

Stars Academy

Grapevine, TX
Est. 2007

2023-2024
Parent Handbook

Stars Academy
1520 West Wall Street
Grapevine, Tx 76051
817-410-3843

www.starsacademygrapevine.com

OUR SCHOOL

WHO WE ARE

Stars Academy is a Christian environment focused on the academic, emotional, and social development of our early education program.

GOALS

Our goal is to provide your child with a wonderful, secure, and Christian learning environment.

CURRICULUM

Each month we will focus on a different shape, concept, memory verse, and color. In addition, Stars Academy utilizes the Abeka curriculum for children in our Two's and Three's program; and the Handwriting Without Tears curriculum for children in PreK and Kindergarten.

Our Kindergarten program will cover mathematics, English language arts, reading, social studies, science, health education, physical education, art, and technology application according to state standards. Music and theatre standards will be met in Music and Chapel.

MUSIC/CHAPEL

Each class will experience Music daily. Chapel will be for children in our Three's -Kindergarten program. Chapel includes hands-on lessons and visuals.

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

The teaching staff at Stars Academy is comprised of educators with the desire to share the love of God with all children. They are knowledgeable and experienced in teaching young children. All employees meet licensing requirements to be able to teach in a licensed facility in the State of Texas, including background checks, and FBI fingerprints. All teachers must receive 24 hours of in-service training, yearly training to recognize signs of abuse and neglect, as well as training in Pediatric CPR and First Aid.

ENROLLMENT & TUITION

SCHOOL YEAR (Sept. 7th – May 16th)

Stars Academy is open to all children ages 6 months through kindergarten and offers two program options for most of our families. Class ratios and procedures have been adjusted to meet guidelines set forth by the TEA (Texas Education Agency) and the State of Texas. Our class ratios are maxed out at a lower number than recommended by the TEA & state. Children will remain with their same small group throughout the entirety of the day.

- Option 1:** Tuesdays & Thursdays Only
63 school days
Available to all enrolled children.
Curriculum will consist of Abeka or Handwriting Without Tears depending on the age group. All children will participate in Music & Chapel each day.
- Option 2:** Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday
93 school days (Last STEM day May 8th)
Available to children ages 2 & up as of September 1st.
Wednesday's curriculum will introduce children to STEM concepts.

REGISTRATION

Registration will begin in February each year for the next school year. Currently, enrolled students will be given the opportunity to register first. Registration to the general public will open two weeks later.

All families must complete our registration application form located on our website <https://www.starsacademygrapevine.com>. Your registration application will be reviewed once it has been submitted and an invoice for the registration fee will be emailed directly to you. The registration process is not complete until the registration fee has been paid. Once your registration fee has been received, your child's spot will be secured. Registration fees are one-time fees and are **non-refundable**. Registration fees are as follows:

Tuesday & Thursday Only

Registration Fee: \$100 (if registering between the months of June-December.)

Discounted registration will be offered to families who register from January - March. Those fees are as follows:

January: \$50.00

February: \$40.00

March-May: \$25.00 (includes registration and activity fee)

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday

Registration Fee: \$150 (if registering between the months of June-December.)

Discounted registration will be offered to families who register from January - March. Those fees are as follows:

January: \$75.00

February: \$65.00

March-May: \$35.00 (includes registration and activity fee)

A waiting list will be maintained for those interested in enrollment when space is no longer available. As space becomes available, parents will be contacted in the order of the names that appear on the list.

ACTIVITY FEE/CURRICULUM

This one-time fee is due at the time of registration. This fee helps cover the cost of all our special activities and daily curriculum. Curriculum fees cover student workbooks and workbook materials. These fees are as follows:

Tuesdays & Thursdays Only

1's: \$100

2's: \$100

3's: \$125

PreK: \$150

Kindergarten: \$150

Tuesday, Wednesday, & Thursday

2's: \$125

3's: \$150

PreK: \$175

Kindergarten: \$175

LATE PAYMENTS & RETURNED CHECKS

Any payment received after the scheduled date will incur a late fee of \$5.00 per class day. Tracking down late tuition payments and billing late fees takes away time we want to spend on improving your child's day. If payment is not received one week after the due date, your child will not be admitted to class until payment is received.

Any checks returned due to insufficient funds or closed accounts will carry a fine of \$25.00.

If you need to pay your tuition late, you must still turn in a post-dated check the day tuition is due.

If May's tuition is not paid on May 1, your child will not be admitted to class the following Tuesday until payment is received.

WITHDRAWAL

A two-week notice must be given to the Director if a child is to withdraw from Stars Academy. This enables the office to notify any parent on our waiting list who may be interested in filling your child's reserved space. Tuition will be charged through the two weeks regardless of attendance. **No notice may be given after March 1st** after which the remaining tuition for the year will be due. (Exceptions may be made if a family move is involved.) Parents are responsible for all collection fees on any unpaid tuition. By signing this parent handbook, you agree to those fees.

LATE PICK-UP FEE

Pick-up time from Stars Academy begins at 2:15 p.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m. Children not being picked up by 2:35 p.m. will begin to accrue late fees. A late charge of \$5.00 per child per five minutes will be assessed to your account, beginning at 2:35 p.m. You will be charged an additional \$2 per minute for every minute you are late after 2:35 p.m. Parents will receive an invoice through Brightwheel for these late fees. Authorized adults listed on your child's pick-up form will be contacted in the event of a parent not returning for their child by 2:45 p.m. If another adult must be located to claim your child, a late fee of \$25.00 will be charged to your account immediately. Continued late pick-up times will result in the dismissal of your child from the program.

DROP-OFF & PICK-UP PROCEDURES

ARRIVAL

All parents will enter the building to drop their child off in their classroom(s). Daily temperature checks will be taken for all children enrolled in our program. Parents will check their child in using the Brightwheel app on their personal phones. A QR code will be posted at your child's door. Scan this code to access the attendance portal. All your children can be checked in using this code.

Special guests and/or activities are planned for every day, and we don't want your child to miss the activity; therefore, prompt arrival is very important in preschool. Late arrivals are also disruptive to the classroom. **Continued late drop-off will result in the dismissal of your child from the program.**

Your child's teachers will be ready to receive your child at 9:25 am. Class activities begin at 9:30 a.m. We open our doors at 9:20 am as a courtesy.

DISMISSAL

Your child may only be picked up from school by you or by those persons listed on your "Authorized pick up" list. Please remember to include both parents' information if they pick up. **Your child will not be released to any person not listed on the Authorized pick-up list.** Driver's license numbers will be verified for anybody picking up your child. If you have made arrangements for someone to pick up your child, please inform the teachers and send a message via the Brightwheel app. Be sure to include the name and driver's license number of the person authorized to pick up your child. If you use the carpool lane, please make sure the person picking up has the carpool tag.

In case of an emergency, contact the school immediately with information on who will be picking up your child. This includes the person's name and driver's license number. **If both parents will be out of town, please make arrangements in person with a director and your teachers.**

PICK-UP PROCEDURES

Infants, One's, & Two's

- Parents with children in our infant and One's classroom will pick their child up from their classrooms. **Parents will check their children out using the Brightwheel app on their personal phones.** A QR code will be posted at your child's door. Scan this code to access the attendance portal. (All your children can be checked in using this code.)
- If you have an older child aged three and older, you will pick up your child in the Main Foyer from their teacher.

Three's, PreK, & Kinder

- Pick up at carpool line (Main Building Entrance)
- Hang your car tag on your rear-view mirror for easy identification.
- During pick-up times, a staff member will walk your child to your car. Parents are expected to reload their own child(ren) into their car seats.
- Your child's teacher will check your child out at the end of the day.

**** THE CARLINE IS A NO CELL PHONE ZONE.** For the safety of our staff and children, and to expedite the drop-off and pick-up process, no parent will be allowed to talk on their phone. This process will be slow and take some time, so we ask that you be patient and understanding of these new procedures.

OPERATIONAL POLICIES

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Stars Academy follows the Grapevine-Colleyville ISD holiday calendar. The school calendar can be found on our website. The school year runs September thru May with summer camp held in June and July.

DATES TO NOTE: Meet the Teacher - May 5th
 No School - November 7th
 Return from Christmas Break - January 4th
 Last STEM Day - May 8th

Hours of Operation

Preschool hours are Tuesday through Thursday 9:30 am to 2:30 pm. As a courtesy, our doors will open at 9:20 am with class beginning at 9:30 am. Children cannot be dropped off earlier than 9:25 am.

BRIGHTWHEEL

Stars Academy will continue to utilize Brightwheel as our main form of communication. Every parent is expected to download the app and set their notifications to "on". Brightwheel is used daily for check-in and check-out, teacher/staff-to-parent messaging, important reminders, etc. It is the responsibility of every family to ensure that your contact information is up to date on your child's profile. If your information changes (i.e.: phone number) please inform the office immediately.

SCHOOL CLOSING/INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event that GCISD closes due to inclement weather, Stars Academy will be closed also. If GCISD has a late school start time due to inclement weather, Stars Academy will remain closed for that day. Parents will be contacted through the Brightwheel messaging system for notification of closures.

CLOTHING & PERSONAL ITEMS

We play hard at school and try to protect clothing with smocks, but accidents do happen. Dress your child in clothes suitable for a variety of activities, which may include painting, play dough, outdoor play, etc. In case of a spill or accident, extra clothing must be provided for your child. Please put a shirt, pants/shorts, socks, and underwear in a gallon-size zip bag labeled with your child's name. These clothes will be kept in their backpack to use in the event of an accident. Please update this bag according to the season.

Make sure your child's name is labeled on all their belongings: backpack, water bottles, folders, lunch box, etc.

DIAPERS & BOTTLES

Diapers cannot be stored in the classrooms because we are a shared facility with the church. Be sure to pack enough diapers for each day in your child's backpack.

Bottles must be premade and labeled with your child's name. State guidelines prohibit caregivers from preparing bottles.

LUNCHESES & SNACKS

Stars Academy will provide one snack of Goldfish each day. If your child cannot eat the snack we provide, be sure to let your child's teacher know this at the beginning of the school year.

Parents are responsible for providing their child's lunch every day. We encourage parents to provide a healthy lunch every day. Stars Academy does not have the capability to reheat foods, so all foods must be able to be eaten straight from the lunch box. All toddlers should bring finger foods (already cut in bite sizes) for self-feeding. Stars Academy is not responsible for the nutritional value of the lunch each child brings to school.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

Stars Academy maintains the following rules of conduct for each classroom. Any behavior considered inappropriate will first be redirected in a positive manner that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Discipline will be individualized for each child and appropriate to the child's level of understanding. Our goal is to teach children acceptable behavior and self-control. We will do this by praising and encouraging good behavior instead of focusing only on unacceptable behavior. Children will be reminded of behavior expectations daily using clear and positive statements. If this fails and unacceptable behavior continues and/or could be harmful to the child, harmful to another child, or destructive of property, it will warrant further disciplinary actions. Your child will be asked to "take a break" if he/she continues the repeated inappropriate behavior and chooses to neglect the teacher's reminders. A "break" will last, in minutes, no longer than the child's age. If this "take a break" approach fails to work with a child, a parent may be asked to come observe their child's behavior. A behavior modification plan will be developed which may include a leave of absence. We will always try to work as a team with the parents to help a child succeed in the classroom.

Please understand that some acting out is perfectly normal for all developing preschoolers. Young children may hit, pinch, bite, push, etc. Preschoolers are growing at their fastest rate and are trying different ways of dealing with their emotions and frustrations. As teachers, we will instruct and guide your children through these expected stages of aggression with consistency, love, and patience. Your understanding and cooperation during these expected periods will benefit your child and the program immensely.

REST TIME

Children in our One's, Two's, and Three's classes will lie down for naps. Your child will need a nap mat labeled with their name. Your child is welcome to bring a blanket or "lovie" with them for naptime. Blankets and lovies will be stored either in your child's nap mat or backpack until naptime. Children in PreK and Kindergarten will not take naps.

Infants will sleep in cribs that meet safety standards according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Parents are expected to bring a clean crib sheet every day. Crib sheets will be sent home daily to be washed and crib mattresses will be sanitized.

TOILET TRAINING

The goal of Stars Academy is to partner with parents when their child is ready for potty training. Teachers will work with each child on an individual basis to assist efforts at home toward toileting success. If a child is not fully potty trained and able to use the restroom independently before entering the three-year-old classroom, we require parents to commit to consistently working on potty training at home in order to be able to enroll in the Three-year-old classroom.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Outdoor play is an essential part of your child's day. We will provide a minimum of 30 minutes of daily scheduled supervised outdoor activities on age-appropriate equipment. Children will play outdoors unless the thermometer is below 42 degrees, or the weather does not permit. Dress your child according to the weather and season. If the weather conditions do not permit us to play outside, children will have the opportunity to engage in physical activities indoors.

You are welcome to apply sunscreen on your child to protect their skin from the sun. Please note that sunscreen must be applied at home.

HEALTH & MEDICAL INFORMATION

IMMUNIZATION & MEDICAL RECORDS

A health statement, provided at enrollment, must be completed and signed by your doctor every year. This health statement along with a copy of your child's updated immunization records must be kept on file. Immunization records must include your doctor's signature in the form of a rubber stamp or electronic signature.

If your child is on a delayed or "catch-up" schedule, a notarized state waiver is required to be kept in your child's file and must be provided at enrollment.

Employees are encouraged to keep their immunizations updated but it is not required.

VISION, HEARING, & SPEECH SCREENING

The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services requires that all children who reach their fourth birthday by September 1st of the current school year be vision and hearing screened. Your child's pediatrician can perform these screenings during their well exam.

CHILDREN WITH ALLERGIES

Stars Academy will make every reasonable effort to meet the needs of children with severe allergies. However, we cannot guarantee that your child will not come into contact with allergens. Please let the office and teachers know if your child has a severe allergy that requires specific protocols such as an antihistamine and/or an epi-pen. Per the State of Texas licensing division, any child with a documented allergy must have an allergy action plan on file and signed by a physician AND a parent. Any required medication is to be provided by the parent in its original container and the school's Medication Form must be completed in order for us to administer treatment. This is also a requirement for your child to attend school.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In the event of a medical emergency, the appropriate first aid measures will be taken immediately to care for the child including a call to 911. Parents will be notified, and if necessary, parents will be asked to pick up the child for further medical evaluation. It is very important that all telephone numbers and emergency contact information be kept current so that parents can be reached at all times. If cell phone numbers have been provided to the school, please be sure cell phones are turned on while your child is attending school. The incident/illness report should be completed and signed by the parent within 48 hours.

MEDICATION

No medication will be administered at Stars Academy. The only exception will be for children that need an EpiPen or inhaler. Only directors can administer these to children. Parents must bring these items to the office and check-in with a director. Parents are also responsible to pick up medication after school. These items will only be kept on campus with an attached action plan stating what medication is needed (i.e.: Benadryl, EpiPen) and signed by their doctor.

ILLNESSES

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to us. Precautions are taken including refusal to admit sick children into Stars Academy and removing any child from their classroom who becomes ill during school hours. Please make other arrangements for your child when he/she has one or more of the following symptoms:

*A CHILD MUST BE **FEVER** AND **SYMPTOM-FREE** FOR 24 HOURS BEFORE RETURNING TO SCHOOL **WITHOUT FEVER-REDUCING MEDICATION OR ANY OTHER SYMPTOM-REDUCING MEDICATION.***

- a. A temperature of 100 or has had a fever during the previous 24 hours.
- b. Symptoms of a possible communicable disease (vomiting, atypical bowel movement that indicates the possibility of infectious diarrhea, sore throat, red eyes, discharge, or crusted eyelids indicating the possibility of infectious pink eye or a constant cough) or has had these symptoms during the previous 24 hours.
- c. Rashes that may indicate the possibility of measles, scarlet fever, or a virus.
- d. Heavy nasal discharge that is not clear.
- e. Fine blisters indicating chicken pox.
- f. Listless, lethargic behavior, lack of appetite, refusal to eat or drink, extreme irritability, or clearly unusual behavior for the child that indicates the likelihood of an oncoming illness.

Please notify a director when your child is ill with a communicable disease (including but not limited to Hand Foot and Mouth Disease, lice, pinworms, chicken pox, mononucleosis, and Covid-19) or has been exposed to one outside Stars Academy. A doctor's note will be required indicating that it is acceptable for the child to return to school. Violation of this policy may result in dismissal.

If your child becomes sick during the day, a director will contact you immediately, possibly for pick-up. Please be sure to enter our school's phone number in your list of contacts. If we deem it necessary for your child to leave the program due to illness, and you are not available, we will call those persons listed on your authorized pick-up list to care for your child. In this situation, we ask that you make every effort to pick your child up in a timely manner.

SURGERY/MEDICAL PROCEDURES

If your child has a surgery or medical procedure during the school year, please send a doctor's note when they return to school releasing them back to regular activity.

SCHOOL SAFETY

SECURITY

All doors that open to the exterior of the building will remain locked at all times.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Parents are welcome to visit at any time during the day without securing prior approval. We ask that parents not enter their children's rooms as unexpected and/or prolonged visits may disrupt the classroom's learning environment.

PHOTOGRAPHS & VIDEO

Pictures and videos taken of children during school will be used for school purposes only with authorization from a parent. If you do not want your child's picture posted on social media, be sure to check off the appropriate box in the Photo Release section of our registration form. If permission was granted to release photos but decided to retract that permission, a written note must be turned in to the office to be kept in your child's file. Please include the child's name, date, and a parent's signature.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

The safety of children is of utmost importance. An Emergency Preparedness Plan has been designed to ensure the safety of children during an emergency. Procedures are in place for emergencies such as fires, severe weather, medical emergencies, intruders, releasing children, playground safety, and national alerts. Drills are conducted regularly by staff and children. A copy of the emergency preparedness plan is available for review at the front office.

In the unlikely event that the building must be evacuated due to emergencies, teachers will quickly move students out of the building following their designated route. Everyone will remain in position until further instruction is given by law

enforcement, the fire department, or a school director. If it is unsafe to re-enter the building, parents will be notified to come pick up their children from the safe location outside the building. A staff member will remain with the children until all children have been picked up.

COMMUNICATION

BRIGHTWHEEL

Brightwheel will be used as our main form of communication. Every parent is expected to download the app and set their notifications to “on”. Brightwheel is used daily for teacher/staff-to-parent messaging, important reminders, etc. Please note that our staff will respond to all parent messages posted on Brightwheel during school hours. For children in our younger classes, a record of nap times, eating logs, and potty/diaper changes will be recorded on Brightwheel. We will also post pictures of various activities throughout the week.

SOCIAL MEDIA

A school page has been set up on Facebook and Instagram. We encourage parents to check these media sites to get updates on special events and pictures of those events. Children who have not been granted permission to release photos will not have their pictures posted on any social media site.

EMAIL

A monthly email will be sent out listing events and other important information for the coming month. Please be sure to provide a current email address so you can get these important emails.

RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

It is in the best interest of children, families, teachers, and the school for concerns and complaints to be addressed in a timely and professional manner. For parents who have a concern or complaint about a school-related issue, please speak to your child's teacher first. If the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, speak to a director.

LICENSING

STATE LICENSING

Stars Academy is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). A copy of the minimum standards for operations, as well as the most recent Licensing inspection report, are available in the office for your review upon request.

DFPS Licensing Office: 817-253-1770

DFPS website: www.dfps.state.tx.us/child_care

CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

Texas law requires Stars Academy to report any situation in which it appears a child is being neglected or abused outside our facility. All staff are trained annually to recognize the sign of child abuse and neglect. If you suspect any child is being neglected or abused, please report it immediately to DFPS.

DFPS Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400

GANG-FREE ZONE

Under Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a child care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalties. Stars Academy is a gang-free zone.