

Dream…Learn…Grow

PARENT HANDBOOK

Revised March 2025

Welcome Letter

Dear Family,

Welcome to Little Scholars Academy. We want to welcome you to our school family and look forward to a great 2026-2027 school year together. We thank you for entrusting us with your children in these formative years. We are committed to providing a quality program that is educational, child friendly, safe, and creative. We believe that each child possesses unique gifts, talents and abilities and it is our goal to draw out the best in each of your children.

We know that searching for childcare can be stressful but finding the right facility can also be rewarding for your family. Finding the right center gives you the peace of mind that your child is learning, growing and having fun. It is normal to feel uncertain about leaving your child in someone else's care. At Little Scholars Academy we understand and are sensitive to your concerns, and we're here to answer any questions large or small. You need a partner who will work with you and your child to communicate, educate and nurture your entire family's needs.

We strive to provide a well-planned, age-appropriate educational program that meets your child's developmental needs at age-appropriate levels. We desire for each child to have the opportunities to ***dream, learn, and grow***. We strive to provide an atmosphere to help children develop positive self-esteem. We believe children are important and we work toward enhancing their different strengths.

Little Scholars Academy strives to offer a program that will support and involve all parents in the education of their children. We realize that it is important that we give them a strong educational experience that will prepare them for their elementary years to come, to strengthen a child and his/her self-concept at an early age.

Childcare providers play a vital role in Philadelphia. LSA will provide children with a safe place to learn and play and their parents with a service that is critical to allowing them to work and carry out other daily activities. Keeping children safe during COVID-19 is our utmost priority. The guidelines in the handbook to help decrease the risk of COVID-19 for children and staff.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions you may have concerning our handbook. Here's to a great 2026-2027 school year! Thank you for choosing Little Scholars Academy. We look forward to providing your child with a caring and enriching environment.

Management

Mission Statement

Our mission is to create a challenging learning environment that encourages high expectations for success through development-appropriate instruction, that allows for individual differences and learning styles. LSA promotes a safe, orderly, caring, and supportive environment. Each student's self-esteem is fostered by positive reinforcement and relationships with students and staff. We strive to have our parents, teachers, and community members actively involved on our students' learning.

Learning Environment

LSA aspires to do this so, that we make a difference in the lives of children and families in the communities where we live and work. LSA provides a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. LSA offers flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. LSA's program is designed to enhance child development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning related to the Early Learning Standards. LSA offers programs and services for children as young as 18 months up to 12 years old. Each program features age-appropriate activities and learning provided by knowledgeable, caring teachers and staff who understand the many stages of early childhood development.

Programs & Curriculum

Our Toddler program educates children 18 months to 2 years old. The program has structured learning opportunities aimed at developing fine and gross motor skills. Activities are designed to assist toddlers as they grow and develop listening, speaking and hand-eye coordination skills. Learning experiences are planned to promote the toddler's growing independence, to enhance social skills, and to build the confidence needed to reach their individual potential and prepare for preschool and beyond. Through the guidance of our experienced teachers, toddlers succeed in a program designed to meet their individual ages and stages.

The Preschool program generally includes children 3 to 4 years old and focuses on this wonderful stage of development when learning takes center stage. Preschoolers are introduced to age-appropriate activities involving math, science, art and even computers. There are pre-reading and pre-writing lessons, music and songs, and a myriad of other fun and educational activities. The interactive curriculum enables teachers to help parents assess and evaluate their child's progress.

Preschool is just that *preschool*: the period that follows the marvelous, explosive growth of the first two or three years of life and precedes the serious business of formal schooling. It is a time of enormous educational strides in language and conceptual thinking, and in the development of self and social skills. Preschool is also a time when parents and society begin to look at children differently, looking toward elementary school and beyond to cultivate future students and citizens.

The Pre-kindergarten program has been professionally developed for children from 4 to 5 years old with the aim of preparing them for the school years ahead. We align our activities and programs with PA early education standards, so children get a jump on their future academic success. We read, we write, tell stories, and build skills in a fun and enriching atmosphere. The program offers a rich variety of projects and activities that build upon established foundations for learning while focusing on advancing language

ability, mathematical reasoning, and scientific thought. Children develop independently and in small groups. Learning centers offer guided experiences that encompass all the skills and understanding necessary for optimum development and academic success. At LSA, it is all about moving forward in a happy and healthy learning environment.

Helping children learn the basic facts is an important goal in the ***Everyday Mathematics*** curriculum. Young children are capable of absorbing a great deal of new material, sometimes more rapidly than adults. Children know much about addition and subtraction and other operations before formal instruction begins. Research on children's informal solution methods revealed a typical developmental progression from simple counting of objects, to use of more sophisticated counting strategies and relationships, to derived fact strategies, to use of arithmetic facts and number relationships.

Handwriting Without Tears (HWT) is a proven success in making legible and fluent handwriting an easy and automatic skill for students. The curriculum uses hands-on, educationally sound instructional methods to teach handwriting. As a result, thousands of administrators, teachers, therapists, and parents across the country have successfully implemented HWT. The result truly is handwriting without tears!

We provide a rich learning environment with curricula that are developmentally appropriate to the specific ages in each classroom. We have a flexible day routine that allows children to advance at their own pace. We strongly believe that learning happens through play. Learning and exploring are hands-on and are facilitated through interest areas. Our program is designed to enhance children's development in the following areas: creativity, self-expression, decision-making, problem-solving, responsibility, independence, and reasoning. We encourage openness to that which is different from us, and the ability to work and play with others. Copies of daily schedules are posted in each classroom.
Our assessment tools utilized at LSA is work sampling and Teaching Strategies Gold. LSA believes that continued assessment of children is vital for toddlers, preschooler; pre-kindergarten; and kindergarten. Teaching strategies comprehensive assessment solutions for early childhood education programs are based on the latest research, are proven valid and reliable, and are aligned with the Common Core State Standards, state early learning guidelines, and the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.

The Creative Curriculum®

Across the United States, teachers use The Creative Curriculum® to prepare more than a million young children for success in kindergarten and beyond. There are 38 research-based objectives that define the path teachers take with children in the classroom. The objectives cover 10 areas of development and learning:

- Social-Emotional
- Physical
- Language
- Cognitive
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science & Technology
- Social Studies
- The Arts
- English Language Acquisition

Our staff, experts in early childhood development and education, observe and evaluate each child's learning, behavior, progress and adjustments. Through encouragement, staff help each child develop his own pattern of interests and talents.

The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos

The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos helps caregivers and teachers provide care and experiences that are nurturing, consistent, and loving and that will help your child flourish. The Creative Curriculum® for Infants, Toddlers & Twos will guide your child's caregivers and teachers in creating a classroom environment filled with responsive daily routines and meaningful, individualized experiences that nurture your child's learning and development.

The routines will be familiar to you: hellos and good-byes, diapering and toileting, eating and mealtimes, sleeping and nap time, and getting dressed. These routines are an important part of your child's day and ensuring that they are consistent, and nurturing will help your child build trust and form the positive relationships with his or her teachers that are the foundation for learning.

In addition to daily routines, The Creative Curriculum® for Toddlers & Twos will support your child's caregiver or teacher every day as she engages your child in meaningful experiences, such as playing with toys, enjoying books and stories, creating art, and going outdoors. It will help your child's teacher observe what your child does and select materials that match your child's growing abilities and interests.

The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool

The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool will fill your child's day with rich learning experiences rooted in exploration, discovery and play. Constructive and purposeful play is essential for children's learning, encouraging discovery and exploration, and supporting children's academic growth. When children play, they acquire language, learn to solve problems, learn to control their behavior and feelings, and explore social roles. They learn about themselves, other people, their community, other communities, and the world around them. They find joy in learning.

The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool is a comprehensive, research-based curriculum that features exploration and play as a way of learning. It helps our teachers create a high-quality learning environment for the children in our care.

Through studies, which are hands-on project-based investigations, The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool helps teachers build children's confidence, creativity, and critical thinking skills- setting them up for success no matter where life leads them.

School-Age Programs

Before & After Care

Little Scholars Academy understands that many parents have to go to work early or stay later than the traditional workday. As such, we offer these parents and their children a safe haven, a place that expands the boundaries of education and nurturing. We provide transportation to and from school, homework assistance, morning and afternoon snacks, and other fun, educational activities.

Our programs for school-age children support their desire to learn by providing new opportunities to help them explore. The center provides a safe environment for after-school, supervised care, recognizing the need of kids following a busy school day. Our energetic and creative teachers understand how to involve the various elementary school ages and activities that are fun and engaging for their particular grade level.

Quiet time and opportunities for doing homework are also provided to assist students with academics. School-age children up to 12 years old can enroll in our before- and after-school care programs, backup care for school holidays and school closings, and summer day camp programs. We are the ideal alternative when you do not want to leave your child at home alone before or after school.

Transportation for the before and after school programs is available to and from Rhawnhurst Elementary, Solis Cohen Elementary School, Farrell School, and Tacony Academy Charter. On days school is not in session, but children are in attendance at the center, children will participate in age-appropriate activities on center days, including games, crafts, outdoor play, etc.

Camp LSA

Camp LSA is a 10-week summer program that runs from mid-June through August. From arts and crafts to picnics, water play and special events, children will get to experience the wonders of a summer vacation close to home. Camp LSA offers flexible scheduling, allowing parents to take advantage of family vacations and time off from work. You can enroll your child for the entire summer, or just specific weeks (sessions) or hours. The Camp LSA is for children ages 2-12 years.

Keystone Stars

All LSA centers are currently participating in the Keystone STARS Certification Program. Keystone STARS is a four-level program in Pennsylvania to evaluate and improve the quality of childcare. The program offers Standards, Training, Assistance, Resources and Support (STARS) to childcare providers to improve and recognize achievements. For more information about the Keystone STARS Program, visit their website at www.pakeys.org.

Staff Qualifications

Our teachers are hired in compliance with the state requirements and qualifications as a base minimum. All staff members participate in an orientation class and ongoing training in the areas of child growth and development, healthy and safe environments, developmentally appropriate practices, guidance, family relationships, cultural and individual diversity, and professionalism.

We strongly discourage families from entering into employment arrangements with staff (i.e. babysitting). Any arrangement between families and our caregivers outside the programs and services we offer is a private matter, not connected or sanctioned by Little Scholars Academy.

Child to Staff Ratios

Children are supervised at all times. All caregivers receive scheduled breaks which reduce fatigue and help to ensure alertness. We maintain the state required standards for child to staff ratios:

Similar Age Levels	*Staff*	*Children*	*Maximum Group Size*	*Total Number of Staff Required for the Maximum Group Size*
Infant	1	4	8	2
Young toddler	1	5	10	2
Older toddler	1	6	12	2
Preschool	1	10	20	2
Young school-age	1	12	24	2
Older school-age	1	15	30	2

While toddlers and preschoolers are napping, the following staff-child ratios apply:

Similar Age Level	*Staff*	*Children*
Young toddler	1	10
Older toddler	1	12
Preschool	1	20

Communication & Family Partnership Policy

Parent Involvement is Important!

When teaching and caring for your child, we value your involvement, because a meaningful partnership with you helps our program to respond positively to your concerns and encourage mutual trust and confidence. Your partnership with us plays an enormous role in how your child experiences our program and what he or she will gain from the experience.

Parent Portal

The Little Scholars Academy Parent Portal is a place where parents can, locate important contact information, download necessary forms, view the monthly menus and more. Make sure to visit regularly for all your needs at www.littlescholarsacademypa.com and click on the "Parent Portal" tab on the main page.

Tadpoles

LSA utilizes Tadpoles, an app for safely and securely communicating with parents about their children. Tadpoles allows teachers to give families insight into their child's daily routines and experiences with real-time updates, photos, videos, progress reports and more. Tadpoles engages families in the learning process and allows them to feel connected to their child's day.

Daily Communications. Daily notes from center staff will keep you informed about your child's activities and experiences at the center. Notes will be emailed using Tadpoles at the end of the day.

Bulletin Boards. Located throughout the center, bulletin boards provide center news, upcoming events, faculty changes, holiday closing dates, announcements, etc.

Newsletters. Monthly newsletters will provide center news, events, announcements, etc. These newsletters will be emailed every month.

Email. We encourage you to provide an email address that you use regularly so that we may send you announcements, event invitations, newsletters and general updates.

Family Visits. Family participation is encouraged. Visit our classrooms, volunteer, come along on a field trip, or eat a meal with your child with a Criminal and ChildLine Abuse Clearance on file. Signing in is required for the safety and protection of our children. Each visitor must wear a visitor's badge while on premises and sign-out upon leaving.

Incident Reports

Minor incidents that occur at the center are recorded on Tadpoles Incident Report and reviewed by the Director and is shared with families via email. When more than one child is involved, the other child's name will not be disclosed due to confidentiality.

Photos

LSA staff are snapping pictures regularly of the children learning, creating art and enjoying in-house activities to share with you! These pictures are posted on the school's website as the events unfold for you to enjoy. At LSA we are excited to watch your children grow and we are proud to share their accomplishments. In order for us to do so, parents are asked to sign the photo release on the Emergency Contact form. We know you'll enjoy sharing the photos with friends and family! Professional photographs are taken at the Center in the fall.

Screening, Observation, Assessment & Family Conferences

Screening:

Developmental screenings using the Ages and Stages, within 45 calendar days of the child's program start date using the Ages and Stages, 3rd Edition (ASQ-3) and the Ages and Stages Social Emotional (ASQ-SE and ASQ-SE2). Questionnaires are conducted within 45 days of program entry for each child. The Ages and Stages tool evaluates a child's progress in four developmental domains of social/emotional, cognitive, physical and language/literacy.

Results of the screening will be shared with families. If there is an identified concern, we will have a conversation with families about making a referral to Elwyn within 14 days of completion of the screening. Within 7 days of parental permission, the referral will be made to Elwyn. For children with challenging behaviors, a referral may also be submitted for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMH Consultation).

Observations:

Teachers collect information about each child's development through on-going observations daily. The results of these observations are used for curriculum planning, assessment, and individual child planning and referral to community resources.

Interventions:

If a child exhibits challenging behaviors, Ms. Tyisha will develop and maintain a data tracking system including observations, Daily Progress Notes, Behavioral Logs, Child Incident Reports, Anecdotal Records, and documentation of strategies that have been implemented and the outcomes. Strategies may include requesting coaching support for general classroom management and learning environment. After observing and documenting a child's behavior for 30 days, Ms. Tyisha will schedule a meeting with the caregiver(s) to discuss child's behavior, strategies applied, and available supports.

Supports:

Ms. Tyisha will request ECMH Consultation, and/or Family Navigation support to obtain supports. If the challenging behavior persists and/or the child's behaviors threaten the health and safety of themselves or others, Ms. Tyisha may request additional support from the Intermediary and OCF to develop a transition plan and identify an alternate placement.

Assessment Family Conferences:

After completion of assessments according to details described above, family conferences are offered. Family & teacher conferences occur twice a year. Parents will be required to provide conformation by signature. During these conferences, we will discuss your child's strengths, likes and dislikes, and styles of learning. We will work together to set goals for your child's growth and development. You may request additional conferences regarding your child's progress at any time. We encourage you to communicate any concerns.

DEFINITIONS

Challenging Behavior: Any repeated pattern of behavior that interferes with a child's optimal learning or engagement in pro-social interaction with peers and adults.

Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (ECMHC). Provides support, education, and resources to providers as it relates to early childhood mental health; with goals of reducing incidents of suspension and expulsion of children due to challenging behaviors, increase the understanding of social and emotional development and its impact on educational success, support child care and families to use effective strategies that help young children with social emotional and behavioral concerns, and link providers and families to resources.

Early Intervention. Provides support and services to families with children birth to age five, who have developmental delays and disabilities. It includes support services and resources for children that enhance daily opportunities for learning provided in settings where a child would be if he/she did not have a developmental delay and disability.

Expulsion. OCDEL defines expulsion as the complete and permanent removal of a child from an early learning program because of challenging behavior or non-infectious health condition.

Intervention. Strategies, procedures, and resources implemented to address challenging behaviors.
Suspension. OCDEL defines suspension is an action that is administered because of a child's developmentally inappropriate behavior and requires that a child not be present in the classroom or the program for a specified period (i.e., sending the child to the office, sending the child to another classroom, denying outdoor time, denying participation in specials events, denying admittance due to the absence of Early Intervention services, requesting an early dismissal).
Transition Plan: Plan that details an alternative placement for the child.

Language Policy

Dual language Learning is supported at Little Scholars Academy. We will help children who are learning more than one language and will introduce children to other languages throughout the year. Parents who are need of assistance we will translate using the language line, technology translation services, and translate any communications sent home in their native language.

Family Questionnaires

In June, we ask families to fill out an annual questionnaire about LSA. The confidential results are tallied, and comments are shared with Center Directors and Staff. This information lets us know what we are doing well and how we can improve our services.

"Getting to Know You" Meeting

The "Getting to Know You" meeting is offered between the Director, Teacher and the parents to create a partnership between the teacher and parent and to discuss the child's learning opportunities in the program.

Back to School Night

Parents are invited to a Back-to-School Night held each October. This is a night where parents come to school and meet with their child's teachers to learn about classroom curriculum and activities.

Enrollment

Once you have visited the program and the Center Director has confirmed there is space available for your child, she will provide you with an application and other enrollment forms. If your child has special needs, please discuss this prior to enrollment, to assure that the needs can be managed within our classrooms.

If you are seeking enrollment within 60 days and there is an opening, the Director will set an entrance date. If there is no opening or if the start date is more than 60 days from the application, you will be placed on a list for future enrollment.

When a particular room becomes full, LSA will form a waiting list for that room. Placement on the waiting list will be based on the date of application.

When the Director receives notice that an opening will occur in a group, she will refer to the waiting list for that group to determine the first eligible family. The family may either:

- Agree to start on date opening occurs
- Agree to begin payments as of that date to hold their child's spot, or
- Decide to postpone enrollment.

When enrollment is postponed, the date of application will be changed to the current date, which may result in a move down on the waiting list.

To reserve your child's spot, return the completed application forms to the Center Director. Along with the paperwork, the following fees should accompany your application:

- Non-refundable registration fee

- A deposit will be required if entrance date is 60 days or less, 2 weeks non-refundable (First and last week)

Enrollment Paperwork

Prior to your child's first day in the program, we must receive the following:

1. Emergency Contact Form
2. Medical Health Form/Immunization Record
3. Civil Rights Compliance Parent Awareness Form
4. Agreement
5. Tuition deposit
6. Registration Fee
7. Family Handbook Acknowledgement
8. IEP/IFSP if applicable
9. CBS Income and Enrollment Form
10. Getting to know you Form

According to state regulations, emergency contact forms and agreements must be updated every six months.

PHL- Pre-K Enrollment Process

Eligibility

Children are defined as eligible to participate in PHLpreK if they: 1) are three or four years old on or before September 1 of the enrollment year and younger than the entry age for kindergarten in the school district; and 2) reside in the city of Philadelphia. PHLpreK is a free program and does not require any additional fees associated with enrollment in the PHLpreK program.

The PHLpreK program is funded by the Office of Children and Families and covers quality preschool services for 5.5 instructional hours (not including nap time) of each day in our program's school year (180 days). If a child requires care beyond a 5.5-hour day, we will discuss other funding options available to you to assist with the cost of the additional care. PHLpreK is a free program and does not require any additional fees associated with enrollment in PHLpreK.

Application

PHLpreK enrollment is processed on a first come first serve basis. All must complete an application for the current program year including children that were enrolled in the PHLpreK program in the prior year (either online or paper).

Along with the completed and signed PHLpreK application, all PHLpreK required documents must be submitted to be considered. Due to our limited number of PHLpreK seats, completion of an application does not guarantee enrollment into the PHLpreK program.

1. To complete an application, please bring in the following information:
   - **PHLpreK Completed Application:** All applying children must have a completed application, signed and dated by the parent/guardian. All questions on the application must include a response.
   - **Proof of Child's Age and Residency:** At least one of the following documents must be submi tted from each column below to confirm the child's date of birth and residence. The address that appears on the documents used as proof of residences must match the address on the PHLpreK application.

What do I need to enroll? (Acceptable documentation listed below)

1. **Proof of Child's Age (the birthdate must appear on the documentation presented for verification**)

   ☐ Birth Certificate
   ☐ Hospital record of child's birth
   ☐ Baptismal certificate indicating the child's date of birth
   ☐ Child's health insurance card
   ☐ Official medical exam printout with child's date of birth
   ☐ Social Security documentation showing birthdate
   ☐ Notarized statement from the parents or other relative indicating the date of birth
   ☐ Valid Passport, Visa or Green Cards
   ☐ Department of Human Services (DHS) letter on DHS letterhead
   ☐ Clinic/doctor/hospital records
   ☐ Government issued document with child's birthdate
   ☐ Prior school or daycare records indicating the date of birth (previous preschool)

2. **Proof of Philadelphia Residency (current address must appear on the documentation presented for verification)**

   ☐ State issued ID or driver's license
   ☐ Current lease/rental agreement mortgage document
   ☐ Current Utility Bill (gas, electric or water bill)
   ☐ Wage statements (W2 tax form)
   ☐ Mail/notice/award letter from County Assistance Office/DHS
   ☐ Foster Letter
   ☐ Medical documents, etc.
   ☐ Voter ID showing address
   ☐ Social Security documentation
   ☐ Recent employers pay stub
   ☐ Child Care Works award letter received by parent
   ☐ Statement from social services agency attesting to client's residence (only if no other proof is available)
   ☐ Compass printout

Parents/Guardian will also be asked to sign off on the following (if applicable)

- Parent Fee Agreement
- Emergency Contact Form
- PHLpreK Enrollment Confirmation Form (only for children determined eligible for Child Care Works Subsidy)
- Attend ALL mandatory parent information sessions
- **Plus, ALL the LSA required paperwork listed under "Enrollment Paperwork"**

Priority for Enrollment

Once all required PHLpreK documents are received, priority is given for enrollment as follows:
1. Any child that was an approved PHLpreK enrollment in the previous program year
2. Any child that attended the site's infant/toddler program and is now age eligible for PHLpreK
3. Any new child that meets that PHLpreK eligibility requirements, prioritized in the order (by date and time) the completed PHLpreK documents were received.

How do I officially join the waitlist if slots aren't available?

- Our program only has a certain number of seats designated for PHLpreK. When all PHLpreK seats are filled, interested families still need to complete all required PHLpreK documents and provide proof of eligibility so that the child can be placed on our applicant waiting list.

- We will notify you based on your inquiry date and application completion if and when a spot becomes available via email and a follow up phone call.

Who do I contact in reference to my child's application?

To check the status of your application please contact Ms. Danielle Hunter-Jones via email at daniellejones@littlescholarsacademypa.com.

Once I receive notification that my child is accepted when can they start?

Once all the PHLpreK documents are received and eligibility has been verified, the child's application will be provided to the PHLpreK program for approval. A child may NOT begin attending the program until approval is granted from the PHLpreK Intermediary Agency. Parents are notified of acceptance within 24 hrs. of approval and child must start program within 7 program days of us notifying the parent/guardian. If the child does not attend within that timeframe, we will follow up with the parent/guardian to affirm your intent to attend the program. If the delay in the child's start day is due to a healthrelated reason, a new sta rt day will be set within a 14-day period. A child who does not attend within the first 21 days of approved enrollment date will be discharged in accordance with the FY22 PHLpreK Enrollment Policy. Families who remain interested in PHLpreK will be placed on the program waitlist until such time as the child is able to attend and a space is available. Any new vacancies will be offered to a child in the order they appear on the waitlist.

Waiting List

Our program only has a certain number of seats designated for PHLpreK. When all PHLpreK seats are filled, interested families still need to complete all required PHLpreK documents and provide proof of eligibility so that the child can be placed on our applicant waiting list. The child will not be placed on the applicant waiting list until all documents are received. The applicant waiting list is prioritized based on the date we received all necessary PHLpreK documents. When a PHLpreK seat becomes available, we will contact the family of the next eligible child on the waiting list to see if the family is still interested and eligible for the PHLpreK program.

Enrollment Process

Once all the PHLpreK documents are received and eligibility has been verified, the child's application will be provided to the PHLpreK program for approval. **A child may NOT begin attending the program until approval is granted from the PHLpreK Intermediary Agency**. Once we receive notice of approval, the parent/guardian will be contacted to arrange a start date for the child.
Parents are notified of acceptance via email by the director within 24 hrs. of approval.

Children Served by Other Funding Sources
Any child that participates in our preschool program through a funding source other than PHLpreK (private pay, Child Care Works subsidy, or other grants/scholarships) is ineligible for PHLpreK. Children are not allowed to "convert" to the PHLpreK program if they are alreadyattending our preschool program under another funding source. For this reason, any child on the PHLpreK applicant waiting list w ould be deemed ineligible for PHLpreK if the child began attending preschool while waiting for a PHLprK seat to become available.

Attendance and Absence Policy

Purpose:
A child who attends a high-quality early learning program is better prepared for kindergarten. Regular attendance ensures that a child receives an optimal learning experience for preschool and adequate program dosage. These learning experiences prepare a child cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically for school in the later years.

Definitions

Excused absence. An absence that is accompanied by a note from the caregiver or doctor explaining the reason for the absence.

Unexcused absence. An absence that is noted without a note from the caregiver explaining the reason for the
absence.

Attendance Procedures:

During the enrollment process caregiver will be advised of LSA attendance requirements, and expectations. Unless prohibited by DHS, your child must begin attending the program within 7 days of enrolling. Our teachers are responsible for signing children in and out of the classroom each day so that classroom can report accurate attendance.

Absences:

If your child is going to be absent, LSA requires families to notify your child's teacher by Tadpoles Parent Portal to let them know that your child will not attend and, if possible, when you expect your child to return. You will be required to provide a written and signed absence notice upon the child's return explaining the reason for the absence. The absence notice should be given to your child's teacher or emailed to the Directors. All absences will be considered unexcused until written excuse is received. If we have not received an excuse note within 3 days of the child's return, the absence will be considered permanently unexcused. For children with 3 consecutive days absent without notification to the program, center's director will attempt to reach the family by phone and will follow up with an email or text, to determine the reason for the child's extended absence and to assist the family with resources if needed. If the absence is due to a medical issue, the family will need to provide supporting documentation from a physician noting the child's illness and permission to return to school. Children who have been absent for 7 consecutive program days without notifying the school will be discharged from the program. A child who is absent for 30 days or more without prior approval from the Program Director and PHLpreK Intermediary may be discharged and placed on the waitlist and will be able to re-enroll if a slot becomes

available. The program will make every effort to reach out to the family via, email, phone, or mail to understand reason for absence and any supports that may be needed. Chronic or extended absences (excused or unexcused) will be reviewed by LSA, The Office of Children and Families and Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC) on a case-by-case basis to determine if a child is to be discharged after 30 days for any PHL Pre-K student.

Planned Absences/ Religious Holiday/Long Term Illness

Upon written request by parent/guardian an extended planned absence for more than 15 days for vacation or observance of a religious holiday must be submitted to the center Directors approval. Planned absences of more than 30 days will require additional approval from the PHLpreK administration but may result in the child's discharge from the program. The child could apply for reenrollment at any time and admission may be granted when a seat becomes available. No child will be deprived of eligibility or penalized in anyway due to an absence for a religious observance if the program was notified in advance. If an extended absence is due to a medical illness as documented by a physician, the seat will be held for 30 days.

Grievance Policy

Policy Purpose

This Policy is to provide a procedure for triaging caller concerns/complaints of families in the program. This policy identifies the process for responding to and addressing client(s) grievances in a fair and consistent manner that aligns with regulatory standards, best practice, and the program mission.

Objective

To ensure any complaint is given due importance and made sure it has been resolved to meet the needs of the involved party/parties, through a proper procedure.

To make sure all the stakeholders understand that the, complaints and grievances, if dealt with professionally and timely and with appropriate communication techniques, such as putting the child first, listening and seeking resolution for all involved, are opportunities for services to improve and grow professionally and reputably.

Definitions:

General complaint-A general complaint may address any aspect of the service e.g. a lost clothing item or the service's fees. The complaint should be reported as soon as is practicable possible to avoid escalation of the issue.

Grievance-A grievance is a formal statement of complaint that cannot be addressed immediately and involves matters of a more serious nature e.g. the service is in breach of a policy or the service did not meet the care expectations of a family.

DHS Regulatory Complaint-A complaint that alleges a breach of Department of Human Service Child Care Regulations, or alleges that the health, safety or wellbeing of a child at the service may have been compromised. These complaints should be made directly to PA DHS by calling 215- 560-2807.

Statement

At Little Scholars Academy, we understand and recognize that ALL stakeholders have a duty of care to ensure the safety of each other but particularly children. We recognize that at times there may be reasons and circumstances that lead to grievances and the need to complain. We aim to treat any and all complaints with respect, fairness and acceptance and will aim to seek a resolution to suit all parties involved and will implement procedures outlines in this document to ensure equity.

Procedures

1. For a **general complaint**, the family members may approach the staff member involved and if needed set a time where the matter can be discussed appropriately, if the family member feels comfortable doing so. Complaints at this level will normally be resolved by discussion and clarification of the needs or wishes of the family or by clarification by the staff member of program's procedures or polices. The complaint and its outcome will be documented in the program Grievance Tracking File.
2. If the family is uncomfortable addressing the complaint with the staff member involved, or if there is a more serious concern, the family should directly address the **grievance** to the director through email at daniellejones@littlescholarsacademypa. The director Ms. Danielle Hunter-Jones will research the grievance/situation and work towards reaching a satisfactory outcome for all parties involved within 5 days of the submitted email. Grievances at this level will normally be resolved by discussion and clarification of the needs or wishes of the family or by clarification by the director of the program procedures or polices. Resolution may also involve the development of new policy if it is a situation that has not been addressed. The director will follow up all grievances with a written letter to the grievant and document all pertinent information.
3. Families are entitled to **appeal** any decision made by the director though email to info@littlescholarsacademypa.com. Such appeals will be made to Little Scholars Academy Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees will conduct further review, final decision, and a written follow-up letter to the grievant within 7 days of the grievances submission.
4. Families that have a complaint that alleges a breach of Department of Human Service Child Care Regulations, or alleges that the health, safety or wellbeing of a child at the service may have been compromised should immediately notify the executive director and also contact PA DHS the childcare licensing director by calling 215-560-2807.

Tuition & Fees

Payment

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Payment is due as outlined in the *Enrollment Agreement*.

Late Pick Up &Early Drop Off Fees

Late pick-up and early drop off is not a normal program option and will only be considered an exceptional occurrence. Late pick up fees and early drop off fees of $2 per minute per child will be assessed after your agreed/contract hours per your agreement. After 3 early drop offs and or 3 late pick-ups it will be $5 per minute per child. We are open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. however, Late Pick Up & Early Drop Off fees are effective according to your "Agreement" contract.

Special Activity Fees

From time-to-time there will be additional fees associated with special activities or field trips. These fees are due prior to the event, activity or trip.

Late Payment Charges

Late payments can pose serious problems for our programs. Therefore, we have put procedures in place to reduce their impact. When payment has fallen one week behind, care will be suspended until brought current. There will be a $25 late fee applied to your account, at the close of business Friday (or the last day of the school week) if tuition if not received. There will be $5 per day late charge for tuition in addition until your account is brought current.

Returned Checks/Rejected Transaction Charges

All returned checks or rejected ACH (automatic debits) or credit card transactions will be charged a fee of $25 for all returned checks. Two or more returned checks or rejected transactions will result in your account being placed on "cash only" status.

Termination

- Thirty-day written notice is required to withdraw a child from the program. Payment is required for thirty days following the withdrawal notice, whether or not the child continues to attend during that period. Child records are released only by the written request of the parent.
- Families who withdraw and later re-enroll will be charged a re-enrollment fee.

Health

Care Plans

Caring for our children at LSA we will request a Care Plan from a medical provider for children with special needs, asthma, medical needs, food allergies and etc.

Physicals/Dental Records

A copy of your child's physical/dental records should be received before but must be received no later than 6 weeks after your child begins the program. Families are responsible for assuring that their child's physicals are kept up-to-date and that a copy of the results of the child's health assessment and dental records is given to the program.

Illness

At LSA, we promote the health and well-being of the children in our centers. Our goal is to provide care as long as the child is comfortably able to participate in the program, will not infect others and does not require more attention than the staff can give in a group setting.

The conditions that require exclusion from the center are as follows:

1. Temperatures: (Taken axillary (armpit) and 1 degree added or with a tympanic (ear) thermometer) • Children with a temperature of 100.4° or greater, who also has behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
2. Symptoms of severe illness such as lethargy, uncontrolled coughing, inexplicable irritability or crying, difficulty breathing, wheezing, or other unusual signs (until medical evaluation determines the child can remain in care)
3. Uncontrolled diarrhea (stool runs out of the diaper or the child can't get to the toilet in time)
4. Blood in the stool not explained by dietary change, medication, or hard stools
5. Vomiting two or more times in 24 hours
6. Persistent abdominal pain
7. Mouth sores with drooling
8. Rash with fever and/or behavior changes
9. Pink or red conjunctiva (i.e., whites of the eyes) or eye lining with white or yellow pus coming from the eyes (signs of bacterial infection)
10. Head lice or nits, until after the first treatment.
11. Scabies, until after treatment has begun
12. Impetigo, until 24 hours after treatment has started
13. Strep Throat or other streptococcal infection, until 24 hours after treatment has been started
14. Chickenpox (varicella) until all lesions have dried or crusted
15. Whooping Cough (pertussis), until 5 days after appropriate antibiotic treatment

Screen Children and Staff for Symptoms

- A daily screening checklist that is administered to staff and parents/ caregivers upon either arrival or at home. This daily check includes:
    - Fever: Every staff-member and child coming to the site will have their temperature checked each morning either at home and at the facility. If either child or staff-member has a temperature of 100.4 or higher, they should remain home.
    - Staff can take their own and parents can take their child's temperature at home and report the value into My Teaching Strategies Parent app.
    - A designated staff-member (Director) will be wearing a mask and gloves can use a no-contact (temporal) thermometer to take temperatures on all staff and children. The no-contact thermometers should be cleaned with an alcohol wipe (or isopropyl alcohol on a cotton swab) between each client. The same wipe can be reused as long as it remains wet. The staff-member can wear the same set of gloves as long as they did not have physical contact with the individual whose temperature they are taking.
    - Symptoms: A designated staff-person (Director)should administer the brief daily COVID-like illness symptom checklist to all staff and parents/ caregivers upon arrival. If the child or staff member has symptoms, the child or staff-member must return and remain home.
    - COVID-like illness is defined as cough, shortness of breath, or any 2 of the following symptoms: fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell.
    - Visual Inspection: Make a visual inspection of the child for signs of illness, which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness, and confirm that the child is not experiencing coughing or shortness of breath.
    - Exposure: Every staff member and parent/ caregiver should be asked if they or their child have been exposed to anyone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days. If the answer is yes, the child or staff member should return home.

Plan for When Someone Becomes Sick

- Staff who develop symptoms of COVID-like illness (cough, shortness of breath, or any 2 of the following symptoms: fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell) will be immediately be sent home. If they need to be picked up, they should wait in a designated isolation room in the Annex while waiting.
- If children develop symptoms, they will be brought to a designated isolation room in the Annex while waiting to be picked up. The staff member waiting with the child should wear a surgical mask and also gloves if holding the child.
- If a child or staff member in a classroom has COVID like illness:
    - If a child or staff member has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19:
    - We will report to the Philadelphia Department of Public Health at 215-685-6741 for instructions.

    - All children and staff in the same classroom or who have come in close contact with (defined as greater than 10 minutes of interaction less than 6 feet away) quarantine at home for 14 days. Anyone who develops symptoms during that time should contact their healthcare provider to request testing.
    - In accordance with PDPH guidance, the COVID positive individual should remain home until all of the following are true:
      1) at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms AND
      2) until fever free off anti-fever medications for 3 days AND
      3) symptoms are improving.
- They can return to school if:
    - Initial COVID-19 testing is negative, and individual meets the center's normal criteria for return after an illness OR
    - A clinician has evaluated the child and documented an alternative diagnosis OR
- For children who were not tested for COVID: All of the following are true:
      1) at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms AND
      2) until fever free off anti-fever medications for 3 days AND
      3) symptoms are improving.
- If a child or staff member has a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19:
    - Call the Philadelphia Department of Public Health at 215-685-6741 for instructions.
    - All children and staff in the same classroom or who have come in close contact with (defined as greater than 10 minutes of interaction less than 6 feet away) quarantine at home for 14 days. Anyone who develops symptoms during that time should contact their healthcare provider to request testing.
    - In accordance with PDPH guidance, the COVID positive individual should remain home until all of the following are true:
      1) at least 10 days since the onset of symptoms AND
      2) until fever free off anti-fever medications for 3 days AND
      3) symptoms are improving.
- Cleaning/Disinfecting after a COVID or COVID-like illness:
    - Close off areas used by the person who is sick.
    - Open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the areas.
    - Clean and disinfect all areas used by the person who is sick, such as classroom, offices, bathrooms, and common areas.
    - Clean and disinfect surfaces in the isolation room or area and in the classroom the sick child or staff members was in after the sick child or staff member has gone home.

Immunizations

Immunizations are required according to the current schedule recommended by the U.S. Public Health Services. Every July, we check with the public health department for updates of the recommended

immunization schedule. Our state regulations regarding attendance of children who are not immunized due to religious or medical reasons are followed. Unimmunized children are excluded during outbreaks of vaccine preventable illness as directed by the state health department.

Health Evaluations/Immunizations

For your child's protection, we recommend that all children receive the standard immunizations including DTP, measles, rubella, polio, Hepatitis B and a TB test. We require a physician's statement of inoculations and general medical health upon enrollment. Medical Health Forms must be updated according to the age schedule on the reverse of the form to comply with PA Department of Welfare regulations. Failure to provide updated records may result in the termination of your child from the center. Updating a form each time you visit the doctor should keep you up to date. Please see your Center Director for additional forms.

Allergy Prevention

Families are expected to notify us regarding children's food and environmental allergies. Families of children with diagnosed allergies are required to provide us a letter detailing the child's symptoms, reactions, treatments and care. A list of the allergies will be posted in the kitchen. We are trained to familiarize ourselves and consult the list to avoid the potential of exposing children to substances to which they have known allergies. We are a nut free facility.

Medications

All medications should be handed to a staff member with specific instructions for administration. Medications should never be left in the child's cubby or with the child to administer on their own. Our staff will ensure that the medication is recorded along with the directions and proceed to dispense the medication as directed.

Medication will be administered only when the schedule cannot be altered and with physician approval. These guidelines must be followed:

1. Provide written instructions from your doctor with date, name of medication, name of patient, dosage amount, dosage frequency, a tool for correct measuring of the medicine and reason for medication.

2. Medicine must be labeled with child's name, name of drug, prescribing physician's name, pharmacist's name, dosage, time and frequency to be given.

3. Give all medications and written permission to Director (or lead teacher in her absence). Written permission from parents and Director's approval are required for medication to be administered.

4. A Medication Form from the center must be filled out and signed before medication will be given.

Care for Children with Asthma

When your child has asthma, you should provide:

1. An Asthma Action Plan (AAP) provided by your child's primary care physician to prevent and to treat the Asthma attacks.
2. Medications including the names, doses, and methods of administration and equipment (nebulizer, inhaler, spacer, mask) with a written instruction.

Promoting Social Distance

It will not be possible to prevent young children from coming in close contact with one another and their teachers. Instead, the goal is to limit the number of people in close contact in order to lower the risk of transmission.

- Ensure that classes include the same group of children each day, and that the same childcare providers remain with the same group each day.
- Preschool groups will not be no more than 22 people in a classroom (teachers plus students) at any one time. Consider having fewer children per classroom if staffing and space permits.
- Groups will not exceed a maximum of 25 people total (including staff).
- School Age students will have their own classroom.
- Restricting nonessential visitors and volunteers
- Avoid activities where children from different classes interact. For example, stagger use of playgrounds/ indoor play spaces, we will not combine classes for enrichment activities.

Minimize contact and crowding at pick-up and drop-off

- All parents must wear masks at pick-up and drop-off.
- All students wearing diapers/pull-ups must be dropped off in a clean diaper/pull-up. If staff notices that a student is dropped off in a saturated or soiled diaper, parents must change the diaper/pull-up before student is admitted.
- Limited direct contact with parents as much as possible. Instead, prioritize giving parents updates on their children electronically by Tadpoles or by phone.
- A designated staff-member will greet children outside as they arrive and escort them to their classroom and escort children to exit the building during drop-off.
- Families will be required to wait 6 feet apart while waiting to drop off their children and complete daily health screen.
- Families will be required to use Tadpoles conducting a daily health screen survey each day before campers and students arrive to avoid bottlenecks at drop-off.
- We will no longer be able to store children's personal car seats or strollers since these surfaces may be contaminated.
- Strollers used by the school for walks will be wiped down with disinfectant between use.
- We are encouraging families to have the same parent or designated person drop off and pick up the child every day.

Intensify cleaning and disinfection efforts

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remote controls, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, strollers, and sinks.
- Wipe off any playground equipment or indoor play space equipment between usage by different classrooms of children.
- All toys will be washed at least daily and before and after each use if possible.
- Set aside all toys that need to be cleaned in a container marked "soiled toys". Wash toys that have not been mouthed with soapy water and air dry before the next use.
- Toys that have been mouthed will be set aside until cleaned by someone wearing gloves using EPA-approved disinfectant.
- Removal of all plush toys or toys that require laundering from the classroom.
- Use bedding (sheets and blankets) that can be washed. Keep each child's bedding separate, and stored in individually labeled bins, cubbies, or bags. Cots are labeled for each child. Bedding that touches a child's skin should be cleaned weekly.
- Each child's belongings will be kept separated and in individually labeled storage containers, cubbies, or areas and taken home each day and cleaned.

Use personal protective equipment

- All staff should wear masks whenever in facility except during meals or outdoor break time. If using a disposable mask, should use a new mask each day. If a cloth mask, should launder every day.
- Note masks should not be placed on:
    - Children younger than 2 years old.
    - Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious.
    - Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.
    - Children during naptime.
- Parents should wear masks at pick-up and drop-off.
- Staff should wear gloves when diapering and preparing food.

Confidentiality

Unless we receive your written consent, information regarding your child will not be released, with the exception of that required by our regulatory and partnering agencies. All records concerning children at our program are confidential.

Inclusion

Little Scholars Academy believes that children of all ability levels are entitled to the same opportunities for participation, acceptance and belonging in childcare. We will make every reasonable accommodation

to encourage full and active participation of all children in our program based on their individual capabilities and needs.

Special Needs

If you are a person with a disability and require some special accommodations, please notify your Center Director so we can do our best to accommodate your needs.

Early Intervention

If any early intervention services are provided for your child, it is necessary to give the IEP or IFSP documentation to your Center Director. This information will be confidential and will assist in providing an appropriate program. The Center Director may also request an evaluation for your child if a need becomes apparent.

Non-Discrimination

At Little Scholars Academy equal educational opportunities are available for all children, without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, disability, or parent/provider political beliefs, marital status, sexual orientation or special needs, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. Educational programs are designed to meet the varying needs of all students.

Emergencies

Fire Safety

Our center is fully equipped with fire alarm system, fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, strobe lighting, and lighted exit signs.

Our fire evacuation plan is reviewed with the children and staff on a monthly basis.

Emergency Transportation

In the event your child needs to be transported due to a medical emergency, if no other authorized person can be contacted and the need for transportation is essential, an ambulance will be called for transportation. A proper escort will accompany and remain with the child until a family member or emergency contact arrives.

Closing Due to Extreme Weather

Should severe weather or other conditions (i.e., snow, storms, floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes, blizzards, loss of power, loss of water) prevent us from opening on time or at all, notification to the families will be announced on the center's answering service and Tadpole communication system.

If it becomes necessary to close early, we will contact you or your emergency contacts as soon as possible. Your child's early pick-up is your responsibility so kindly arrange for back-up procedures.

Cell Phone Usage

The time you spend in the center dropping off and picking up your child are the primary windows of time we have to communicate with one another about your child. In order to make the best use of these

opportunities, as well as to be attentive to your child, other children and adults who may wish to communicate with you, we ask that you NOT use your cell phone at any time while visiting the center.

Right to Refuse Child Release

We may refuse to release children if we have reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking up a child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol or is physically or emotionally impaired in any way that may endanger the child. To protect your child, we may request that another adult listed as an Emergency and Release Contact pick-up the child or we may call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. Reoccurring situations may result in the release of your child from the program.

Attendance

Absence

If your child is going to be absent or arrive after 9:00 AM, please call to inform staff. We will be concerned about your child if we do not hear from you. Students arriving after 9:00 AM, must have a doctor's note to be admitted. During the enrollment process students and caregivers will be advised of the attendance requirements, and expectations. Unless prohibited by DHS, your child must begin attending the program within 7 days of enrolling.

We adhere to https://www.cdc.gov (CDC), https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Children/Pages/Child-Care-Early-Learning.aspx (OCDEL), https://www.phila.gov/departments/office-of-children-and-families/ (City of Philadelphia Caring for Our Children) guidance for health related exclusions. If you child is absent from school, you will be required to utilize the Tadpoles app to notify Little Scholars Academy. Please include the reason why your child will be missing school and their return date.

All absences will be considered **unexcused** until the family has provided the center's Administrator notification to explain the reason(s) for the absence. (**If we haven't received an excuse note within 3 days of the child's return, the absence will be considered permanently unexcused.)**
For children with 3 consecutive absences without notification to the program, the center's Director will attempt to reach the family by phone and will follow up with an email or text, if available to determine the reason for the child's extended absence and to assist the family with resources if needed. If the absence is due to a medical issue; the family will need to provide supporting documentation from a physician noting the child's illness and permission to return to school.

Children in PHLPreK only will be discharged after 30 days of not attending pending PHMC approval if proper written and confirmed documentation is not provided for the students absence. A child who is absent for 30 days or more without prior approval from the Program Director and PHLpreK Intermediary may be discharged and placed on the waitlist if interested and will be able to re-enroll if a slot becomes available.

Chronic or extended absences (excused or unexcused) will be reviewed by the Office of Children and Families and Public Health Management Corporation (PHMC) on a case-by-case basis to determine if a child is to be discharged after 30 days.

Planned Absences/ Religious Holiday/Long Term Illness

Upon written request by parent/guardian an extended planned absence for more than 15 days for vacation or observance of a religious holiday must be submitted to the Program Director for approval. Planned absences of more than 30 days will require additional approval from the PHLpreK administration but may result in the child's discharge from the program.

The child could apply for reenrollment at any time and admission may be granted when a seat becomes available. No child will be deprived of eligibility or penalized in anyway due to an absence for a religious observance if the program was notified in advance. If an extended absence is due to a medical illness as documented by a physician, the seat will be held for 30 days.

Drop-off & Pick-up

General Procedure

LSA operating hours are 6:30 AM – 6:30 PM. Please do not drop-off your child prior to the opening. All students wearing diapers/pull-ups must be dropped off in a clean diaper/pull-up. If staff notices that a student is dropped off in a saturated or soiled diaper, parents must change the diaper/pull-up before student is admitted. Extended contracted hours are available at an additional rate. Parents are expected to accompany their children at drop off. Please allow enough time to arrive and leave by closing time. **You are responsible for your child until your child is checked into his/her classroom and after being signed out at the end of the day. Be sure to watch your child in the parking lot.**

Authorized Pick-up

Your child will only be released to you or those persons you have listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. If you want a person who is not identified as an Emergency and Release Contact to pick-up your child, you must notify us in advance, in writing. Your child will not be released without prior written authorization. The person picking up your child will be required to show a picture ID as verification. Please notify your pick-up person of our policy.

If a child has not been picked up after closing and we have not heard from you, attempts will be made to contact you, and the contacts listed as Emergency and Release Contacts. Provisions will be made for someone to stay with your child as long as possible, but if after 2 hours we have not been able to reach you or a person listed as an Emergency and Release Contact, we will call the local child protective services agency.

Guidance

General Procedure

Thoughtful direction and planning ahead are used to prevent problems and encourage appropriate behavior. Communicating consistent, clear rules and involving children in problem solving help children develop their ability to become self-disciplined. We encourage children to be fair, to be respectful of other people, of property, and to learn to understand the results of their actions.

Acts of Aggression

Children are guided to treat each other and adults with self-control and kindness. When a child becomes physically aggressive, we intervene immediately to protect all of the children. Our usual approach to helping children with challenging behaviors is to show them how to solve problems using appropriate interactions. When discipline is necessary, it is clear, consistent and understandable to the child. Physical restraint is not used or permitted for discipline. There are rare instances when we need to ensure a child's safety or that of others and we may restrain a child by gently holding her or him only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.

Notification of Behavioral Issues to Families

If a child's behavior/circumstance is of concern, communication will begin with the parents as the first step to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges. We will work together to evaluate these needs in the context of our program. On rare occasions, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care. Examples of such instances include:

- A child appears to be a danger to others.
- Continued care could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child as determined by a medical, psychological, or social service personnel.
- Undue burden on our resources and finances for the child's accommodations for success and participation.

Suspension/ Expulsion

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to ask that a child be removed from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced. Little Scholars Academy cannot independently expel or suspend students who are enrolled in PHLpreK. Instead, the director will contact PHMC and or Spark QSC for guidance and support to resolve any related issues. In addition, this does not apply for Extended Care services that covers childcare for students before and or after PHLpreK hours.

WHEN A CHILD IS HAVING A PROBLEM IN THE CLASSROOM

- Staff will try to redirect child from negative behavior.
- Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriate of activities, supervision.
- Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children. Staff will praise appropriate behaviors.
- Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules.
- Child will be given verbal warnings.
- Child will be given time to regain control.
- Child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality. Parent/guardian will be notified verbally.

Parent/guardian will be given written copies of the disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion. The director, classroom staff and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors. The parent will be given literature or other resources regarding methods of improving behavior. Recommendation of evaluation by professional consultation. Recommendation of evaluation by Elwyn Seeds.

Family Resources for intensive service:

Elwyn Early Learning Services provides preschool early intervention services to eligible children, ages 3 through the age of beginners, or through the transition to school-age programming, in Philadelphia County.

Phone: (215) 222-8054

Hours of Operation: Monday to Friday; 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Email Addresses:

ELS North-Northeast - ELS-North-Northeast@elwyn.org

ELS Northwest-Central - ELS-Northwest-Central@elwyn.org

ELS South-West - ELS-South-West@elwyn.org

ELS Chester - ELS-Chester@elwyn.org

Temple University's Families First program:

Temple University's Families First program, through the Institute on Disabilities, is a free parent empowerment training and support program dedicated to families receiving early intervention in Philadelphia. All families receiving early intervention services in Philadelphia are welcome to access the free training and networking opportunities that Families First has to offer! This program is partially funded by Elwyn ELS.

Temple Institute on Disabilities & Families First

The PEAL Center, Parent Education & Advocacy Leadership:

The PEAL Center serves Pennsylvania families who have children with disabilities and/or special health care needs from birth to age 26. PEAL also educates self-advocates and youth on self-advocacy, self-determination, and leadership development. https://www.pealcenter.org/

Vision for Equality:

Located in Philadelphia, assists and empowers people with disabilities and their families to seek quality and satisfaction in their lives as well as equal access to supports and services. https://www.visionforequality.org/

HUNE:
HUNE is a not-for-profit organization that provides free bilingual English and Spanish training, technical assistance and individual assistance to families of infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and to professionals who work with children. https://www.huneinc.org/

Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania:
n Pennsylvania, the Parent-to-Parent program is based on the philosophy that parents of children and adults with disabilities or special needs can be helped by other parents who have traveled the road before them. The model is a one-to-one match between an experienced, mentor parent, called a peer support parent and a parent seeking individualized support from another parent who has been there. http://www.parenttoparent.org/

Early Intervention Technical Assistance (EITA):
The information on this page is geared to help families connect with other families and get more involved in shaping Early Intervention services at the local and statewide levels. Also included are some key resources that may be of interest as you support your child's learning and development and begin to navigate and understand the Early Intervention and Early Childhood programs in Pennsylvania. http://www.eita-pa.org/families/

Biting

Biting is a normal stage of development that is common among infants and toddlers – and sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that most young children will try at least once.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten and to help the biter to learn a more appropriate behavior. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective behaviors that address the specific reason for biting.

Notes will be written to the family of the child who was bitten and the biter's family. We will work together with the families of each to keep them informed and to develop strategies for change.

Safety

Clothing (Uniforms are Mandatory)

Please dress your child in practical clothing that allows for freedom of movement and is appropriate for the weather. Your child will be involved in a variety of activities including painting, outdoor play, sand, weather, and other sensory activities. Our playground is used as an extension of the center, and daily programs are conducted outside whenever weather permits.

One particular aspect of concern is the risk associated with children's clothing that may become entangled with climbing or sliding equipment that could lead to choking or other serious harm. All drawstrings from children's clothes should be removed as a precaution.

Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for center play and make it difficult for your child to participate in some activities.

Daily Outdoor Play

Your child should have comfortable, washable and weather appropriate clothing and footwear at all times. We go outside year-round, please check with your child's teacher for any additional clothing your child may need. Please make sure your child has two sets of extra clothing in his cubby at all times in case of emergency.

Children are expected to go outside according to Keystone STARS PA Position Statement when:

- The forecast temperature/wind chill are above 25°,
- The forecast temperature/heat index is less than 90°,
- There is no precipitation falling, and
- There is no current air quality alert.

Communal Water-Play

Communal, unsupervised water play is prohibited. Supervised children are permitted to engage in water-play. Precautions are taken to ensure that communal water-play does not spread communicable infectious disease.

Injuries

Safety is a major concern in childcare and so daily safety inspections are completed inside and outside the center area in order to prevent injuries. First aid will be administered by a trained caregiver in the event that your child sustains a minor injury (e.g., scraped knee). You will receive an incident report outlining the incident and course of action taken. If the injury produces any type of swelling or needs medical attention, you will be contacted immediately. Each classroom is equipped with a first aid kit meeting the state regulations. In the event of a serious medical emergency, the child will be taken to the hospital immediately by ambulance, while we will try to contact you or an emergency contact.

Respectful Behavior

All children and families will be treated with respect and dignity. In return, we expect the same from all of our families. We will not tolerate hostile or aggressive behavior. If this occurs, we reserve the right to ask you to control your behavior or to remove your children from our care.

Smoking

The poisons in secondhand smoke are especially harmful to infants and young children's developing bodies, therefore the indoor and outdoor center environment and vehicles used by the center are non-smoking areas at all times. The use of tobacco in any form is prohibited on the center's premises.

Prohibited Substances

The use of alcohol or illegal drugs is prohibited on the center's premises. Possession of illegal substances or unauthorized potentially toxic substances is prohibited.

Any adult who appears to be inebriated, intoxicated, or otherwise under the influence of mind-altering or polluting substances is required to leave the premises immediately.

Dangerous Weapons

A dangerous weapon is a gun, knife, razor, or any other object, which by the manner it is used or intended to be used, is capable of inflicting bodily harm. Families, children, staff or guests (other than law enforcement officers) possessing a dangerous weapon will not be permitted onto the premises.

In cases that clearly involve a gun, or any other weapon on our premises, the police will be called, and the individual(s) involved will be immediately removed from the premises. This policy applies to visible or concealed weapons.

Child Custody

Without a court document, both parents/guardians have equal rights to custody. We are legally bound to respect the wishes of the parent/guardian with legal custody based on a certified copy of the most recent court order, active restraining order, or court-ordered visitation schedule. We will not accept the responsibility of deciding which parent/guardian has legal custody where there is no court documentation.

Suspected Child Abuse

We are required by law to report all observations of child abuse or neglect cases to the appropriate state authorities if we have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect, no matter where the abuse might have occurred. The child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report is substantiated and to work with the family to ensure the child's needs are met. Our center will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect. All staff members are required by law to directly report any suspicions of child abuse and neglect to Childline at 1-800-932-0313 as per DPW regulation 3270.19.

Implement additional food safety procedures

- Served meals will be in classrooms. During this time we will not implement our typically served family-style, each child's meal will be plated to serve it so that multiple children are not using the same serving utensils.
- Sinks used for food preparation will not be used for any other purposes.
- Staff will ensure children wash hands prior to and immediately after eating.
- Staff will wash their hands before preparing food and after helping children to eat.
- Staff must wear gloves while preparing food

Intensify cleaning and disinfection efforts

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, chairs, doorknobs, light switches, remote controls, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, strollers, and sinks.

- Wipe off any playground equipment or indoor play space equipment between usage by different classrooms of children.
- All toys will be washed at least daily and before and after each use if possible.
- Set aside all toys that need to be cleaned in a container marked “soiled toys”. Wash toys that have not been mouthed with soapy water and air dry before the next use.
- Toys that have been mouthed will be set aside until cleaned by someone wearing gloves using EPA-approved disinfectant.
- Removal of all plush toys or toys that require laundering from the classroom.
- Use bedding (sheets and blankets) that can be washed. Keep each child’s bedding separate, and stored in individually labeled bins, cubbies, or bags. Cots are labeled for each child. Bedding that touches a child’s skin should be cleaned weekly.
- Each child’s belongings will be kept separated and in individually labeled storage containers, cubbies, or areas and taken home each day and cleaned.

Promote Healthy Habits and hand hygiene

- Perform hand hygiene by washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Hand hygiene should be practiced at the following times:
    - Entry to the facility at handwashing stations or using hand sanitizer and after breaks.
    - Before and after eating or assisting children with meals.
    - Before and after preparing food and drinks.
    - Before and after medication administration.
    - Before and after diapering.
    - After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom.
    - After coughing, sneezing, or blowing their nose.
    - After playing outdoors.
    - After coming in contact with bodily fluids.
    - After handling garbage.

Outings & Field Trips

Weather permitting; we conduct supervised walking trips around the neighborhood. Children are accounted for at all times. A permission statement for participation in walking trips is included in the enrollment package.

From time to time, there will be supervised field trips, and we encourage you to join your child on the trip. *Permission Slips* for each trip must be signed by the child’s family.

For fieldtrips, please dress your child appropriately for the season. Walking shoes are a must. Sandals and flip-flops are not appropriate for walking and make it difficult for your child.

The safety of children and staff will be guarded in all activities of childcare programs. Proper restraint systems (seat belts) and the correct use of them are critically important during travel to/from the childcare program as well as during field trips.

Personal Belongings

To help us care for your child's possessions, it is incredibly important that all items brought to the center are labeled with your child's name. Please mark all items and clothing with indelible marker or name tags. Please wash linens and blankets each weekend. *(Full Classroom Supply List are located online)* Little Scholars Academy cannot be held responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged personal items. Your child will need the following supplies:

Toddlers			
Diapers, baby wipes and creams/ Training Pants (if potty training)	1 crib sheet/1 child-size blanket	2+ Changes of clothing (suitable for season)	Full-size backpack
Preschool			
Training Pants (if potty training) and baby wipes	1 crib sheet/1 child-size blanket	2+ Changes of clothing (suitable for season)	Full-size backpack
Pre-Kindergarten			
1 child-size blanket	1 child-size blanket	Change of clothing (suitable for season)	Full-size backpack

Cubbies

Upon enrollment each child will be assigned a "cubby." Cubbies are labeled with your child's name. Your child's cubby will be checked on a daily basis for items that need to be taken home.

Lost & Found

Lost items will be placed in the Lost-and-found Box located in the office. Please note that we are not responsible for lost personal property.

Toys from Home

We request that you do not allow your child to bring toys from home into the center unless they are part of a show-and-tell activity.

Nutrition

Food Safety

LSA Centers are NUT FREE (includes tree nuts & peanuts). Due to the seriousness of this allergy, no foods containing peanut/tree nut products may be brought into the building. Visit www.snacksafely.com for an updated list of peanut free products.

Food Prepared for or at the Center

Food prepared for or at the center will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child Food and the state requirements for food service.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate substitutions. The written notification should list appropriate food substitutions and must be updated at least annually.

Food allergies can be life threatening and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by the family physician.

CBS Food Program

Little Scholars Academy is a **nut free center**. We provide care for children who have life threatening allergies to peanuts, tree nuts, etc. and our priority is safety. Due to this, we ask that families **do not bring outside food into our center.** This includes breakfast, lunch, or an extra snack. Many foods nowadays which do not contain nuts are often times processed through machinery that also handles nuts.

Childcare Centers offering meals through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) play a critical role in supporting the wellness, health, and development of children. Childcare providers, in particular, have a powerful opportunity to instill healthy habits in young children that serve as a foundation for healthy choices in life.
The updated CACFP nutrition standards will help safeguard the health of children early in their lives and improve the wellness of adults. Under the updated CACFP nutrition standards, meals and snacks served will include a greater variety of vegetables and fruit, more whole grains, and less added sugar and saturated fat. It is our goal to make mealtime as pleasant and as stress free as possible for the children and staff alike.

WHAT WE PROVIDE

Little Scholars Academy serves breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack A menu is posted on the website under the parent portal.

SPECIAL DIETARY NEEDS

Children who require a special diet must have a letter from a pediatrician. If your child has any food allergies, parents must send in a written letter about the child's allergies to the Director or the teacher.

Toddler Feedings

- Children are encouraged to self-feed to the extent that they have the skills. Children are encouraged, but not forced to eat a variety of foods.
- Round, firm foods that pose a choking hazard for children less than 4 years of age are not permitted. These foods include whole grapes, peanuts, popcorn, thickly spread peanut butter and hard candy.

Birthday Celebrations

At Little Scholars Academy, we do more than provide healthy food at snack time and lunch time. We teach kids the importance of making healthy food choices themselves. We ask that in celebrating your child's birthday with his or her classmates, you consider healthy alternatives to cupcakes, cookies and cake. Please remember in making your treat choices that we are a peanut and tree nut free organization.

Some suggestions are sugar-free juices, pretzels, goldfish, fruit squeezes, fruit cups, and (or) party bag favors.

Toilet Training

The most important factor in making the toilet learning experience successful and as low-stress as possible is a family/teacher partnership that supports your child. Research indicates that children cannot successfully learn how to use the toilet until they are physically, psychologically, and emotionally ready. Many pediatricians say that most children under 24 months of age are not physically capable of regulating bladder and bowel muscles. Most positive toilet training occurs only after children show signs of physical control or awareness of their bodily functions and when they demonstrate an interest or curiosity in the process. We are committed to working with you to make sure that toilet learning is carried out in a manner that is consistent with your child's physical and emotional abilities and your family's concerns.

In order to move into a preschool classroom, children must be three years old and be toilet trained. A toilet-trained child wears "big boy" or "big girl" underpants and is able to use the toilet independently without adult prompting for a period of three months. At times, a non-toilet trained child may move to a Preschool class, the Toddler tuition fee will be charged until independent toilet training is achieved.

Television Time

Our normal daily routine does not include television watching, but from time-to-time, we may record a television show without advertisements as a teaching aid and discussion stimulator. Television consumption will not be longer than one hour, and the program will be screened prior to showing.

Transition Policy

Every child's transition in childcare should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. LSA will work with parents to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced. To ensure LSA students have smooth transitions LSA provides the proper transition plans. We offer meet and greets, visits to new classrooms, and field trips to the local elementary schools.

Transition from home to center. Prior to child's first day, parents will have an opportunity to tour the center, meet with their child's teachers, and communicate any anticipated concerns.

Transition between learning programs. Children are transitioned to the next program based on age, developmental readiness, state licensing requirements, and space availability. During the transition, current and future teachers will meet with parents to propose a plan to introduce their child into the new program. Including and not limited to planned visits for the student for up to 2-week length of time.

Continuity of Care

Little Scholars Academy practice in continuity of care to promote a strong positive relationship as well as secure base for exploration and learning. LSA teachers promotes extended time for children to stay with the same teacher or teaching team up to three years or more, rather than ending every year or even sooner.

Transition to elementary school. Transition activities such as a field trips to local elementary schools, will be part of your child's transition from our center. We will provide parents with information on local

schools, what to expect, and ideas on how to talk to their child about going to elementary school. Building Bridges is the District's citywide plan to help children and families make a smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten. Building Bridges brings together pre-k teachers and their neighborhood elementary school kindergarten teachers to share ideas and plan activities to support smooth transitions to kindergarten. We are actively involved in the developed city-wide plan to help children and families make a smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten.

Community Resources

County Assistance Office (CAO)

Pennsylvania residents can seek assistance with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), help with childcare, health care coverage, home heating assistance (LIHEAP), school meals, Select Plan for Women, long-term living services and cash assistance through their local County Assistance Office. For more information, visit www.dhs.pa.gov.

Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC)- Formerly CCIS

ELRC agencies are the hub of childcare information in your local area. ELRC agencies provide you and your family with information on quality childcare and personalized childcare referrals to childcare providers based on your specific needs or preferences. ELRC agencies also administer the Child Care Works subsidized childcare program. For all of your childcare questions and needs, contact the ELRC agency for your local area or call the Child Care Works Helpline at 1-877-4-PA-KIDS.

Car Seat Clinics

Pennsylvania State Law requires that children under age 4 be restrained in a federally approved car seat or booster seat that is appropriate for the child's age, height and weight. Children ages 4 to 8, must use a booster seat if they are no longer in a car seat. To find a Car Seat Clinic to help with the proper installation of your car seat, visit the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). The NHTSA may also be able to help with reduced cost or free car seats.

Child Safety Seat Program at CHOP

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia offers child car seats at no cost through its Child Safety Seat Program at CHOP. Anyone who cannot afford to buy a child safety seat can be referred to this program by a healthcare provider. To be eligible, you must be currently receiving public assistance and have a green EBT Access card.

In order to obtain a car seat, you must have a written prescription/referral from a healthcare provider (doctor, nurse, social worker, etc.) along with an EBT Access card and photo identification. The prescription/referral form must state your need for a child safety seat and that you cannot afford to buy a safety seat.

Please call the Safety Center at 267-426-5000 to schedule an appointment. There is no cost for this program. However, a donation is always welcome.

Early Intervention Services

The Pennsylvania Early Intervention program provides support and services to families with children birth to age 5 with developmental delays or disabilities. Parents who have questions about their child's development may contact the CONNECT Helpline at 1-800-692-7288. The CONNECT Helpline assists families in locating resources and providing information regarding child development for children ages birth to age 5.

Pennsylvania's Local Education and Resource Network (LEARN)

LEARN teams build support networks in every county for organizations and individuals interested in quality early education. LEARN Teams bring together early childhood programs, families, school districts and child-serving organizations to assess what quality early learning programs are currently available in the community and to develop ways to encourage quality early learning. They also work with school districts and community-based early learning programs to develop ways to make smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten for child, families, and teachers.

Women, Infants & Children Program (WIC)

WIC is a federally funded program that provides healthy supplemental foods and nutrition services for pregnant women, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants and children under age five in a supportive environment

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
Pennsylvania's program to provide health insurance to all uninsured children and teens who are not eligible for or enrolled in Medical Assistance. Regardless of the reasons your children might not have health insurance, CHIP may be able to help you. 1-800-986-KIDS.

Parent Handbook Acknowledgement Form

Please sign this acknowledgement, detach it from the handbook, and return it to the center prior to enrollment.

The handbook may be updated from time-to-time, and notice will be provided as updates are completed. Thank you for your cooperation, and we look forward to getting to know you and your family.
I have received the **Little Scholars Academy (LSA)Family Handbook with COVID-19 policies and procedures**, and I have reviewed the family handbook with a member of **LSA** staff. It is my responsibility to understand and familiarize myself the Family Handbook and to ask center management any questions I may have regarding any policy, procedure or information contained in the **LSA Family Handbook and COVID-19 Procedures**.

Recipient Signature/ Child's Name	Date
Staff Signature	Date