is biting and persistent biting (3+ bites in 2 weeks) may require the child to stay at home until the behavior improves. For the safety of all children in the classroom, in extreme cases of habitual biting, the child will be withdrawn from school.

Calendar and Special Events

School Calendar

Our calendar follows the calendar plan set by Hoover City Schools, with the exception of start and end dates, Good Friday, and early closings or delayed openings as deemed necessary by HCS.

School Performances and Events

Donuts with Dad	3K and 4K only
Costume Parade	Whole School
Christmas Program	2K, 3K and 4K will perform
Graduation	4K Families
Mother's Day Tea	3K and 4K

New Parent Orientation

At New Parent Orientation you will be able to hear about the Early Learning Academy Program, ask any questions, and go over the parent handbook. At the meeting, you will have the opportunity to submit all the necessary forms for your child to begin school. Registration is considered incomplete until all forms are completed and returned.

Meet Your Teacher

"Meet Your Teacher Day" is a time to introduce your child to the classroom and the teacher before the school year officially begins. This is typically held the day before school begins from 9-1. It is a drop-in event. This is a wonderful time for you to meet the teacher and share about your child's needs for the upcoming year.

Holidays

To help our families, we follow the Hoover City School System for holidays and vacation schedules as closely as possible. However, from time to time, it will not be exactly what is right for our preschool and circumstances. Therefore, please reference your yearly calendar and read the parent newsletter for information.

Celebrations and Birthdays

We have several special celebrations throughout the year during normal classroom hours. Each classroom may have a designated room parent. Please watch for more information regarding these celebrations throughout the year.

Birthdays are very important, and we consider it a privilege to participate in the celebration. As a part of that celebration, we ask that you please notify the teacher in advance that you will be sending something in for the class. Please be aware of any allergies in the classroom. Also, please reserve goodie bags, balloons, or other birthday items for parties outside of school.

In addition, birthday party invitations will not be distributed at school unless every child in the class is invited. Please mail invitations for parties that do not include every child in the class.

Fundraisers

We set our tuition rates to be as affordable as possible to parents. Any extra expenses or programs must come from additional funding. These include things such as playground improvements, classroom improvements, or library growth. To raise these additional funds, we may use fundraisers. We greatly appreciate and depend on the support of all our parents in helping to plan and coordinate these events.

Communication

Contact Information

Please be sure that your contact information is current and accurate in our records and within our Smartcare System. You may update your contact information anytime in the ELA Office. We utilize email, phone numbers, and addresses for sending you information. It is your responsibility to ensure that we have the correct information.

SmartCare and Facebook

Please download both the Smartcare app and Facebook. These systems are very effective ways to notify you of any emergency situation. We will also use these systems from time to time to remind you of things happening at the preschool.

Newsletters

The school newsletter will be sent home monthly, informing you of all upcoming events. Your teacher may also send home a specific newsletter and calendar each month informing you of things specific to your child's class.

Contacting the ELA Office

You may contact the ELA Office at (205)-824-9050. Because of the day-to-day tasks that are necessary for running the Preschool Program, someone may not be available to answer this extension. If you have an immediate emergency and must get in touch

with the director, please hang up and dial (205)-822-1360 and inform the church receptionist of your emergency. She will relay the message to the director. You may also email the director or assistant director.

The Shades Crest ELA Committee

The goals, policies, and procedures of the Early Learning Academy are written and maintained by the Early Learning Academy Committee. If you believe that these goals, policies, and procedures are not being upheld, please communicate your concern. However, please communicate with the responsible staff member first and according to the chain of command listed below. Should you reach the top of the chain, and feel dissatisfied with the resolution, you are free to seek the ELA Committee's review by communicating to the committee in writing. A church receptionist or staff member can provide the current information for contacting the ELA Committee, as this committee's membership changes annually.

The responsible staff members and chain of command are

1. Teacher
2. Early Learning Academy Director
3. Ministerial Liaison

What to Bring to School

Infants and Crawlers

- **Diaper Bag-** Your child should be sent with a diaper bag every day. Please be sure that the bags are large enough to carry all the items they need throughout the day including a bottle, food, and a change of clothing. It is very important to check the bag each day for any information/communication from your child's teacher.
- **Diapers-** The ELA does NOT provide diapers. Please send diapers in bulk for your child. Teachers will inform you when more diapers are needed.
- **Change of Clothing-** Each child is required to bring a change of clothing to be kept in the classroom for the duration of the season. Please bring the clothes in a gallon-size Ziploc bag labeled with the child's name. Please include socks and underwear. We will remind you when it is time to exchange clothes as the seasons change.
- **Bottles-** Parents are required to bring bottles already prepared for their infants. Each bottle must have the child's name on it. If they are to have two bottles in the time that they are in our care, they must send two separate bottles. All prepared

bottles, Breast Milk or Formula, will be refrigerated, please label breast milk bottles. The bottle is removed from the refrigerator as needed and warmed before being given to the infant (please let us know if your child does not prefer a warm bottle). The used bottle is rinsed and placed in the child's bag and returned to the parent for cleaning. *NO CLASS BOTTLES

- **Food-** We do not provide snacks for infants. If an infant child is to be fed a snack or baby food, the food sent from home should be ready to consume. Please supply a spill-proof cup with your child's name on it for older infants. Please send water for your child's drink. If they consume it all, then we will refill the cup.

Toddlers

- **Backpacks-** Backpacks are preferred for toddlers – Please be sure the backpack is big enough to hold the classroom folder, lunch box, and all the items they need throughout the day. It is very important to check the backpack each day and open their daily classroom folder for projects and letters from your child's teacher/caregiver.
- **Cup/Food for Toddlers-** Please supply a spill-proof cup with your child's name on it. In the morning the cup will be placed in a basket and given to the children throughout the day. **Please send water for your child's drink.** If they consume it all, then we will refill the cup. Every child is required to bring lunch and a snack. Please pack a ready-to-eat lunch that your child can enjoy independently. Be sure to also include any necessary utensils that they may need. Toddler rooms do not have refrigeration for food or drink, so please pack an ice pack to keep their food fresh.

Preschool (2K, 3K and 4K)

- **Backpacks-** Each child should bring a backpack to school everyday. Please be sure that the bags are large enough to carry several items including their lunch box and daily folder but also small enough for the child to carry without assistance. It is very important to check the bag each day and open their daily classroom folder for projects and letters from your child's teacher.
- **Lunch-** Every child is required to bring a ready-to-eat lunch and a snack. Please pack a lunch that your child can enjoy independently. Be sure to also include any necessary utensils that they may need. Per guidelines from Jefferson County Department of Health, lunches must be sent ready to eat. We do NOT heat up or cook food. Lunch will NOT be refrigerated, so please use ice packs to keep food fresh. We encourage children to bring a labeled drink cup/water bottle that can be used for water throughout the day. Please do not deliver fast food to your child

for lunch. Schedules change and lunches need to be at school with the children in the morning.

- **Change of Clothing-** Each child is required to bring a change of clothing to be kept in the classroom for the duration of the season. Please bring the clothes in a gallon-size Ziploc bag labeled with the child's name. Please include socks and underwear. We will remind you when it is time to exchange the clothes as the seasons change.

All Ages

- **Toys from Home-** The preschool will provide all necessary toys and equipment to allow for a variety of play and learning activities during the day. Please do not allow your child to bring toys, blankets or stuffed animals to school. Exceptions are made for a child's initial adjustment period and "share day" as specified by your teacher.
- **Appropriate Clothing-** *Children should wear play clothes to school.* Daily activities include active and messy play, and children should feel comfortable and enjoy playing without worrying about their clothes. If your child is potty trained, please do not send them in outfits they are unable to remove independently. Outside play is a regular part of the daily schedule. Please check the weather to see that your child is dressed appropriately. In the event of EXTREME heat or cold (below 50* or above 85*) or rainy weather, our children will play indoors or at the Family Life Center. Dressing your child for the appropriate temperature at midmorning and dressing them in layers is the best way to ensure that they are comfortable. Children should also wear comfortable play shoes. Tennis/Athletic shoes are best. For safety reasons, we do not allow children to wear flip-flops, slip-on sandals or any other open toe shoes. Sunscreen should be applied before bringing your child to school on days that you feel it is necessary. Our teachers do not apply sunscreen. Picture days are considered "dress-up days"; the teachers will curtail messy activities for that day so that you may dress your child as you see fit.
- **Please label ALL clothing and belongings including cups that you send to school-** This helps our staff ensure that belongings are returned to the proper owners and also helps prevent unintentional sharing (especially toddler cups).

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival Procedures

Please enter the building for drop-off using the ELA Office entrance. For safety reasons, all other doors will remain locked. All children should be dropped off by their parents or by persons who have been designated in writing by the parents to be on the child's Safe People List. You are required to sign in your child.

Please be courteous of your child's teacher and respect their time to prepare for the day. For parents, it is important that you and your child not arrive more than 5 minutes before classes begin. If you are not participating in our extended care program and arrive early, please stand with your child outside of the classroom until the teacher begins receiving students. All children must be delivered into the hands of their teacher. Our program cannot be responsible for the child unless the parents adhere to this important policy.

Extended Care – Morning Care

Early Care begins at 7:15 am. Please sign your child in on the sign in sheet of their classroom. Classes are combined by age for morning care. ELA Classes begin at 9:00 am.

Late Arrivals

Please understand the importance of arriving on time. Our classrooms have a schedule, and we allow time for the children to become acclimated in the morning. It is important that your child arrives on time. We understand that everyone will have mornings where they are late from time to time. If you do arrive late, please walk your child to their classroom and be mindful of making the teacher aware of your child's arrival while making a quick exit.

Dismissal Procedures

Please arrive 5 minutes before class dismisses. Your child's safety is our first priority. Therefore, all children should be picked up by their parents or by persons who have been designated on the child's Safe People List. More information about this list is provided in this handbook.

A child will not be permitted to ride home with another student unless a note is sent by the child's parent requesting permission for the child to ride with that student. All carpool rules apply and proper seats are required. The 2, 3 and 4 year old classes need to use carpool for pick up. See carpool procedures on the next page.

Infants/Crawlers and Toddlers will be picked up from their classrooms. If you have Infant/Crawler or Toddler younger siblings, we encourage you to come inside to pick up the infants/crawlers or toddlers first and then pick up the older sibling from carpool.

Extended Care – Afternoon Care

If you are participating in Extended Care, you should sign out your child at pick up. You are considered late if your child is not picked up by 4:15 p.m.

Late Pick-Up

It is important that you be prompt when picking up your child. Carpool ends at 1:10 p.m. and extended care ends at 4:15 p.m. If a child is picked up late, a fee of \$1.00 per minute will be charged to your account. For example, if you pick up your child at 4:19, you will owe \$4.00. In addition, *if you are late 3 times*, your PM Care privileges may be revoked for 1 week. If habitual late pick-ups continue, your extended care privileges may be revoked indefinitely. Exceptions are made occasionally for emergencies. If you know that you are going to be late, please call the ELA Office and leave a message. You may also call the church office and leave a message with the church receptionist.

The director will follow these procedures when a child is not picked up:

1. Bring the child to the ELA Office to wait for the parent to arrive.
2. Attempt to contact the parents and/or guardians on home and mobile numbers.
3. Attempt to contact all individuals on the child's Safe People List on record in the ELA office.

Carpool Procedures

We consider the safety of our children and teachers a top priority. For this reason, all parents, children, and staff are expected to adhere to the following procedures:

- **Afternoon Carpool Procedures**

- Carpool begins at 1:00 and ends at 1:10. For the safety of our children, our carpool requires the use of car seats and/or booster seats (for older children who qualify). Our teachers are instructed not to place children in cars without proper car seats installed in the back of the vehicle, not the front. If you arrive in carpool without a properly installed seat, you will be asked to park and walk inside to pick up your child. Thank you for understanding.
- A staff member will open your car door and assist your child into the car. The staff member will NOT buckle your child. Please pull forward to the parking lot and buckle your child. Please do not get out of your car to assist us as we find that carpool is faster and safer for everyone when the staff is executing a system that is planned and predictable.
- Cell phone use is prohibited during carpool for safety reasons.

- By 2 weeks into the school year, we expect ALL 2's 3's & 4's to use carpool.
- If you plan to utilize our carpool, you must sign the release in the Registration Packet.

Health Department Guidelines

Tobacco

- Smoking shall be prohibited at all times in all Child Care Centers, including before and after hours when no children are present. Smoking shall be prohibited in any vehicles used by the Child Care Center to transport children.
- Smoking is prohibited by **all** individuals on Shades Crest ELA campus.
- All Child Care Centers shall have a policy that staff shall be prohibited from smoking during a work shift while on or around the Child Care premises. If cigarettes are consumed before the work shift begins or during a break away from the Child Care Center premises, the staff members shall be required to wash their hands thoroughly. Program staff shall avoid bringing clothing that smells of smoke into the classroom, center or onto the playground.
- When the Child Care Center is in a shared commercial space (e.g. a strip mall), smoking by staff members shall be prohibited within ten (10) feet of any entrance or exit and anywhere within sight of the children.
- Signage shall be posted in facilities and vehicles to communicate the NO SMOKING policy. Staff will be informed of this policy through such means as a procedures manual and orientation as well as training provided by supervisors. Parents, families and others will be informed through such means as a parent handbook, signs posted on parent bulletin boards and announcements during parent orientation and Child Care Center committee meetings.

Physical Activity Policy

Each child shall have an opportunity for the appropriate amount of active play each day. Active play shall take place outdoors when weather and environmental conditions permit. When the weather and/or environment do not permit outdoor activity, active play shall take place indoors.

- 3 yrs and older (preschool children)- *At least 90 minutes per 8 hour day*
- 12 months to 3 yrs - *At least 60 minutes per 8 hour day*
- Infants to 12 months- caregivers shall make provisions for the promotion of physical development on a daily basis, including varied activities appropriate to each child's development.

- Daily schedules including physical activity time shall be prominently posted in each classroom.
- Children who exhibit out of control behavior during active play may be given a time-out of no longer than 5 minutes. Children cannot be made to remain indoors or seated as punishment for earlier classroom behavior.

Employees Health and Wellness Policy

No employee shall be permitted to work at the CHILD CARE CENTER while experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Jaundice
- Sore Throat with Fever
- A lesion containing pus such as a boil or infected wound that is open and draining and cannot be covered

All employees shall report such symptoms to their CHILD CARE CENTER supervisor and shall not return to work until symptoms desist.

Any employee diagnosed with a communicable disease that can be transmitted by foods or other means or who is a carrier of organisms that cause such a disease shall not be allowed to work in a CHILD CARE CENTER in any capacity in which there is a likelihood of such person transmitting disease to other persons.

Screen Time

Screen time for children 2 years old and older, including television, videos, video games, and computer usage, shall

- Require Director approval
- Never to be offered during meals and snack time
- Not to exceed 30 minutes a day without prior permission from the director.
- Screen time shall only be used for educational purposes or physical activity.

Recommended Updated Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns

(Please see Addendum A)

Shades Crest Early Learning Academy Committee, May 2026

Any proposed changes regarding the policies and procedures outlined in this handbook should be reviewed and voted on by the Weekday Early Education Committee as stated in the by-laws of the church.