



EARLY LEARNING CENTER

# Parent Handbook

2025-2026



## Early Learning Center

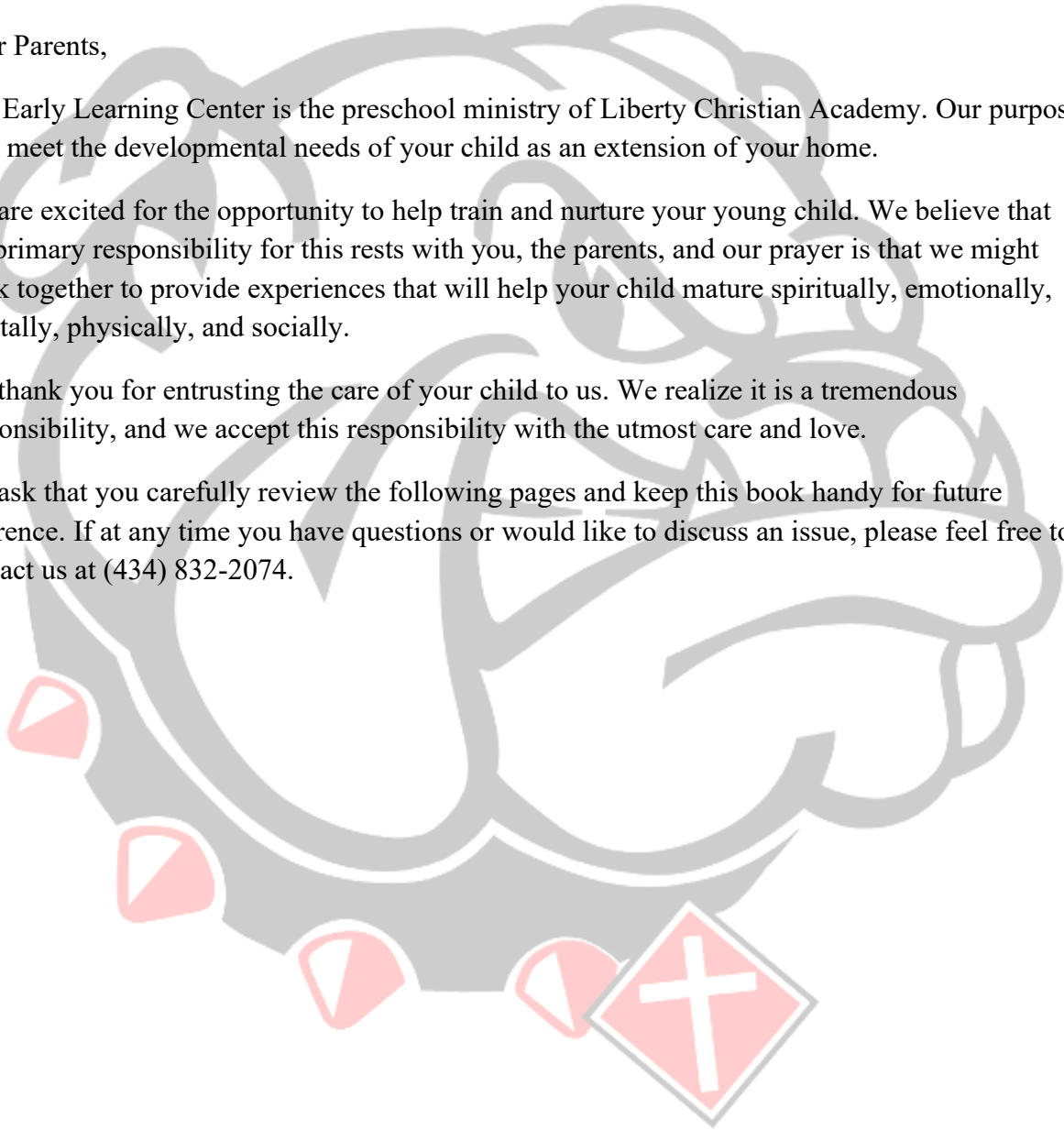
Dear Parents,

The Early Learning Center is the preschool ministry of Liberty Christian Academy. Our purpose is to meet the developmental needs of your child as an extension of your home.

We are excited for the opportunity to help train and nurture your young child. We believe that the primary responsibility for this rests with you, the parents, and our prayer is that we might work together to provide experiences that will help your child mature spiritually, emotionally, mentally, physically, and socially.

We thank you for entrusting the care of your child to us. We realize it is a tremendous responsibility, and we accept this responsibility with the utmost care and love.

We ask that you carefully review the following pages and keep this book handy for future reference. If at any time you have questions or would like to discuss an issue, please feel free to contact us at (434) 832-2074.





## Early Learning Center

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Liberty Christian Academy Early Learning Center (ELC) exists to support parents and guardians in their Biblical responsibility to nurture and train their children. Thus, the ELC provides a secure, loving, Christ-centered environment focused on meeting each child's social, academic, physical, and spiritual needs within an active learning environment.

### **THE ELC**

The Liberty Christian Academy Early Learning Center is a private, Christian preschool enrolling approximately 300 students ages 2-6. The school is adjacent to the Liberty Christian Academy building. LCA Early Learning Center complies with all applicable laws and regulations pertaining to health and sanitation, water supply, building codes, statewide fire prevention code, staff-child ratios, and health and criminal check requirements for staff. Liberty Christian Academy Early Learning Center is exempt from licensure under the State religious exemption law. As mandated by child abuse and neglect laws, childcare workers are required to report any suspected cases of child abuse and neglect.

The ELC is protected by a state-of-the-art security system including cameras located in all hallways and playgrounds. Our facility consists of fifteen classrooms, a large indoor play area, a kitchen area, and two separate playgrounds with age-appropriate play structures.

### **CURRICULUM**

The LCA Early Learning Center utilizes the Creative Curriculum for Preschool from Teaching Strategies. This hands-on, active learning curriculum is project-based, addressing intellectual goals, dispositions and habits of mind including initiative, motivation, self-regulation, problem solving, and social competency. Academic tasks within this literacy rich environment include emergent literacy and numeracy skills as well as scientific inquiry. Authentic methods encouraging developing literacy skills as well as the directed literacy approach of the "Letterland" curriculum are integrated into the program daily. Furthermore, the ELC four- and five-year-old students are administered the Aimsweb PLUS test in the fall in order to guide literacy instruction and again in the spring to determine progress. All ELC students also participate in a special music class twice a week with a degreed music teacher.



## Early Learning Center

### **SPIRITUAL PROGRAM**

The Spiritual development of every student is of the highest importance at the Liberty Christian Academy Early Learning Center. Weekly Chapels are planned and conducted by our Campus Pastor, Andy Lawrenson, for our PK4 and TK students. These Chapels incorporate the weekly Bible stories, memory verses, and musical worship. Spiritual education is also accomplished in every classroom through daily Bible instruction and the integration of Biblical principles throughout the school day. Godly play is taught and encouraged using Jesus Christ as the example and utilizing a Christian language system rooted deeply in Biblical Scripture. As Dr. Jerome Berryman (1995) describes, “Wisdom, herself, is interpreted [in Proverbs 8:30], as being a child playing delightfully before God...so that our creative nature and our playful wisdom are bound together.” With that thought, the Liberty Christian Academy ELC attempts to plant the seeds of God’s Word in the heart of every ELC student.

### **ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS**

Children must be at least 2 years of age as of September 30 of the current year. As space is available, all ages may choose either a full or half day schedule. Schedule options and fee schedules can be found on the LCA website at [www.lcabulldogs.com](http://www.lcabulldogs.com).

First time attendance includes:

1. Completion of application and contract (with both parents’ signatures if applicable). A non-refundable registration fee must accompany the completed applications.
2. Interview with the Director with both parents if possible.
3. Certified birth certificate must be brought to the interview.
4. Completion of Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Health Form, signed by a physician (must be dated within twelve months of start date).

### **HOURS OF OPERATION**

The Liberty Christian Academy Early Learning Center is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. We also offer an early room which opens at 7:00 a.m. and an extended school day until 5:30 p.m. at an extra cost. The school year program coincides as closely as possible with the schedule of Liberty Christian Academy. Please note the current school year calendar as published on the LCA website.

A summer program with similar schedules is offered. The summer program begins the Monday after Memorial Day and ends seven school days prior to the opening of school in August.



## Early Learning Center

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

Liberty Christian Academy makes every effort to keep the Early Learning Center open during inclement weather. However, the safety of our children, families and teachers must always be a primary consideration. There will not be adjustments to charges for missed days. Should you have any questions concerning school delays or closings, local television station WSET13 and WSET online will carry the latest information. Information may also be obtained from our website: [www.lcabulldogs.com](http://www.lcabulldogs.com). A one-hour delay means we open at 9:00 a.m., and on a two-hour delay, we open at 10:00 a.m.

### **CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The ELC treats security as the highest priority. We have a robust check-in and check-out policy requiring the use of a child specific User ID and Password. Liberty Christian Academy and the ELC maintain a comprehensive Crisis Management Plan to provide the faculty with procedures if a crisis situation were to arise. The Plan is reviewed annually and updated by Academy administration and approved by the School Board. Throughout the school year, children at the ELC practice fire, severe weather, soft lockdown, and hard lockdown procedures. Liberty Christian Academy and the ELC employ a School Resource Officer to assist Academy administrators in maintaining the safety, order, and discipline of the school. All incidents that impact the safety, order or discipline of the school are reported by the administration to the Resource Officer.



## Early Learning Center

### **FOOD POLICY**

During the school year, a hot lunch may be purchased daily from the Academy lunch program. Hot lunches will **NOT** be available on days LCA K-12 is closed. Hot lunches will be ordered through the app “School Café” and funds for lunches will also be added through the same app. **LUNCH ORDERS MUST be PLACED by 9:00 AM.**

For lunches brought from home, we ask that sugar and snack foods be kept to a minimum. *No soda please.* We will monitor lunch times and encourage children to eat all that is sent, encouraging their eating of “healthiest” foods first.

On days that grades K-12 at Liberty Christian Academy are closed (full or half day), lunches will *not* be for sale. *Children must bring a lunch on these days.*

*If your child has food allergies, please discuss in advance with the Administration and the teacher a specific protocol for food that fits your child’s needs.*

On children’s birthdays, parents may bring cupcakes or some other treat for each child in the class to share during snack time. Arrangements for this special birthday snack should be made in advance with the teacher, taking into account any allergies that may be present in the class.

### **PAYMENT POLICIES**

*School Year:*

A \$145.00 non-refundable registration fee is due with the application. *All* tuition for the school year may be paid in one payment prior to the start of school or it may be paid in ten equal installments which will auto debit from your bank account through the FACTS system. There is a \$150.00 materials fee for each student which is due by August 1. This fee may be paid separately from the monthly installments at any time prior to August 1, or it will be added in full to the August installment payment.

Summer fees and tuition are separate from the school year tuition and payments. Summer tuition is auto debited in two payments (June and July).



## Early Learning Center

### *Withdrawal:*

The withdrawal process is initiated when the Parent or Financially Responsible Party completes a withdrawal form and submits it to the Manager of the Office of Student Accounts (OSA). Failure to complete the withdrawal process with the Manager of the OSA may hinder the release of student records. Completion of official withdrawal requires fulfillment of all financial obligations owed to LCA by the Parent or Financially Responsible Party under this Contract. The Parent or Financially Responsible Party will be responsible for all or a portion of the tuition and fees for the 2024-2025 school year per chart below:

<b>Date of Withdrawal:</b>	<b>Financially Responsible for:</b>
Feb. 1 – Day Before Schools Starts	1 month of tuition and 50% of activity & materials fee
After the Start of School	Current and Subsequent Month plus 100% of activity & materials fee

### **DAILY ARRIVAL**

Parents/guardians bring their children into the building and sign them in using the computers in the office. A unique username and password will be issued to each family. Parents/guardians should then go with their child to the designated classroom and leave the child in the care of the teacher. The first two or three weeks, it may be hard for young children and parents/guardians to separate. We have found, however, that teachers can quickly gain the child's confidence and instill a sense of security if the parents/guardians do not prolong the parting. A wise rule is to let the child join his/her group alone, leaving the parent/guardian at the doorway. We ask that at no time you allow children to run freely in the LU hallways or in our building.



## Early Learning Center

### **DAILY DEPARTURE**

Anyone picking up a child should go first to the computer and sign the child out before proceeding to pick up the child. Your child will only be released to the persons who are identified on the Application Form as being allowed to pick up your child. Should it be necessary for someone other than those listed on the application to pick up the child, please call the office with the name of the trusted person. The office will ask to see that person's photo ID prior to being allowed to pick up the student. Half-day students need to be picked up by 12:15 each day.

Full-day students are expected to be picked up by 3:15 and extended care students must be picked up by 5:30 each afternoon. There will be a \$10.00 fee added to the FACTS account for every five minutes the child is late being picked up on any given day.

### **PARKING FOR DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP**

Parking spaces have been designated for ELC parent use in parking lot PTR4. This is the lot between the church and Green Hall. These parking spaces ***MUST ONLY*** be used when dropping off or picking up an ELC child. They may ***NOT*** be used as parking spaces for LCA drop off or pick up, or for other activities. Additional spaces are also available in the lower lot. Parents may also park in the lots in front of TRBC Main Street doors.

### **STAFF**

Our staff consists of dedicated Christians who love the Lord and have a genuine love for children. All staff are trained to work with young children and spend much time in preparation for each day's activities. Each teacher has a yearly renewed health certificate on file signed by a physician stating that the faculty member is free of any disability which would prevent them from caring for children. We also obtain a Criminal Record Clearance from the Central Records Exchange Department of the State Police for each staff member as well as a search by the Child Protective Services Central Registry of Abuse/Neglect Investigations. Teachers are required throughout the school year to attend a number of professional development workshops and seminars in the field of Early Childhood Education.

Lead teachers and Assistant teachers work with the children during the school day hours. Assistant and Part-time teachers work the extended care time after the 3:15 dismissal each day.



## Early Learning Center

### **HEALTH AND MEDICAL INFORMATION**

Parents/guardians must disclose any new health concerns and issues of the Student with LCA in accordance with LCA policies and update the same as promptly and reasonably practicable with any subsequent health concerns and issues arising after Parent's/guardians initial disclosure. Parent/guardians authorizes LCA to share all health information provided to LCA within its staff and as reasonably necessary, consistent with LCA policies and as permitted by law.

Each child must have on file, prior to the start of the school year or summer program, a Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Physical and Immunization form (completed within 12 months prior to their start date). Both the physical section and verification of immunization section of the form must be signed by a physician. Children should not come to the Center if they are ill. If your child becomes ill, you will be notified and asked to pick up the child. We ask that you notify the Center immediately if your child has been diagnosed as having a communicable disease. In order to protect the student body of the Academy, we require that any student with one of the below listed illnesses/conditions be taken home and remain there until he/she has fully recovered from the illness/condition.

**FEVER** – Body temperature above normal (normal defined as 98.6 degrees). We will call parents if a child has a fever of 100 degrees or above. Your child should be observed at home for at least 24 hours after temperature has returned to normal before returning to LCA/ELC.

**CONJUNCTIVITIS** – Inflammation of the mucus membrane lining the eyelids and covering the front of the eyeball – commonly known as “pink eye.” The child should be seen by a doctor and treated for 24 hours before returning to the ELC. Your child cannot return to LCA the same day of treatment unless by permission of your doctor stating that he/she does not have contagious conjunctivitis.

**THROAT CULTURES** – If your doctor does a throat culture on your child, he/she may not return to LCA until results of the culture are known.

**SCARLET FEVER** – An acute streptococcal infection marked by fever, sore throat and a red rash appearing most often on face, neck, upper chest and skin of arms, elbows, groin, and inner aspect of thighs. Non-communicable after 24 hours of drug therapy (usually penicillin). Most children require three to four days before returning to LCA. This will allow your child time to recuperate and prevent further complications.



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**IMPETIGO** - Contagious multiple skin lesions usually on exposed portions (face, around lips and nose, fingers, elbows, legs, and knees). Lesions are multiple, varying in size and shape and consist of blisters which rapidly turn into brown crusts, on a reddened base. Caused by strep or staph germs. The child is excluded from LCA until a physician authorizes the child's return- usually three to five days.

**CHICKEN POX** - An infectious, viral disease of childhood. The incubation period after exposure can be two to three weeks, commonly 13 to 17 days. Sudden onset with fever and itchy eruptions which become small blisters within a few hours and develop in various stages (crops). The child will be excluded from LCA until the last crop has crusted and is dry.

**HEAD LICE** - Any of various small, wingless parasitic insects that suck blood and inhabit the hair. The child will be excluded from LCA until treated and free of nits (eggs laid by the head louse). The child's head must be checked by an LCA nurse prior to being admitted back into the ELC.

**VOMITING** - Parents/guardians will be called to come for their child if he/she vomits during the school day. The child should not return to LCA until free of vomiting for 24 hours.

**DIARRHEA** - Parents/guardians will be called to come for their child if he/she is experiencing diarrhea during the school day. The child should not return to LCA until free from diarrhea for 24 hours.

**RUNNY NOSE** - If the mucus coming from the nose appears infectious (is yellow/green in color), the parent will be called to pick up the child.

### **MEDICATIONS**

A student requiring medication or who is under a doctor's care should usually remain at home. However, if a child does require medication at school, a parent/guardian must complete and sign the ELC medication authorization form located in the ELC office. These forms are valid for ten school days. Medication must be in original packaging with age-appropriate dosage listed. Should a medication need to be administered or kept at school for longer than 10 days, a health care provider and a parent/guardian MUST complete a medication consent form. These forms are valid for 12 months. Medicine should be brought by a parent/guardian in the original prescription bottle with the prescription label that includes child's name, name of the medication, dosage, and frequency of administration. All medication must be placed out of the reach of any child - never in the classroom, or in the child's backpack. This includes asthma inhalers.



## Early Learning Center

### **INJURY**

If a student is injured at the LCA Early Learning Center, the teacher will report it to the office. All head injuries are seen by the LCA nursing staff to determine severity. Parents/guardians will be notified immediately of any serious injury. An injury report will be completed and will be given to parents and kept in the child's file for all injuries, serious or otherwise.

### **BITING POLICY**

When a student bites another student, both sets of parents/guardians are contacted. The incident is documented in a Biter Log kept in the ELC. If the biting becomes habitual, further action on the part of the ELC may be taken to ensure the safety of all students.

### **INSURANCE**

Liberty Christian Academy to include the Early Learning Center has Public (General) Liability insurance coverage on our insurance policy.

### **STUDENT APPEARANCE**

It is important that your child be comfortable and not concerned with having to keep clean. We ask that dress be neat and modest with only appropriate wording on T-shirts or hats. Play clothes are ideal for a child's day at preschool. Please be sure all clothing, including hats, boots, coats, gloves, socks, and undergarments are clearly labeled with your child's name. Bring a change of clothing to be left at the Center, in case of an accident. Seasonal clothing changes should be made throughout the year. Children who wish to play on the climbing toys on the outdoor playgrounds must wear sneakers or other appropriate rubber soled, closed toe and closed heel shoes. Sandals are not appropriate footwear for playground wear.

### **OUTDOOR PLAY**

The children play outdoors almost every day. Please send your child in clothes suitable for outdoor play according to the weather. We go outdoors in winter weather when the ambient temperature is 33 degrees or above, although children may go out for a few minutes for fresh air even on colder days. If there are special medical problems which you feel require that your child not go outside on a particular day, these should be discussed with the Administration.



## Early Learning Center

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips will be taken periodically by our TK, PK4 and PK3 students to enhance your child's learning experiences. ALL students MUST have a signed and completed Permission slip by their parent/guardian prior to attending and participating in off-site field trips. Permission slips will be sent home for parents/guardians to sign and complete through the classroom teacher. Notification of these trips will be given in advance. Information regarding the field trips is disseminated through the class calendar, newsletter, and the parent message board. A child will not be permitted to stay at the Center if he/she arrives after that child's class has left for the field trip unless space is available in an age-appropriate class. The students will be transported on LCA safety-inspected buses. Depending on the location, parents/guardians may join their children on the field trips by following the LCA school bus or meeting the children at the location. If you choose to attend, *siblings may not accompany you on any ELC field trips* in order that your ELC child may enjoy complete attention from you during the trip.

### **NOTES, MEMOS, MESSAGES**

Important ELC announcements are disseminated through your child's folder or cubby, posted on the bulletin board in your child's classroom, posted on the classroom Facebook group, and/or mentioned in the class or ELC weekly newsletters called The Vine. Be sure to check these locations each day/week for upcoming events or important announcements.

### **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### *Emergency contacts:*

Please be sure we have current phone numbers to contact a parent or another trusted adult in case there is a serious emergency. When contacted regarding an emergency or illness with your child, it is expected that you arrive within the hour to collect your child in order to ensure safety of your child as well as the other children and staff in the ELC.

#### *Class parties:*

During the year, special occasions and holidays are celebrated with classroom parties. Teachers will ask for parent/guardian help or goodies from those who are able to assist. It is a very special time for the child when Mom, Dad or guardian can attend the parties as well.



## Early Learning Center

### *Programs:*

Our children prepare special programs for family and friends at various times during the school year. Some of the types of programs include open-music class at Christmas, Graduation programs, and various individual class programs as organized in each classroom. You will be informed of these special events through notices and weekly emails.

### *Support:*

Parents/guardians are asked to become acquainted with the child's school, staff, curriculum, and activities. Talk with your child daily about experiences and lessons learned. Check with teachers if you would like any further information concerning specific studies and upcoming activities. Read to your child often and teach him/her, by word and example, a respect for God, for law, for the authority of the school, and for the rights and property of others.

Please carefully review the agreements on your signed ELC Contract.

