



# **OUT OF SCHOOL CARE**

# **PARENT HANDBOOK**

## About Our Facility

### Hours of Operation

Laugh and Learn Academy Out-of-School Care (OSC) is open from 6:00 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The Academy will be closed for statutory holidays and during the Christmas break. Specific closure dates for Christmas will change from year to year, and parents will be notified. Parents will be notified in advance in the case of closures due to maintenance or other specific reasons.

### Fee Information

Your child's placement at the Academy is assured through payment of childcare fees. Fees are **\$600/month**. Summer care only rates are **\$800/month**. Please make payment via email money transfer to [laughandlearnsprucegrove@gmail.com](mailto:laughandlearnsprucegrove@gmail.com) on or before the first day of the month or on the start date of your child, which will be prorated for the month based on your child's start date

### Subsidy

Subsidy is awarded by Alberta Family and Social Services after an assessment of family income and conditions are made. Applications can be made directly on-line at <http://www.child.gov.ab.ca/>. It is the responsibility of the parent to arrange for subsidy and to renew subsidy applications before they expire. If you are applying for subsidy, you are required to pay half the monthly rate prior to your child attending the Academy. You will then have five business days to submit approval for subsidy. If you receive subsidy, you will be refunded or credited the fee amount, minus your parent portion. **Please note: To qualify for subsidy, your child must attend our Academy for a minimum of 50 hours per month. Subsidy currently pays a maximum (effective Sept. 1 2020) of \$366/month .**

One week before your subsidy expires, you will need to provide confirmation of your reapplication or be charged the full month's fees for the next month. This helps us avoid situations where subsidy expires.

### Late Payment

If fees are not paid on time, the Academy reserves the right to terminate care and fill the vacant space.

### Arrivals and Departures

Please escort your child into the academy in the morning and make contact with the caregiver on duty. Children are not allowed to be dropped off outside the door as per Child and Family Services. Please notify staff of any special instructions or messages. For example, if you will be at a different location or phone number for the day. Should your child require medication that day, please ensure medication forms are filled in and signed. You are required to enter the time your child(ren) are dropped off and picked up.

### Late Pick-up Policy

Considerations will be made for traffic, emergencies, and poor weather conditions. Recurring late pick up will result in a fee.

## **Absence Policy**

If the absence is known in advance, please submit the days to the director via text message. Please inform the centre of any absences after school as we go on the assumption a child is with us until we know otherwise.

## **2. Getting Started**

### **Registration and Orientation**

Registration must be completed in full and submitted before your child can attend the facility.

All information must be fully completed in order to provide the best care for your child, including signing and initialing any policies or permission statements. Emergency contact forms are included in the registration form. Registration forms are required for each individual child. Unlike most facilities, we do not charge a registration fee.

An orientation of the routine and a tour of the Academy are conducted by the Director or another staff member. This is a great time for you and your child to get acquainted with the Academy and staff.

### **Bussing Policy**

We work in conjunction with the local bus system to make sure children are provided safe transportation to and from school. As some things may change year-to-year, please refer to our bussing agreement to find out about our policies and procedures regarding bussing.

If your child will not be riding the bus to the centre, please notify the centre before the end of the school day.

### **What to Bring on the First Day**

1. Indoor Shoes (No black soles, please.)
2. Change of clothes in case of accidents or messy incidents.
3. Proper outdoor gear or required gear for seasonal outdoor play (eg. Swimsuit and towel for summer).
4. Labeled water bottle.
5. A readiness to have fun!

### **Clothing Policy**

All children must be fully and properly clothed for the weather and the day's activities, both indoors and outdoors. Even for older children, we recommend leaving a set of extra clothing at the Academy. Extra clothing should include a shirt, pants, underwear, and socks. We ask that children have a pair of indoor shoes. We ask that they not have black soles and are actual shoes, rather than slippers in the case of an emergency such as a fire drill. Indoor shoes are left at the Academy, and children will use their outdoor shoes for outdoor activities. All clothing and shoes should be labeled. The Academy is not responsible for lost clothing, shoes, or outdoor gear.



### **3. Behaviour Policy**

#### **Child Guidance Policy**

Each child at our Academy is treated with respect and dignity. We believe that children have the right to self-expression. To discipline is to teach. It is not through humiliation or degradation. It is not dangerous, exploitive, psychologically damaging, or harmful to any child.

Most potential discipline problems can be prevented by acknowledging positive behavior, setting clear expectations for acceptable behavior, and by offering a program that interests the children and keeps them actively involved. General expectations of the child include:

1. Children will respect the rights and feelings of others.
2. Children will show respect for personal and Academy property.
3. Children will stay in designated areas.
4. Children will play safely and with compassion with others.
5. Children are responsible for their actions and must accept consequences for their behaviour.

The Laugh and Learn Academy's philosophy is that children should be taught to make choices. Where possible, a problem-solving approach is used to address inappropriate behaviour. Limits are explained to the children along with the reasons for those limits. These limits and guidelines do not change at any time, so that our students will always know what is expected of them throughout their time with us. Children may be removed from an activity and allowed to return at an agreed time based on their behavior and ability to demonstrate safe, respectful play with others. Practicing the rules help children understand them as part of their routine. Logical consequences for breaking a rule are also explained to the child.

#### **Aggressive Behaviours and Bullying Policy**

Certain behaviours are not acceptable at our Academy, such as inappropriate language and physical aggression. Laugh and Learn Academy is a No Bully Zone. Children will feel safe coming to this centre, bullying will not be tolerated. More serious behaviours or sudden behavioral changes will be brought to the attention of the parents of the child. A meeting may be arranged between the Director, parents, and the child to discuss the problem and decide on a plan of action consistent at home and at the Academy. The Academy has the right to refuse care for your child should the behaviour become a danger to themselves or others.

#### **Inclusion and Diversity Policy**

All families, children, and staff are welcome at our centre regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, or religious preference. We strive to promote cultural diversity and tolerance within our centre. We will try our best to celebrate different ethnic holidays as they arrive in the calendar year and to invite families to share the personal and cultural experiences through volunteer participation opportunities, or through the sharing of photographs and other materials.

We do not discriminate against anyone based on any special needs or abilities, and we strive to accommodate those needs as they arise for the individual child.

#### **Items from Home**

Children are welcome to bring toys or other special items to the Academy with parental permission, but are responsible for that item while it is here. We ask that these items go home at the end of the day though.

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You may store a bag with extra clothing at the Academy, but school bags, books, and other related items should go home with children at the end of the day. If an item is brought from home, your child will be asked to store it with their things in their personal locker. Please note that neither staff nor the Academy are responsible for the loss or destruction of toys, games, etc. that may be brought from home. We are also not responsible for the loss of any school property or school-related items. We understand that some parents may provide their child with a cell phone or other electronic devices. All devices should be left in the child's backpack and be placed on silent or vibrate while in the centre. The items can also be locked up, if needed. If you need to contact your child, please do so by contacting the centre directly via cell phone or e-mail.

#### **4. Health and Medical Policy**

##### **Health Policy**

We follow the Government of Alberta's health guidelines regarding the spread of illness and disease. A child is considered ill when they exhibit any of the following signs or symptoms: vomiting, fever, diarrhea or a new unexplained rash or cough. A child can also be considered ill if they require greater care and attention that cannot be provided without compromising the care of other children or if the staff knows or believes your child poses a health risk to other children and staff in the Academy. Staff will notify you and ask you to make arrangements to pick up your child as soon as possible. Children will be removed to the sick room to rest and be separated from others until you arrive.

Your child must remain away from the Academy until they have been symptom-free for 24 hours. For example, if your child has no symptoms on Tuesday morning, they may return to the OSC on Wednesday morning.

Please do not send your child with Tylenol or other OTC medications to mask fever or other symptoms. If you feel the need to medicate your child, this is a good indicator that your child needs to stay home. Illness is easily spread among children, so our policies are in place to protect your child as well as other children in Laugh and Learn Academy. We encourage all children to use proper hand washing and sanitizing techniques when at the centre, including before meals, after using the washroom, after messy play, and other appropriate times. Consistent hand washing practices will help avoid the spread of bacteria and contagious disease.

##### **Lice Policy**

We have a no-nit policy in place at the Academy. We approach concerns about lice with due diligence and with the hope of decreasing the likelihood of it spreading further. Should we discover that your child has lice, we will ask parents to take the child out of the facility and treat them for the problem. We also ask that you share any relevant info regarding lice that may come from your child's school.

Children must be nit-free when they are brought back to the facility the next day. A staff member will re-check your child upon arrival. If there are still nits, you will be asked to take the child home again. While we understand that this is an inconvenience, we cannot knowingly expose children, staff, and their families, and we must minimize the possibility of transfer within the Academy.

##### **Administration of Drugs Policy**

We follow the procedure for drug administration set forth by government regulation. A medication form must be completed, and the drug given directly to the staff responsible for your child. We cannot administer medications without a correctly completed form. All dosage requests must match those on the label.



All medication must be in the original container with the original label. In the case of prescribed medication, the medication must be labeled by the pharmacy for the child. We cannot accept medications with the name of a parent or other person on it. We will not administer medications that have expired, so please remember to replace or update any medications that a child would need daily or in the case of an emergency, such as an EpiPen. Expired drugs will be returned to the family.

We cannot administer medications that have the instructions to give “as needed” without a doctor’s specific written instruction for a specific time to give the medication. Please note that we may call the pharmacy on the prescription label to get clarification about the medication should we have any questions. If a medication is necessary for the child to attend, they will not be allowed to return to the Academy until the medication or life-saving device is up-to-date. For safety reasons, please do not leave any medications in your child’s backpack. Medications will be kept in a locked container. The caregiver will fill out the time and amounts of the drug to be administered. Only qualified staff with first aid will administer drugs to your child.

If your child has been given medications at home, such as antibiotics, please let the staff know in case of situations where such knowledge would be needed for emergency medical treatment.

### **Over the Counter Drug Policy**

Laugh and Learn Academy will not administer over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen, ibuprofen, or cough and cold medications without a doctor’s note. These medications are generally used to reduce fevers and pain. They may mask serious symptoms of illness, which makes it difficult to monitor the health of your child and protect others from communicable illness. Frequent violation of this policy could result in termination of care.

### **Emergency Transportation Policy:**

If your child is seriously ill or injured, we will contact you immediately. Please make sure all contact information is up-to-date for this reason. In extreme cases, a child may be taken to a medi-centre by Academy staff by way of car or taxi. If a serious illness/injury occurs, an ambulance may be called and the parent will be responsible for the cost of the ambulance. A child with serious injury will be taken to the nearest available hospital. Any incident or accident of significance will be recorded by the staff member in charge, brought to the attention of the Director, and then discussed with parent when the child is picked up/met at the hospital.

In the case of an event that makes it necessary to evacuate the children from the Academy, they will be taken by their teachers via the nearest exit as indicated on the Emergency Evacuation Plans posted at both of the exits. If an emergency does occur, parents will be called and asked to pick up their children at the specified location. In the case of an injury or an evacuation, if a parent cannot be reached, one of the two emergency contacts will be phoned.

### **Allergies and Other Medical Concerns**

Laugh and Learn Academy is a nut-free. Medical conditions such as allergies must be made known on the registration form. The proper medication forms must be filled out for any daily or emergency medication that needs to be administered on the OSC premises.

## **5. Nutrition Policy**

### **Meals and Snacks Policy**

The Laugh and Learn Academy does not provide meals. We do however supplement a lunch, if it doesn’t meet the Canada food guide standards or if a child’s lunch is not brought into the Academy. Children are always required to sit at the table during a meal to avoid choking or other food-related accidents. We try to model and encourage good table



manners. Children are expected to clean up their eating area at the end of the meal and place all garbage and recyclables in the proper containers, and plates, bowls and cups in the dishwasher.

### **Water Bottles Policy**

We promote children drinking water throughout the day to avoid dehydration. We will take water bottles with us on walks and trips to the parks. We ask that parents provide an appropriate water bottle, such as a metal or plastic sports bottle, which will be stored in a place accessible to the child at any time. Please do not bring disposable plastic bottles, as they are not meant for repeated use or frequent washing, as advised by the Canadian Bottled Water Association. Children are asked to sit when drinking the water to avoid choking or other accidents. We also have reusable plastic cups available for students as needed.

### **Packed Lunches and Snacks**

Because we try to encourage healthy eating choices, we ask that these meals and snacks follow recommendations of the Canada Food Guide as closely as possible. There is no access to a stove or baking oven. We reserve the right to supplement these meals if the lunch or snack in question is lacking in nutritional content as suggested in the Canada Food Guide. Please remember that we are trying to promote healthy choices, and that caregivers may ask that a child to finish sweet treats and snacks after trying to eat the healthier items packed in a lunch.

If parents would like to send treats for the room to celebrate a special occasion like a birthday, please feel free to do so as long as all children are able to receive the treat. Caregivers will let parents know how many children are in the room.

## **6. Safety Policy**

### **Safety Policy**

The Academy Safety Policy includes Emergency Evacuation, Fire Drills, Equipment Safety, hand washing, sanitizing, etc. Laugh and Learn Academy takes safety very seriously, we strive to ensure that your children and staff remain in a safe and secure environment

### **Emergency Evacuation Policy**

The Academy is maintained as a safe place for children. We encourage safe play both indoors and out, and we will instruct children in proper safety techniques for using specific equipment, while on walks or bike rides in the community,

Through modeling and routine, we will establish safety rules that allow the children to function with minimal risk of injury to themselves or others. Children will be aware of any safety or emergency procedures that will allow them to remain unharmed in an emergency situation. Staff will follow all rules, procedures, and guidelines to insure the safety of the children in their care.

Complete emergency evacuation procedure instructions are located near each exit. Staff members take the daily attendance sheets for the group, as well as the emergency backpack with contact names and numbers and other emergency supplies. They proceed to the nearest exit with the children in their care.

Attendance is taken to make sure everyone has made it out safely. The director will check the building before leaving and locking up. If the group is not able to return to the centre, they will travel to the nearby evacuation location and parents will be called to pick up their children.

## **Fire Drill Policy/Emergency & Natural Disaster Procedure**

The above steps are used in the event of a fire, disaster or emergency in Laugh and Learn Academy. The only exception is that the children and staff return to the Academy after attendance has been taken. We practice unannounced drills occasionally to make sure children and staff understand the emergency evacuation procedures. Fire drill procedures are also posted in all rooms.

## **Emergency Contact Policy**

An emergency contact sheet is included in the Laugh and Learn Academy registration packet. In the event that a parent(s) cannot be reached, the first person on the emergency contact sheet will be called. Please make sure that this sheet is filled out in its entirety and that all emergency contact numbers are up-to-date at all times and inform us of any permanent or temporary changes. We are required by licensing to have a physical address for at least one of your emergency contacts if there is ever a situation that would require the child be transported to the contact person's home.

## **After-Hours Contact**

After-hours emergency phone numbers are posted on the door and outside the Academy. This information is kept up-to-date and includes community emergency numbers, as well as a contact for the Laugh and Learn Academy.

## **Equipment Safety**

Toys, games, and equipment are inspected frequently for safety and age-appropriateness. All appliances used in the Academy meet safety requirements and are in good repair. Teachers will also inspect equipment and grounds for safety hazards at any visited play parks or recreation areas before allowing children to use them.

## **Accident/Incident Report Policy**

In the case of behaviour-related accident or incident, these reports will be written for both the perpetrator and the victim but will only include specifics on the parent's child in the interest of confidentiality. Please do not ask for information on other children in the Academy. If a parent has learned through other sources that another child is involved, we ask that the parent does not confront the child directly and instead address all concerns through the Director. This is for the emotional well-being as well as the safety of all children in our Academy.

## **7. Activities Policy**

### **Outdoor Clothing Policy**

Parents must provide proper outdoor attire appropriate for the weather conditions, including footwear. For example, a child should have a hat, mittens, warm coat, and snow pants for snowy weather. We try to go outside at least once a day every day, even in the winter, to allow for fresh air and exercise. If a child's outdoor clothing is lacking, you may be contacted to come bring the child's gear as we have few extra supplies.

The Academy goes on daily outings, weather permitting. We cannot always wait for late arrivals; therefore it is the parents' responsibility to meet up with the group. Locations will be posted at the entrance. We cannot keep children at the OSC until their group returns.



## **Off-Site Activities/Field Trips Policy**

When the Academy goes on field trips or participates in off-site activities, parents will be notified in writing no later than one-week in advance, depending on the nature of the off-site activity. Consent forms, along with a description of the activity and any materials/items needed for the day, will be distributed to parents to be signed and returned by a designated time to allow the child's participation. Parents opting out of the field trip or off-site activity will need to notify the OSC and make other arrangements for care. All Parents are formally invited to join us on field trips.

## **Technology Policy**

This may include the use of a computer, a video, the television, or audio recordings of their own voices, etc. as a means of an activity. All activities, including the use of the computer, will be of appropriate age and content. Computer is designated for homework use, but children will have access to play games. Tech time is from 5-6 PM, Monday-Thursday for up to 15 minutes. If a child chooses to watch someone else play a game, that counts as their turn. Tech-Free Friday is implemented to promote imagination, socialization, physical activity, intellectual development and emotional intelligence.

## **Video Viewing Policy**

Movies or videos will be limited in their use. We will sometimes show short videos less than 10 minutes that enhance programming, such as a YouTube video of a rocket launch during space-themed programming or an example of dancers from another culture or country. Full-length movies are limited to once a month or for special occasions. TV use during tech time is for educational programming and focused on developmental outcomes.

## **Social Media Policy**

Laugh and Learn Academy has a public and a Parents Facebook page intended for family use only. We use the public page to share information and crafts without showing any faces or names in order to protect the privacy of our clients. The Parents Page is used to share photos of the children engaged in activities as a daily documentation panel, as well as to share resources and poll parents. Social media may be used for communications purposes, advertisement, and community outreach. It is our policy that such use follows our parent permission section in the registration form for photography and is respectful of all laws and ethical guidelines to protect the privacy of the children and families.

Our **Laugh and Learn Academy Parents** closed Facebook group is only for current children's parents and family. Parent's whose children leave the centre will be removed from this group. We will only put children's pictures in this group never on our public **Laugh and Learn Academy** Facebook page.

## **8. Child Abuse and Child Development Policy**

### **Child Abuse Policy**

Because child abuse is a serious allegation, policies are intended to protect the children in our care. If a child in our care shows signs of child abuse or neglect, it will be reported to the Director and to appropriate authorities, as required by law.

It is the Laugh and Learn Academy's goal to employ child care professionals who are committed to the highest standards of ethical behaviour. To ensure the health and safety of children in our care, a zero tolerance policy is strictly enforced. We consider corporal punishment or physical discipline by the staff to be abuse. If a parent has any concerns about the

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conduct of an employee that could be considered abusive, please contact the Director or Laugh and Learn Academy owner without hesitation.

### **Observation and Documentation Policy**

Staff are required to document the development and behavior of children. Often, these observations will be included in the child's portfolio. Some documentation of more severe concerns, behaviours, or other serious issues will be stored in our running records and be placed in the child's file.

### **Child Development Policy**

Programming and activities are designed to positively influence a child's physical, social, and emotional development. Parents are encouraged to share any additional information regarding their child's school progress or IPP's so that we are able to help in any ways that have been identified by your child's teachers and or school specialists. All information is kept strictly for staff information and no info will be shared in any way.

## **9. Communication Policy**

### **Building a Positive Rapport**

It is important that parents feel comfortable leaving their child/ren in our care. We will do our utmost to make sure children feel safe, secure, and loved. We hope this will give parents peace of mind without worrying about the welfare of their children.

We want parents to feel comfortable speaking with the owner/Director, and any other staff at the Academy should there be any questions or concerns. We encourage and greatly appreciate feedback, positive or negative, and value parent interest in the daily routines and their children's progress under our care. Only through parents' comments can we resolve any concerns.

### **Parent-Staff Communication Policy**

Communication between parents and staff is one of the most important elements of our Academy. Staff are required to communicate with parents both verbally and non-verbally. Notices will be posted on our community board, twitter, notices will be given to parents on child specific items. Staff may ask questions in notes or incident reports to encourage problem solving between themselves and parents, as well as encourage further parental input regarding the child's care. Parents are encouraged to respond to notes and verbal communication in a positive, respectful manner. Parents are also invited to contribute via e-mail or by the suggestion box at the entrance. Communication allows us to improve our services to the children and is encouraged at any time.

### **Licensing Reports**

Laugh and Learn Academy is regulated by the Department of Child Family Services, which regularly inspects the Academy to ensure that the program is meeting the standards set out by the Alberta government. Every 3 years, the license is renewed, and a complete review of the program, staff, and administration is carried out. The most recent written report is posted in the entry way. We are inspected 2 times per year. Parents are encouraged to read the report to keep them updated regarding the OSC's progress.

### **Handbook Review Policy**

Please ensure parent and employee handbooks are reviewed and updated no less than once a year, as well as when new concerns arise, or policy changes are needed. Parents will be informed of changes and issued new handbooks or pages



for the handbooks when necessary. We encourage parents to participate in these changes. We hope that this parent handbook is clear regarding our policies, procedures, and philosophies and welcome any feedback parents can give us!

Please use the space below to note any changes or to make notes regarding your child's care and the policies described in this handbook.

### **Centre Policy Review**

We are constantly changing; we appreciate feedback from parents, children and staff as to how we can modify our program or policies to reflect what people would like. Through the suggestion box, parent surveys, children's surveys, etc., we are always open to suggestions and comments.

### **Open-door Policy**

Laugh and Learn Academy has an open-door policy. Parents are free to drop by and see how their child is doing, they are also free to come and play/engage with the activities that their child is participating with. Parents may also call the Centre's phone and talk with their child to see how their day is going.

## **Illness Report Form**

**Child's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time first observed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Staff Identifier:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time Parent Notified:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Staff that contacted Parent:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time that child was removed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date that the child returned to the centre:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Discipline Report Form**

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Staff Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

Time and nature of incident: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Time and type of discipline implemented: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Time and method of parent notified: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Staff that contacted Parent: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Date**



