



Family Handbook Policies & Procedures 2024-2025

"We Are One"

".....walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift."

Ephesians 4:1-7 ESV



August 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Thank you for choosing Heritage Early Learning Academy! We are so excited to be celebrating our fourth year together! We are honored to partner with you in the care and education of your children.

Heritage Early Learning Academy is committed to providing you and your child access to exceptional educational opportunities in the name of Christ. We are committed to being leaders in urban education and to building a strong foundation in our community...starting at the roots!

Trust that we will make every effort to deliver high quality learning and family support services that will help your child thrive now and in the future.

What an exciting opportunity to serve families who understand the promise and possibilities of early childhood education. We look forward to linking arms with you and discovering all the Lord has in store for us this year!

Sincerely,



Tammy Puch
Principal
Heritage Academy



Jacquelyn Davis
Assistant Principal
Heritage Early Learning Academy

Heritage Early Learning Academy, 328 Greene St, Augusta, GA 30901
706-821-0034

<https://heritageacademyaugusta.org>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1	MISSION, VISION	3
SECTION 2	ACADEMY & CONTACT INFO	4
SECTION 3	BELIEFS & PHILOSOPHY	4-6
SECTION 4	ENROLLMENT & ADMISSION	6-7
SECTION 5	TUITION & PAYMENT INFORMATION	7-8
SECTION 6	PROGRAM OVERVIEW	8-10
SECTION 7	PARENT ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIP.....	10-12
SECTION 8	MEALS & SUPPLIES	12-14
SECTION 9	BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS & GUIDELINES	14-15
SECTION 10	HEALTH & SAFETY	15-17
SECTION 11	GENERAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES	17-18
SECTION 12	STUDENT ACTIVITIES	18-19
SECTION 13	CALENDAR	20-21

Section 1 - MISSION & VISION

MISSION

The mission of Heritage Early Learning Academy is to empower families with access to exceptional educational opportunities in the name of Christ.

VISION

The vision of Heritage Early Learning Academy is to be...



Leaders in urban education!



Committed & called staff caring about the whole child!



Partnering with parents to build a godly foundation for a glorious future!

Section 2 - ACADEMY & CONTACT INFORMATION

Heritage Early Learning Academy serves children ages 18 mos – 5 years old without regard to race, religion, national origin, economic status, gender or ability.. The academy is Quality Rated & licensed and regulated by Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). Annual unannounced inspections of the academy are conducted to ensure all state standards, policies and procedures are met. A copy of the state rules and regulations along with a copy of our most recent licensing review are available in the front office.

Hours of Operation: Monday – Friday, 7:30am – 5:30pm; we are open 12 months a year (TK is 10 mos only). ***See the calendar at end of handbook for days the Academy is closed.***

Heritage Academy Executive Director *Tana Watson* Email: twatson@heritageacademyaugusta.org

Heritage Academy Principal *Tammy Puch* Email: tpuch@heritageacademyaugusta.org

HELA Assistant Principal *Jacquelyn Davis* Email: jdavis@heritageacademyaugusta.org

Heritage Program Director *Nicole Johnson* Email: njohnson@heritageacademyaugusta.org

Heritage Admissions Director *Sonya Roland* Email: sroland@heritageacademyaugusta.org

Heritage Finance Director *Gail Brown* Email: gbrown@heritageacademyaugusta.org

Our academy is a smoke and drug-free environment.

Section 3 - BELIEFS & PHILOSOPHY

STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, only infallible authoritative Word of God.
2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, bodily resurrection, ascension to the right hand of the Father and personal return in power and glory.
4. We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
5. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a Godly life, that the

ministry and infilling of the Holy Spirit is available for every believer, that it is not a prerequisite to salvation. (John 14:6, Acts 1:5,8; 2:2-4, 12-18).

6. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
7. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, no matter to which Bible-believing denomination they belong, ever seeking, together, to “become more and more in every way like Christ who is the head of his body, the Church”. (Ephesians 4:16)

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

The purpose of Christian school education is the instruction of children in a God centered view of the world. Underlying this goal is the conviction that God reveals all truth, that He is the source, sustenance, and goal of all creation, and that real education rests upon the revelation of His truth in Holy Scripture. Thus, Christian education is first, Godward, then manward; first an understanding of God’s revelation and the embodiment of His truth, Jesus Christ, then an understanding of all that is in the world through the eyes of God.

As the reality and power of God permeates all true learning, so this perspective informs all aspects of the school, its staff, and its setting. We, therefore, hold that:

1. Children are gifts of God to parents, who have the ultimate responsibility for educating them in God’s truth, and therefore education must be a cooperative effort between school and parents if it is to take place outside as well as inside the classroom.
2. The model of Christian conduct is Jesus Christ and the molding of a Christian character must be directed towards the total person: spirit, soul, and body.
3. In pursuance of the nurture of the complete student, clearly defined standards of conduct, dress, and performance must be articulated and maintained.
4. Discipline is essential for the child and is administered in a loving, just, and consistent way. It creates the proper atmosphere for learning and assists each child in developing self-control.
5. The school is not a place for the reformation of children with behavior problems, but a place for the encouragement of children to be ready and eager to learn.
6. The school admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in

- administration of its educational policies, admission policies, financial aid, and athletic and other school administered programs.
7. All subjects are taught to prepare the child to grow into a responsible adult citizen of the world and God's kingdom. The school promotes love for and skill in reading; the value and mastery of mathematics; effective and clear expression in oral and written communication; understanding of science and its creator; wholesome appreciation of and proficiency in the fine arts and literature; respect for and understanding of government, cultures and social issues and their relationship to God; and esteem for and understanding of the Bible and church history.
 8. Respect for the individual student as a unique creation of God, calls for instruction geared to individual needs, skills, and proper academic preparation. A positive self-image, characterized by self-respect and humility, results from successful personal achievement and a clear perception of God's love for each person.
 9. The school will promote in its students a firm and loving respect for the home, God's basic unit of society; the nation, the structure for freedom of thought, worship and association; and the Church, the Body of Christ.
 10. The prayerfully pursued goal of Christian education is a redeemed and joyful child, possessing Christian ethics, God-centered in his thoughts and actions, committed to eternal values and grounded in a powerful faith and a love for his neighbor.

Section 4 - ENROLLMENT & ADMISSION

ADMISSION STEPS

Admission is based on available openings, and requires completion of these steps:

- Step 1 – Be placed on Waiting List
- Step 2 – If a spot opens up – you will be invited to apply (requires setting up a TADS account)
 - Priority placement is given to current staff & families, those living in 30901 & those who qualify for free & reduced lunch***
 - Toddlers= 12 months to 2 years
 - Preschool= age 3 by September 1 (& fully bathroom independent by first day of school)
 - Pre-Kindergarten= age 4 by September 1
 - Transitional Kindergarten= DOB varies
- Step 3 - Submit Financial Information or apply for CAPS
 - This helps determine which, if any, scholarships are available, and determine specific payment plan
- Step 4 - Parent Interview, Tour, Assessment
 - Developmental Assessment for K4 & TK applicants
- Step 5 - Admissions Decision

- Step 6 – Registration & Enrollment
 - Pay \$55 registration fee per child
 - Submit all required forms
 - Child enrollment form
 - Birth certificate, proof of immunization (Form 3231)
 - EED - Form 3300 (K4 & TK only)
 - Medical & Emergency Information
 - Health Care Treatment Plan (if applicable)
 - Allergy & Medicine Information (if applicable)
 - Family Handbook Acknowledgement
- Step 7 - Set up Payment Plan (this secures your child's seat)
 - Pay first week's tuition by the Friday before your first week
 - Pay activity fee per child by September 30 (see page 8)
 - Download Pro Care App

All records and information related to your child or family are considered confidential, and kept safe in a lockable cabinet in the office. Only those employed by the program who have a "need to know" will be able to access this information.

RE-ENROLLMENT

The re-enrollment process for the next school year is the month of March. All families in good standing with the academy are eligible to re-enroll and have first priority to reserve their spot for the next school year.

Section 5 - TUITION & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TUITION

Tuition is charged for the child care program (toddlers), preschool program (K3) and pre-kindergarten & transitional kindergarten program (K4/TK). Families contract for a 10 or 12-month payment schedule (as noted on enrollment form), and tuition is based on a yearly amount. Payment for the contracted schedule is required every week whether or not your child is in attendance. This enables us to pay teachers a stable salary every week all year and secures your child's spot in the academy.

Payment is made weekly through ProCare. **All payments are made electronically via ProCare.** You will arrange this during the payment plan process. No tuition money is dropped off at the academy. ProCare informs the academy of all parents complying with their accounts, and sends alerts of those accounts that are deficient. ProCare will send a weekly invoice to you, and parents are expected to pay for each week of care. A late fee of \$40 will be added when payments are 2 days past the invoice due date. **Payment is due every Friday - in preparation for a full week of care.** If payment has not been made by Tuesday afternoon, your child will need to stay at home. By Friday, if there is still no payment (for the current week & the next week), your child will be withdrawn, and their spot made available to those on the waiting list. Specific tuition details will be explained during the admissions process.

PAYMENT PLAN

Payment is always due in advance with no deduction for any absences, holidays, staff development days or closures due to inclement weather, power outages, or other situations beyond our control. Your weekly tuition payment secures your child's spot at the academy. We are no longer able to offer a tuition vacation week.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Our admissions director will work with each family to determine what type of financial assistance is possible. Resources such as CAPS, military assistance, scholarships, grants, etc, are available to qualified families. We no longer offer a tuition vacation.

ACTIVITY FEE

We are pleased to partner with a variety of programs in the CSRA to offer enrichment activities for every age. These programs will be held between 8:30am-3pm, once a week for a specific month or quarter. These outstanding programs actually cost more than is listed, but we are partnering together to make it reasonable for our families. The one time activity fee offsets the cost of these programs & varies with each age group: Toddlers – \$100 (Soccer Shots); K3/K4 - \$150 (Soccer Shots, Karate, Phinizy Swamp); TK - \$175 (soccer, Phinizy Swamp, plus school supplies & tech fee). Please refer to our Activity FAQ's received during parent interview for more information.

LATE PICK UP FEES

Your child's tuition pays for their care and education at the academy for up to 10 hours per day, which is the maximum number of hours they are allowed to stay at the center. ***A late pick up fee of \$1 per minute will be assessed for children who are picked up after 5:30 pm (after 3:10 for TK)***, which is when the academy closes. Repeated late pick up will result in being withdrawn from the academy.

Section 6 - PROGRAM OVERVIEW

TRANSITIONS

Your child's transition in the academy should be a positive and exciting learning adventure. We will work with you and your child to ensure the smoothest possible transition occurs as new routines and new people are introduced.

- ***New School Year***
 - Typically, children stay in the same class for the school year (August to July) and transition to a new class every August. Before the new school year, the academy is closed for a week to transition, train staff, and prepare for the new classes. Prior to the first day of school, families attend a Back to School Orientation to meet the teacher and get familiar with their new class.
- ***K4 to K5, TK to K5 or 1st Grade***
 - It is our expectation that our K4/TK students will go on to attend kindergarten or first grade at Heritage Academy. The K4/TK teachers work to prepare the children for the K5/1st grade entrance

assessment given in March. In May, K4/TK children enjoy a “promotion parade” and visit to the “big school” to prepare for their transition to kindergarten or 1st grade.

CURRICULUM

- We have 3 toddler classes (18 mos-2 yrs), 2 preschool classes (K3), 2 pre-kindergarten classes (K4), and 1 transitional kindergarten class (TK).
- Our curriculum is developmentally progressive, with an emphasis on reaching age appropriate milestones; our teachers challenge and encourage each child to reach his or her greatest level of achievement. We believe daily routine & structure help children become confident and secure.
- Curriculum for all classes focuses on literacy & language development, social/emotional growth, critical thinking skills, fine & gross motor development, and introduction to the Bible - God's true Word.
- Focus on intentional & purposeful play – toys & activities assist in...
 - Strengthening large & small motor skills
 - Social, emotional & spiritual growth
 - Making new discoveries & problem solving
- Cognitive development gives priority to...
 - Building a strong literacy foundation
 - Being talked to & read to
 - Exploring math & number skills
 - Art & music to stimulate creativity
- Regular assessments to monitor progress & target specific needs
- Preschool/Prekindergarten/Transitional Kindergarten additions:
 - K3 Preschool curriculum also includes music & Spanish once a week, & a monthly story time from the public library
 - Curriculum used in K4 & TK is designed to prepare the children for entering Heritage Academy. It includes Foundations & read alouds, letter recognition & phonograms, and foundational math activities. Also included are daily Bible lessons, *Neuronet* (improves coordination of motor & cognitive skills); once a week Music, Spanish, & PE class; and once a month story time from the public library

PROGRESS MONITORING

The developmental progress of all children will be regularly assessed formally and informally. Observational assessments allow teachers to support each child's specific needs and developmental growth path. End of Theme Assessments are implemented in the pre-kindergarten & transitional kindergarten classes each month. This helps teachers determine skill levels and support needed for all learners, and prepare each child to be ready for Kindergarten/1st grade.

Arrangements are made, in partnership with parents, when assessments indicate a possible need for further evaluation. Our goal is for each child to meet (or exceed) their developmental milestones, and to receive immediate interventions when they do not.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Heritage Early Learning Academy will make every effort to include children with special needs. Staff will assess each child on a case-by-case basis in cooperation with the parents and other professionals, as appropriate. Every effort will be made to make accommodations and adaptations that are reasonably achievable.

REST TIME

All children will have the advantage of a rest period. This will usually be between 12-2pm daily. The academy will provide cribs/cots. ***Children resting on cots may bring a SIMPLE blanket that is no longer than your child - with no straps or pillows - from home.*** Blankets will be sent home every Friday to be washed.

OUTDOOR PLAY

Heritage Early Learning Academy has designed a unique, state of the art outdoor space which includes: a paved path for tricycles, an area to play basketball & soccer and specific sections to promote age appropriate gross motor development. Not only does our state license require that ALL our children play outside for 60-90 minutes daily (which we will divide into morning and afternoon sessions), but it is a vitally important part of growth development. We will play outside even in cold weather - so please always dress your child appropriately. In the event of rain, we do also have an indoor play space to utilize.

Section 7 - PARENT ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIP

PARENT INTERVIEW

Heritage Early Learning Academy understands the value of the parent and child relationship as the family serves as the child's first teacher. For this reason, taking time to get to know the parent(s) is required for admission into the academy.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Submit all forms as required during enrollment.
- Pay tuition as agreed upon in a timely manner.
- Provide all items requested by the teacher
- Notify the academy immediately of any change of address, phone number, contact information, family or job status, etc. Emergency numbers must always be current.
- Notify the academy when your child is/will be absent.
- Follow all procedures outlined in this handbook.
- Set a good example while at the academy - dress appropriately, refrain from cell phone use, no corporal punishment on academy property, speak with respect to all adults and children.
- Under normal conditions, while parents are welcome to visit anytime, please consider your child's reaction if the visit will not result in the child leaving with you - as sometimes this can be very upsetting for young children, and disrupt the rest of the class. (Check with the teacher on the best time to visit; if possible, refrain from visiting during rest time).

- Attend parent-teacher conferences every fall & spring.
- Attend as many class and school events as possible.
- Respond promptly to any phone call or request from the academy.
- Prepare your child for a successful day - with a good night of sleep (10 hours), dressed for the weather, a pleasant ride in the car, etc.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

A WEEKLY report will be provided for every toddler.

A Bi-Monthly report will be provided for every K3 preschooler.

A MONTHLY report, along with an Assessment, will be provided for every K4 and TK student.

Heritage Early Learning Academy uses the Procare school management system. Parents can check their children in and out, view school announcements, message the teacher, view their child's reports & pictures from a home computer or cell phone.

The academy will communicate in the following ways:

- Procare app - announcements, messages, newsletters, progress reports
- Email
- Phone calls
- Website
- Social Media
- Word of mouth

Drop off & pick up times, or class visits are not the times when teachers can give you one on one attention - their focus will be the children. If you have an issue you need to discuss with the teacher, please contact the office about setting up an appointment for a conference, or leave a message for the teacher to call you on her break.

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

To ensure better understanding between the academy and home, there is a parent/teacher conference in the fall and spring. Both fathers and mothers are encouraged to attend. During these conferences, topics of discussion may include the child's progress, developmental milestones, and any other concerns. If the parent or teacher feels that additional conferences are needed throughout the year, those can be arranged with advanced notice.

Conferences will not take place with non-custodial parents or family members, unless the parent or guardian is also present. Student records and related communications are deemed confidential. Teachers and administrators do not divulge any confidential information obtained from observations, conferences, etc, except as may be legally required

o The Watch Me Grow Development Milestones checklists are used as a point of conversation for these conferences. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/watchmetraining/index.html>

o The academy participates in Strengthening Families. Our program incorporates strategies that build the protective factors for families. The protective factors include: parent resilience, social connections, social & emotional competence for children, concrete support in times of need, and knowledge & child development. Heritage Early Learning Academy connects parents to workshops and resources that promote stronger, healthier families.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

We know that the family is a child's first teacher. We value families as partners in the growth & development of children. We welcome and encourage parents and grandparents to be involved at Heritage Early Learning Academy! (A background check is required for regular volunteers). We offer a variety of ways in which families can participate in helping us establish and reach our goals:

- Story Time Readers - come and read to children
- Room Parents - help the teachers organize special class events or parties
- Small Group Helpers - assist small groups of children with games or activities which the teacher will provide
- Playground Supporters - attend a morning or afternoon recess session and engage children in fun outside activities
 - When volunteering, ***please check in at front office & wear a volunteer badge.***
- Fantastic Friday will be held on one Friday of each month with a designated theme. These events are for all the families & the whole school community, and alternate from being held in the morning or the afternoon. The list is included on our calendar.
- Parent Workshops – there are 3 workshops held each year – fall, winter, spring. They are led by our main school's counselor, or members of the community, and address such topics as: raising resilient kids, screen free parenting, managing screen time, healthy habits, etc.

For those desiring to renew their child's Heritage scholarship, attendance at 2 of the 3 parent workshops is required.
- *Regular classroom volunteers will need to complete a fingerprint background check through Bright From the Start.*

Section 8 - MEALS & SUPPLIES

Heritage Early Learning Academy furnishes all toys, books, cribs/cots, and curriculum items. Parents pay a one time activity fee each year, which covers the cost of most other school supplies & technology.

MEALS (*must be able to eat the solid food listed on the menu*)

Two nutritious meals, as well as one snack, are included in your tuition and are prepared each day by a full-time cook, who plans a nutritionally balanced menu. Food prepared at the academy will be properly planned, prepared and portioned according to the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp>). Training in food preparation, health standards, and child nutrition prepares our cook for this important role.

- Breakfast is provided from 7:30-8 am
- ***If you arrive past the time breakfast is served – please make sure your child is done with breakfast before entering the building. It is best to feed them at home.***
- An afternoon snack is provided
- Lunch - ***must be present by 9am in order for enough lunch to be prepared***
 - *Please schedule appointments on one of the half days or days off (see calendar). If your child must go to an appointment after 9am, the office must be notified in advance & a doctor's note must be provided. No admittance during rest time.*

- ***The Quality Rated & National Lunch programs require that NO outside food be brought into the building – therefore, children may not bring breakfast inside or bring a lunch box (except to meet dietary, allergies or cultural needs). Please provide written documentation (ie a doctor's note) if your child must bring a lunch box.***
- Please provide your own milk, if your child cannot drink dairy milk.

FEEDING

Feeding time is used as an opportunity to bond and build community with children. Beginning in the toddler program, children are transitioned and led through a series of self-help skills in order to master feeding themselves. Teachers use meal times as opportunities to engage the children in conversation.

DIAPERING

Diapers will be checked and changed as needed or every one-two hours. Adequate diapering facilities are available in each room housing toddlers. Prior to diapering children, staff will wash hands with warm running water and liquid soap or put on gloves. After children are diapered, staff and children will repeat hand washing. Staff will adequately clean and disinfect the changing table area and re-wash hands or dispose of gloves. Diapering facilities will be maintained safe and sanitary at all times.

SUPPLIES PARENTS PROVIDE:

- Every child is asked to leave an entire change of clothes at school for emergencies.
- Children who are not potty trained provide their own diapering supplies.
 - Please provide enough for at least 1 week at a time.
 - Only DISPOSABLE diapers are allowed.
- When children begin to show interest and are developmentally ready, and with the assistance of the parents, we will be happy to assist in the potty training of your child. It will be the parent's responsibility to provide a daily supply of underwear, and changes of clothes for this endeavor.
 - When your child enters this stage, we will send you our potty training policy.
- For children who sleep on cots, please provide a blanket for rest time.
- ***LABEL EVERYTHING*** with your child's name - their items will be kept in their cubby, but we need to know whose cubby to return belongings to.
- For special events, when you may be asked to send in an item of food from home - send in ***only*** what the teacher asks (we will request healthy items, commercially prepared packaged foods in factory-sealed containers, items that won't pose allergy issues, etc).
- ***For Preschool, Pre-Kindergarten, & Transitional K: Provide a Heritage Early Learning Academy UNIFORM DAILY: khaki bottoms and polo shirt with ha logo (K3 - NAVY, K4 - light blue, TK - white) - more details in Dress Code under General Policies.***

SUPPLIES PARENTS DO NOT PROVIDE:

- **Bookbags** - *Quality Rated Program does not allow these*
- **Cups/water bottles** - *we provide cups & water*
- *No toys from home (unless there is a special show & tell activity).*
- *No car seats or carriers can be left at the academy (there is no room to put them).*
- *No choking hazards - anything that could fall off and/or be a possible choking hazard to your child or other children (ie beads, bows, jewelry, scarves etc).*
- *No food for the class, unless requested by the teacher.*

Section 9 - BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS & GUIDELINES

GOAL

Heritage Early Learning Academy seeks to create an atmosphere where everyone who enters knows they are uniquely designed by our Creator and, therefore, we are all image bearers of God. We all have value and deserve to be treated with respect. Our goal is for each classroom to maintain a positive environment that is engaging, innovative, creative and safe for all.

GUIDANCE

There are several ways you can expect staff to guide children and manage classroom behavior. Staff Development days include training in these areas:

- Preparation - the importance of having a well prepared classroom and plan for each day, each child
- Expectations - regular routines, and clear and consistent instructions promotes security in the children and the classroom
- Prevention - looking for and correcting potential problem areas (ie transitions, standing in line too long, etc)
- Conscious Discipline - a social-emotional learning program that helps teachers guide children to understand their emotions and how to manage them in a healthy way <https://www.lifespan.org/lifespan-living/what-conscious-discipline>
- Growth Mindset - praising the process, persevering, embracing failure, learning from mistakes, staying positive <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH9cGGDAwxk>
- Redirection - wisdom to know when to simply guide to another activity
- Recovery - removing a child acting inappropriately to a space in the room (or office) where they can calm down
- God's Word & prayer - as a private, Christian institution, it is a privilege to be able to direct children to Scripture and pray with them.

EXPECTATIONS

All children, as their age & stage allows, are expected to behave in the following ways:

- Obey & respect all adults
- Treat everyone with kindness
- Do not cause harm to yourself, others or the property

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Recurring disciplinary problems will be addressed with parents and documented. Staff will work with parents to problem solve ways for each child to be successful at the academy. Extreme and/or ongoing behavior problems, which disrupt the learning environment, will not be tolerated and will result in the child being withdrawn from the academy.

Section 10 - HEALTH & SAFETY

DRILLS

For the safety of all children and staff, regular fire, tornado and safety drills will be conducted and explained. Emergency procedures have been developed, are posted in the classrooms, discussed regularly with staff, and will be followed during all drills. Parents will receive an email when a safety drill has been conducted.

Should we need to evacuate our building for any reason, our reunification site will be Heritage Academy gym - across the street - 333 Greene Street. (The gym faces Ellis Street).

ACCIDENTS

While we take every effort and precaution to keep our children safe, minor accidents are inevitable. The majority of the staff are trained in CPR and first aid. When minor incidents (bumps, scrapes, scratches) occur, we will treat the injury. Parents will be notified via Procure, and if necessary, a written incident report form will be sent home on the day it occurred and filed. Parents will be immediately notified of head injuries or any potentially serious injury.

If an emergency injury or illness occurs, you will be contacted as soon as possible. If necessary, the child will be transported by ambulance to Children's Medical Center downtown. Emergency treatment may be provided in accordance to the child's Emergency Action Plan, if time allows. An employee will stay with the child until a parent arrives and longer, if necessary. If your child has a dental emergency, you will be asked to pick your child up to seek appropriate care. All serious injuries will be documented, with a copy filed.

Parents assume the responsibility for any fees incurred in seeking medical treatment.

IMMUNIZATIONS

ALL children are required to have a current immunization record either from the Health Department or family physician (http://tskprep.org/files/2016/06/Blank_Immunization_Form_3231.pdf). All child care centers are required by law (O.C.G.A. Chapter 20-2-771) to have current immunization records on file for each child, and the Richmond County Board of Education conducts an audit of these forms twice a year. An official, notarized affidavit must be on file if immunizations conflict with the religious beliefs of the parents. ***K4/TK children are also required to have an Ear/Eye/Dental form.*** https://dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/related_files/document/DPH_Form_3300.pdf

ILLNESS

For the safety of all, sick children are not allowed to attend the academy. If a child becomes sick at school, they will be kept in the office until the parent picks them up.

NOTIFICATION OF ILLNESS

Parents will be notified immediately when their child has elevated symptoms, medical attention may be required and the child can no longer stay at school. Parents are expected to arrange for the child to be picked up within 30 minutes.

Parents should notify the academy right away if their child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease. The academy will then notify in writing the families of the class(es) that may be impacted.

I NEED TO STAY HOME IF...

I HAVE A FEVER	I AM VOMITING	I HAVE DIARRHEA	I HAVE A RASH	I HAVE HEAD LICE	I HAVE AN EYE INFECTION	I HAVE BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL
						
Temperature of 100° F or higher.	Within the past 24 hours.	Within the past 24 hours.	Body rash with itching or fever.	Itchy head, active head lice. (or ringworm, scabies, etc)	Redness, itching, and /or pus draining from eye.	Hospital stay and/or emergency room visit.

I am ready to go back to school when I am...

Fever free without the assistance of medication for 24 hours (i.e. Tylenol, Motrin, Advil).	Free from vomiting for 24 hours.	Free from diarrhea for 24 hours.	Free from rash, itching or fever. I have been evaluated by my doctor if needed.	Treated with appropriate lice treatment at home. (Need doctor's note if had contagious skin condition).	Free from drainage and/or have been evaluated by my doctor if needed.	Released by my medical provider to return to school.
---	----------------------------------	----------------------------------	---	---	---	--

If your child has strep throat or another bacterial infection, he/she should stay home until the antibiotic has been given for at least 24 hours and your health care provider has given permission for your child to return to school. We encourage you to seek medical attention when your child is sick and to follow your health care provider's recommendations about returning to school and other activities.

MEDICATION

If at all possible, please give all medications to your child at home. If medication must be given during the school day hours, parents must complete an Authorization for Medication Form and hand the form and medication - in its original container - to the OFFICE. ***For the safety of all children, no medication can be kept on the child or in the child's belongings or in the classroom.*** Medication for severe allergies or emergency medication (ie asthma pumps or epi-pens) require a separate Health Care Treatment Plan Form. ***Rescue medication must remain at the academy any time the child is present.*** All medication is kept in a cabinet in the office; time medicine is given, as well as any adverse reactions, will be documented (parents will be called).

ENTRY INTO THE BUILDING

Always enter through the main, front office entrance. Ring the bell & wait to be buzzed in. This is the only door that allows entry. No one enters the building without the knowledge of the administrative staff.

MANDATED REPORTER

The state of Georgia requires that all members of child care institutions report known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. Heritage Early Learning Academy is therefore a mandated reporter, and obligated to report any suspected instances of child abuse or neglect to the local Department of Family and Children Services.

Section 11 - GENERAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE

Children benefit from regular attendance year round, including the summer. Parents will be contacted if a child is absent for 2 or more days. We use child attendance data to identify patterns of absence that might put children at risk. We will develop appropriate strategies to improve individual attendance, as necessary.

Heritage Early Learning Academy is a high quality and sought after program. Regular attendance is expected. Those who are frequently absent will be withdrawn and their spot opened up to our waiting list.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

- Children may arrive as early as 7:30am.
- ***Children MUST be present by 9am in order to attend the Academy***
 - ***Exception: advanced notice with a doctor's note***
 - ***We want to encourage maximum benefit from our program, prepare children for the main school & be good stewards of our resources.***
- Breakfast is provided between 7:30-8 am.
- Children will be encouraged to be independent and be dropped off at the door and walk to class on their own.
- ***8:15 is the start of instruction for K3, K4 & TK & they are expected to be here by that time.***
- TK children must be picked up by 3pm.
- All children are to be picked up by a parent, guardian or authorized adult.
 - Depending on the time of pick up, children may not be in their usual classroom or may be on the playground.
 - Always check in with the front office first when signing the child out.

Do not leave children unattended in your car. Heritage Early Learning Academy is not responsible for any damage that may occur to your vehicle while on the property.

DRESS CODE STANDARDS

- Dress all children in age appropriate clothing that is easy to get on and off.
- Wear clothes appropriate for active play.
- Teachers plan a variety of educational, hands-on activities and sometimes clothing may become messy, soiled or dirty.
 - Comfortable, inexpensive clothing is best.
 - Wet clothing (& if possible, soiled clothing) will be bagged and sent home to be washed.
- Tennis shoes/sneakers/closed toe shoes and socks are best to be worn every day - this will allow children to have stability when walking and playing on various surfaces throughout the day (no flip flops, sandals, heels or rollers).
- Dress for the weather - wear the correct outer garments for the temperature outside.

- On cold days, this includes: coat, hat & gloves - LABELED with name.
- **Preschool, K4, Transitional K wear a required uniform:**
 - Khaki bottoms - shorts, pants, skirt/skort, jumper
 - Polo shirt with our ha logo (short or long sleeved)
 - K3 - NAVY only
 - K4 - LIGHT BLUE only
 - TK - WHITE only
 - ***Tshirts on Wheels will embroider our logo on your shirt for \$8/shirt. Contact Bobby Williams - 706-414-7732***
 - ***The office will organize drop off/pick ups periodically throughout the year (specifically August/January)***
 - Inquire about gently used uniforms - we often have some available - at no charge.

Heritage Early Learning Academy is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing. There is a lost & found in the front office.

TRANSPORTATION

Children will not participate in extracurricular activities that require transportation of any kind. Special guests or presentations will be conducted throughout the year at the academy.

MEDIA RELEASE

Regular pictures and videos are taken at Heritage Early Learning Academy to document the experiences of the children and raise awareness in the community. ***By signing tuition agreement & completing the enrollment application, you give permission for your child's photograph or video to be used for marketing purposes. (If you wish to have your child excluded, please contact the front office).***

SCHOOL CLOSING

In case of severe weather or mechanical breakdown, the academy may be closed, starting time delayed (due to icy conditions), or an early dismissal may be required. Often, but not always, if Richmond County schools are closed, we will also be closed. Sometimes Richmond County delays or closes schools for reasons that would not impact us. In the event of the academy closing, we will seek to notify our families through our parent portal, as well as by text, email, our website & social media. This is another reason why it is very important we always have current, updated family contact information.

Section 12 - STUDENT ACTIVITIES

CLASS PARTIES

Seasonal and holiday parties are encouraged. During the month of October, the season of fall will be celebrated, but we will not focus on Halloween or have a costume party. At Christmas and Easter our focus will be a spiritual one - focusing on who Jesus is and what He did - rather than focusing on Santa or the Easter Bunny. Your child's teacher will give direction about how these holidays and events will be celebrated and how you can participate.

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are special days for children. To celebrate at school, please make plans in advance with your child's teacher. We request healthy, pre-packaged items – the office can provide a list. ***A book donation to the class is a great way to share your child's special day!***

NO birthday invitations will be handed out at school. School is not the place to drop off presents - save this for home. Balloons are not allowed, as they can pop and become a choking hazard.

FANTASTIC FRIDAYS

Fantastic Friday will be held on one Friday of each month with a designated theme. These events are for all the families & the whole school community, and alternate from being held in the morning or the afternoon. The list is included on our calendar.

CHAPEL

TK students will attend weekly chapel at the main school every Wednesday from 8:30-9. Once a month K4 students will have a chapel service (typically the first Thursday of the month). This will include worship songs and a message from the Bible. It will be held in a K4 classroom.

Items in this handbook are subject to change - parents will be notified of any changes. Unusual circumstances, such as a Covid pandemic, could alter tuition and would prevent many of the interactive events from taking place as described, and may also impact drop off & pick up procedures.

Section 13 – CALENDAR – *We closely follow the Heritage main school calendar.*



AUGUST

Mon-Fri, Aug 5-9 *Staff Training & Transition - ACADEMY CLOSED*

AUGUST

Mon, Aug 12 8:30-10–*NEW Family Orientation; 10-12 drop in Returning Families-Meet the Teacher*

Tue, Aug 13 *First Day of School*

Fri, Aug 23, during dismissal *FANTASTIC FRIDAY – Happy Birthday HELA (treat served)*

Fri, Aug 30 ***HALF DAY*** – *ACADEMY CLOSSES at 12 for Labor Day weekend*

SEPTEMBER

Mon, Sept 2 *Labor Day – ACADEMY CLOSED*

Fri, Sep 20, 10-11 *FANTASTIC FRIDAY – Grandparents Celebration*

OCTOBER (parent conferences scheduled Oct. 7-24 - teachers will contact you)

Fri, Oct 11 ***HALF DAY*** – *ACADEMY CLOSSES at 12 for Fall Break*

Mon-Tue, Oct 14-15 *Fall Break – ACADEMY CLOSED*

Fri, Oct 25, 3-4pm *FANTASTIC FRIDAY – Family Fall Fun Fest*

NOVEMBER

Fri, Nov. 8 ***HALF DAY*** – *ACADEMY CLOSSES at 12*

Fri, Nov. 10 *Veteran's Day – ACADEMY CLOSED*

Fri, Nov 22, 11-12 *FANTASTIC FRIDAY – Gratitude Luncheons with class*

Mon-Fri, Nov 20-24 *Thanksgiving Break – ACADEMY CLOSED*

DECEMBER

Fri, Dec 20, 1-2pm *FANTASTIC FRIDAY – Christmas Program & Jesus Birthday Party*
Dismiss after program

Mon-Fri, Dec 23-27 *Christmas Break – ACADEMY CLOSED*

JANUARY

Wed, Jan 1 *New Year's Day - ACADEMY CLOSED*

Mon, Jan 6 *Staff Development – ACADEMY CLOSED*

Fri, Jan 17 **HALF DAY** – ACADEMY CLOSSES at 12 for MLK weekend

Mon, Jan 20 **MLK Day** – ACADEMY CLOSED

Fri, Jan 24-during drop off **FANTASTIC FRIDAY** – “We Love our Parents” Hot Chocolate Bar

FEBRUARY

Fri, Feb 14 **HALF DAY** – ACADEMY CLOSSES at 12pm; **FANTASTIC FRIDAY** - Valentine’s Dance 5-7pm, main school gym

Mon, Feb 17 **President’s Day** – ACADEMY CLOSED

Mon Feb 26-Fri Mar 1 **K4/TK entrance testing for Heritage Academy**

MARCH (Re-enrollment for 24-25 school year – Mar 1-Apr 1; parent conferences scheduled Mar 3-21)

Mar 3-7 **Fantastic Dr. Seuss Week** - Celebration of Reading – parents sign up to read to child’s class

Fri, Mar 7 **HALF DAY** – ACADEMY CLOSSES at 12

Mon, Mar 10 **Staff Development** – Academy Closed

APRIL (Scholarship distribution – Apr 10-May 26 – for those who completed Re-enrollment & attended 2 parent workshops)

Mon-Mon, Apr 7-14 **Masters Week/Spring Break** - ACADEMY CLOSED

Fri, Apr 18 **Good Friday** - ACADEMY CLOSED

Fri, Apr 25, 10:30am-12 pm **FANTASTIC FRIDAY** – Spring Fling Family Picnic

MAY

Wed, May 15, 8:30-10 am **K4/TK – Promotion Parade** (attend Heritage Academy Chapel)

Friday, May 22 **Last Day for TK & 10 month students**

Fri, May 23 **Staff Development** – Academy Closed

Mon, May 26 **Memorial Day** - ACADEMY CLOSED

JUNE

Thu, June 19 **Juneteenth** – ACADEMY CLOSED

Fri, June 27, 3-4 pm **FANTASTIC FRIDAY** – Mothers-Daughters Spa; Fathers-Sons Gym

JULY /AUG

Thur-Fri, July 3-4 **Fourth of July Break** – ACADEMY CLOSED

Fri, Aug 1 **FANTASTIC FRIDAY** – Splash Day & Ice Cream (**Last day for 12 month students**)