

Academy of Early Learning



Parent/Student Handbook

2019-2020

~Strong Beginnings, Bright Futures~

Marion County's Child Development Education Program

(CDEP)



111 Academy Street

Mullins, South Carolina 29571

Direction: Marion County School District: Preparing all students to live and work effectively, responsibly, and productively within our society.

Purpose: Marion County School District educates, prepares and inspires students to be productive citizens in a changing global society.

Beliefs:

- All students can become productive members of society.
- Education is a partnership among students, families, schools, and community.
- Our children are the center of all decision making.
- Education should prepare students to succeed academically and socially so they can compete for quality jobs and become productive members of society.
- Each person has intrinsic value and worth and is a unique individual with different needs and abilities.

School Motto: Strong Beginnings. Bright Futures

“Home of the Early Birds”

General School Information

111 Academy Street

Mullins, South Carolina 29574

Phone Number: 843-464-3725; Fax: 843-464-3728

Grade: 4-Year Old Preschool

4K/5K Montessori

Principal: Farrah W. Owens

School Secretary: Samantha Lewis

WELCOME STUDENTS

The administration and staff would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Academy of Early Learning. The information in this handbook has been compiled to help you be successful at this school. Please know that we believe in you and together we can achieve great things. Our goal is to help you become lifelong learners ready to conquer whatever challenge the world may bring. If you believe it, together we can achieve it!

WELCOME PARENTS

We strongly believe parental involvement is vitally important to the success of your child's educational experience. Your input into the educational process is valued. Parents are encouraged to stay in close contact with your child's teacher, attend parent conferences, become involved as a volunteer, and participate in special events! It would mean a great deal to our staff, but more importantly it would mean the world to your child.

School Staff

Farrah W. Owens, Principal
Samantha Lewis, School Secretary
Rosanne Owens, Lead Teacher

3K PCD

Christopher Skipper, Teacher
Queen Hughes and Miriam Taylor, Instructional Assistants

4K PCD

Joan Johnson, Teacher
Jackie Davis and Sharon Reaves, Instructional Assistants
Stephanie Stinehart, Teacher
Joyce Foster and Connie White, Instructional Assistants

4K Traditional

Elizabeth Barrineau, Teacher
Doris Brown, Instructional Assistant
Debbie Bittle, Teacher
Dawn Davis, Instructional Assistant
Martha Burke, Teacher
Linda Dozier, Instructional Assistant
Gail Hughes, Teacher
Linda Blue, Instructional Assistant
Candy McLain, Teacher
Martha Green, Instructional Assistant
Emmy Moore, Teacher
Ella Shannon, Instructional Assistant
Kelly Stiehl, Teacher
Doris Moultrie, Instructional Assistant
Amelia Watts, Teacher
Dorothy Gause, Instructional Assistant

4K/5K Montessori

Mie Brown
Janice Weeks, Instructional Assistant
Christine McKenzie
Cathy Emanuel, Instructional Assistant
Lindsay Strickland
Anna Turner, Instructional Assistant

Guidance Counselor

Lee Ruth Willis

Speech-Language Therapist

Brittney Smith

Nurse

Jane Ward

Custodians

Lisa F. Genwright
Marvin Genwright

Cafeteria Staff

Wanda Brayfield, Manager
Renee Davis
Leigh Ann Page

Program Goal of the Child Development Education Program

The goal of the Child Development Education Program (CDEP) is to provide children and their families with quality preschool experiences necessary for school success. Each program shall endeavor to:

- ✓ Provide a healthy, safe and nurturing environment
- ✓ Provide an environment that encourages early literacy, emotional, social, physical and intellectual development
- ✓ Encourage the development of a positive self-image
- ✓ Make learning fun so that children will develop a desire to be lifelong learners
- ✓ Encourage language development, creativity and an appreciation of fine arts and music
- ✓ Encourage children to interact successfully with other children and adults and to live and work together in a cooperative environment which promotes decision making, peaceful resolution of conflicts and respect for others
- ✓ Form a cooperative partnership with parents so we can work together to meet the needs of each child and ensure his or her success

Uniform:

Red tops (t-shirt or collared shirt) and khaki bottoms (skirts, shorts, pants).

We would also encourage the wearing of sneakers or closed toed shoes for safety reasons.

Students will be expected to dress in the appropriate uniform **each** day.

School Hours/Schedule: Staff will be on campus ready to take students in at 7:00 a.m. Students will begin moving to their assigned classroom at 7:30 and daily instruction will begin at 7:50.

Enrollment Procedures:

To be eligible a child must be four years of age on or before September 1, 2018 based on acceptable documentation, such as a birth certificate or official document from other countries. Proof-of-age eligibility must be on file no later than the day the child begins CDEP.

Family Income Eligibility : At the time of enrollment, an annual family income of 185% or less of the federal poverty guidelines as promulgated annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services or Medicaid eligibility. Verification must be on file before the child is enrolled. Acceptable forms of verification include the following: (a) completed free and reduced lunch form with verification of family income, or (b) copy of current Medicaid card. Verification of family income may include pay stubs, tax returns, or W-2 forms. (See the Appendix for the Family Income Eligibility Table.)

Application Process: The parent enrolling a child must complete and submit a CDEP application. The application must be accompanied by a copy of the child's proof of-age eligibility, documentation of the family income eligibility, and immunization documentation. Individual school districts may require additional documentation as deemed necessary.

***If parents select Montessori curriculum an additional school choice form must be completed.

Contact Ms. Samantha Lewis in the office with additional questions about enrollment and registration.

EARLY DISMISSAL/STUDENT CHECK-OUT

For safety and security reasons, the following dismissal policies will be strictly enforced:

- If you pick your child up early, you must come to the office to sign him/her out. **Students will not be released to any individual not listed on the student's transportation card on file in the office. If someone comes to pick up your child and is not listed on the student's transportation card, an attempt will be made by the office staff to contact the parent. Unless the parent can be contacted, the student will not be released.**
- Students may not be checked out after 1:30 pm. If you arrive after this time to pick up a student, you will be asked to pull into the car rider line, and your child will be dismissed with the car riders at 2:20.

- Once dismissal has begun, parents or other family members will not be permitted to get students off of a bus or out of the bus line. Teachers will not be permitted to dismiss a child to a parent at this time. Only an administrator will have the authority to pull a child from the bus line or off a bus. Parents must report to the office to sign out the student. The front office staff will then notify administration, and the child will be brought to the front office.

EMERGENCY/STUDENT CHECK-OUT CARDS

It is important that an emergency card be completed for your child. On it, you will list the names of persons who may pick up your child in the event you cannot do so. Parents and others, whom our staff may not recognize, will be asked for identification and the child's Transportation Card will then be referred to. **Children will not be released to anyone not on the Transportation Card.**

Change of Address: See Ms. Samantha Lewis in the office for address changes.

Supplies: See Supply List

HOMEWORK: Students at the Academy of Early Learning **will not** be assigned homework.

Students will have a plastic take home bag that will go home each Thursday with student work and any other correspondence to parents such as a newsletter, etc. The plastic bag should be returned Friday. Each month the teacher will send home a newsletter and a calendar with monthly engagement activities for families and children.

Rest Time: Opportunity for a brief rest time shall be incorporated into each instructional day. Rest time may not exceed one hour per day, except, in rare cases, to address the specific individual needs of children. Children unable to sleep during the rest period should be allowed to lay quietly on their mat or look at books quietly.

Discipline: Early Childhood students (ages 3-5 years old) and kindergarten students are beginning to gain self-understanding and self-regulation of their emotions in an expanded social context. It is essential that positive social/emotional behaviors are explicitly taught in the classroom and at home. We do our very best to keep all children safe. However, there are times when children may experience an unpleasant result of another child exhibiting challenging behavior such as a hit or push. Our children are small and we adults are patient. Our job is to teach children acceptable social and emotional behaviors, teach them to meet their needs in appropriate ways, and how to handle or solve problems using their own voices. Each child in our school learns that they play an important part in helping others learn how to be friends, asking children to join play, giving all children compliments, and solve their own social problems with appropriate strategies.

The Academy of Early Learning uses the Pyramid Model to support our discipline policy. The Pyramid Model is a framework of practices to support social/emotional learning in all children.

CDERP Discipline Guidelines: Providers shall make use of developmentally appropriate guidance techniques and may not allow the use of corporal punishment or severe discipline. Corporal punishment is the use of physical force to the body as a discipline measure. Physical force to the body includes, but is not limited to: spanking, slapping, biting, and shaking. Severe discipline includes shouting, withholding of food, and/or isolation or confinement for longer periods of time.

Effective August 2016 11, Staff members and parent(s)/guardian(s) shall sign and date a discipline policy statement as required by the Department of Social Services (DSS). The signed disciplinary policies shall be maintained on file.

Also; see Marion County School District Student Code of Conduct

Money at School: Cash is not kept on site.

Attendance/Tardies: The 4K CDEP program is educational in nature, providing 6.5 hours of instructional time, five days a week and 180 days per year. All participants are expected to attend regularly and for the full instructional day. Attendance requirements should be explained and provided in writing to parent(s)/guardian(s) during enrollment and orientation. Classroom attendance shall be recorded daily and maintained on site. Written absence excuses should be submitted following each absence and maintained on site. Children are allowed a maximum of ten unexcused absences per 180-day school year. Issues regarding children's attendance will first be addressed by the school administrator. The child's parent(s)/guardian(s) should be contacted to determine the reasons for the chronic absenteeism, tardiness or early departure and to identify ways of resolving any underlying factors that might be preventing the child's consistent attendance.

Transportation:

Public school transportation services will be provided by the district. If transportation is offered, eligible students living within established provider routes must be afforded an equal opportunity to receive this service. CDEP schools shall not be responsible for the transportation of any student living outside their resident attendance zone.

Any changes to the normal mode of transportation for a student must be made IN WRITING. The request must state if the change is permanent, for a specific number of days, or if it's until further notice. The request must also state the exact street name and the number of the address you wish your child to go. **If the need arises to make a transportation change please call the district Transportation Office, Mr. Tim Perkins at 843-423-1811** Please send a note to your child's teacher in the morning if there will be any changes to the normal mode of transportation. An administrator can grant a transportation change by phone but this will be done on a case by case basis. It is imperative that you plan accordingly. In any case, **no transportation changes will be accepted after dismissal begins.** If you need to sign your child out of school early, you must do so in the main office.

MORNING ARRIVAL:

Students will be dropped off either in the bus lane by the bus or car lane. Faculty and staff will be on duty to assist students to their location first thing in the morning. Students should not be dropped off prior to 7:00 a.m. and will be considered tardy after 7:50 a.m. Our car rider lane closes at 7:45. After 7:45 a parent must walk a student in from the parking lot.

For safety and security reasons parents will not be permitted to walk students to class in the morning unless they have a prearranged conference with a teacher. If you do have a prearranged conference with a teacher, you must sign-in at the front desk and receive a visitor's pass. The FIRST WEEK of school we do allow parents to walk children inside to their classroom. After the first week, our 4K students are escorted to class by staff members.

Students are not to come to the school or be dropped off at school before 7:00AM.

Afternoon Car Rider Procedures:

Car riders will be dismissed between 2:20 and 2:30 pm. Parents who pick up their children in the afternoon should enter the parking lot off of Main Street, take a right around the circle, where they will wait for students to be called to the second sidewalk with the covered shelter. Students will be dismissed from this exit. Parents should then exit the parking lot by pulling forward and taking a left or right onto Northside Street. Staff members will be on duty to direct traffic.

Once the afternoon traffic starts to move please remain in your vehicle and cease cell phone use. Staff will bring your child to the car, open car doors on the passenger side, and assist your child safely inside. To keep our lines moving, please have child seats accessible from the passenger side of the car.

THE FULL SEATBELT LAW FOR CHILDREN IS POSTED AT THE CLOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK.

We will use a car tag identification procedure. Parents are given TWO window identification cards at Open House that are REQUIRED TO BE USED BY ANYONE PICKING UP A CHILD. If your child will be picked up in any car, this ID card must be visible in the window on the passenger side. Without an ID card, your child will not be permitted to get in the car. Any driver without an ID will have to circle to the parking lot and go into the office to sign the child out as your child's safety is our first priority.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THESE POLICIES ARE IN PLACE FOR THE SAFETY OF THE STUDENTS AND WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED.

FIRST AID

We are equipped to take care of only minor first aid problems. If a child becomes sick or is injured at school the principal or nurse will make a determination as to the severity of the illness. If necessary, every attempt will be made to contact a parent or designated person from the emergency form.

HEALTH ROOM

The health room is staffed by a registered nurse.

Parents, your child should be kept at home if any of the following conditions exist:

- ◆ Contagious Illness
- ◆ Temperature above 100 in the past 24 hours
- ◆ Vomiting/Diarrhea
- ◆ Severe stomach ache/headache or cough
- ◆ On antibiotics for less than 24 hours
- ◆ Feeling too sick to sit upright

If your child develops any of these conditions while at school, or other conditions, which warrant medical attention, you will be called to pick up your child.

Medications: Per MCSD policy JLCD-R, students are not allowed to bring medications to school. A properly signed and dated request on the district-approved form from the parent/legal guardian must be on file in the student's health record prior to administration of any medication by school district personnel. Medication permission forms and medication orders must be updated at the beginning of each new school year for each new or different medication and when changes are made to the student's medication regimen. One permission form per school year will suffice for medications that will be given on a long-term basis. Medications must be provided in pharmacy-labeled bottles. "Sample" medications provided for a student by his/her healthcare practitioner may be accepted for administration if the healthcare practitioner provides written guidance for administering the medication and the medication is brought to the school in the original container provided by the pharmaceutical manufacturer. Nonprescription (over-the-counter) drugs may only be administered if a properly signed and dated district-approved form has been submitted by the parent/legal guardian.

All medications will be administered by the school nurse or a designee in her absence in order for proper documentation to be maintained. Notify the nurse immediately if a student has any kind of medication.

Medication information is confidential and should be shared by the nurse or parent on a "need to know" basis.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Four year old students enrolling in school must have a current immunization record on file. A South Carolina Certificate of Immunization is required for all students in Child Development Programs through 12th grade. All new students have 30 calendar days from their first day of school attendance in which to present this certificate to the school. These certificates and the immunizations may be obtained from the health department, military clinics, and private physicians, etc.

PARTIES/CELEBRATIONS

Each class will be limited to 3 parties during the school year. Teachers will provide information to parents regarding parties when they are scheduled. Healthy snacks are encouraged at parties.

Individual student birthday parties are not allowed at school. Parents may provide a small treat for students to be consumed at lunch or recess.

SCHOOL INSURANCE

The Board of Trustees of Marion County Schools offers each student an opportunity to purchase Student School Accident Insurance. Access to the policy details and the accident claim form is found under the Operations Division of the MCS D website. Please note that your child's school has purchased a Student Accident Insurance Program that covers your child for injuries while he/she is participating in school sponsored and supervised activities.

REPORTING CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

Child abuse/neglect is a serious offense and should be considered as such by those coming in contact with it. It is important that such cases be reported so that the children known to be in danger can receive assistance. Teachers are required by law to report any such concerns they have to the proper authorities.

UNIVERSAL BREAKFAST/LUNCH

Marion County School District will be participating in the CEP (Community Eligibility Provision) program for the 2018-2019 school year. This program allows the district to provide breakfast and lunch meals to all of our students without cost to them. Parents/guardians will not be required to complete applications for this program.

ASSESSMENT

Readiness Assessment: The Read to Succeed legislation requires that all 4K and 5K students be assessed with a readiness assessment in 2018-2019. CDEP teachers are required to conduct ongoing assessments to gather information about each child's growth and skill development across domains, as well as to inform instruction.

Marion County School District uses the following assessment to meet this requirement:

- DIAL 4, Screening Tool by Pearson Clinical (4K)
- PALS PRE-K (4K)
- Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (5K)
- Fountas and Pinnell Reading Assessment (5K)

STUDENT RECORDS

The school will maintain on each student a cumulative record folder, which contains directory information, scholastic information, standardized test data, health records and other similar information. The district will protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable data on children during collection, storage, disclosure and destruction of applicable records.

If it is necessary for the student to transfer to another school, parents will be asked to complete withdrawal forms available at the guidance office. No information will be released on a child until these forms are complete. All school issued materials, cafeteria fees and library books must be returned prior to transfer and all fees/fines must be paid.

PARENT RIGHTS

Parents have the right to review and contest material in a student's permanent record folder. Anyone who wishes to inspect the records must make the request for inspection of a student's record to the principal of the school in which the student is enrolled or where the record is housed. Principals or designated district office administrators will set a time and place for the inspection of such records within a reasonable period of time, but in no case more than 45 days after the request has been made.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS: Parents, guardians, and community members that would like to volunteer at the Academy of Early Learning must complete a SLED check.

DIRECTORY INFORMATION

By law, the district may disclose directory information, unless parents request that such information not be given out. Directory information includes: the student's name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weights and heights of members of athletics teams, dates of attendance, diploma or certificate and awards received, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended and other similar information. The district will not release directory information to any person or agency for commercial use. Schools will treat each student's education records as confidential.

PARENT COMMUNICATIONS AND CONFERENCES: Two of the quarterly contacts must include documented parent/teacher conferences during the school year that provide information including student progress on the Readiness Assessment. A final assessment report on the child's progress must be provided to parents at the end of the school year. This report may be sent home, reviewed during a conference or home visit. Parents will be also scheduled for interim and report card conferences.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PROCEDURES

The superintendent makes the decision by 6:00 a.m. whether to proceed with normal schedules, delay the opening of school or cancel school for the day. In some instances, the decision can be made the preceding afternoon or evening. In the event of school closing due to inclement weather, district officials will contact parents via the district's automated phone notification system, BlackBoard Connect. Announcements of school closings or delays also will be sent to local news media and posted on the district's website. If inclement weather occurs during the school day warranting the closing of school, similar notification procedures would be followed at the district or school level.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student's education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without parental consent, to school officials with a legitimate educational interest, other schools to which a student is transferring, appropriate officials in organizations that support health and safety of children, or in compliance with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena.

Disciplinary action taken against a student is considered a part of his/her educational record. School personnel will not discuss any disciplinary action taken against a student with anyone other than the student and his/her parents, except in the above listed circumstances. Even if your child is a victim of

another child's behavior, you will not be provided information regarding the consequences given to another student.

TITLE IX/SECTION 504 STATEMENT

Inquiries and complaints about IX (Sexual Harassment) should be directed to Paula Grant at 719 North Main Street, Marion, SC 29571 or by calling 423-1811. Inquiries and complaints about Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 should be directed to Dr. Cassandra Strickland at the same address and phone number listed above.