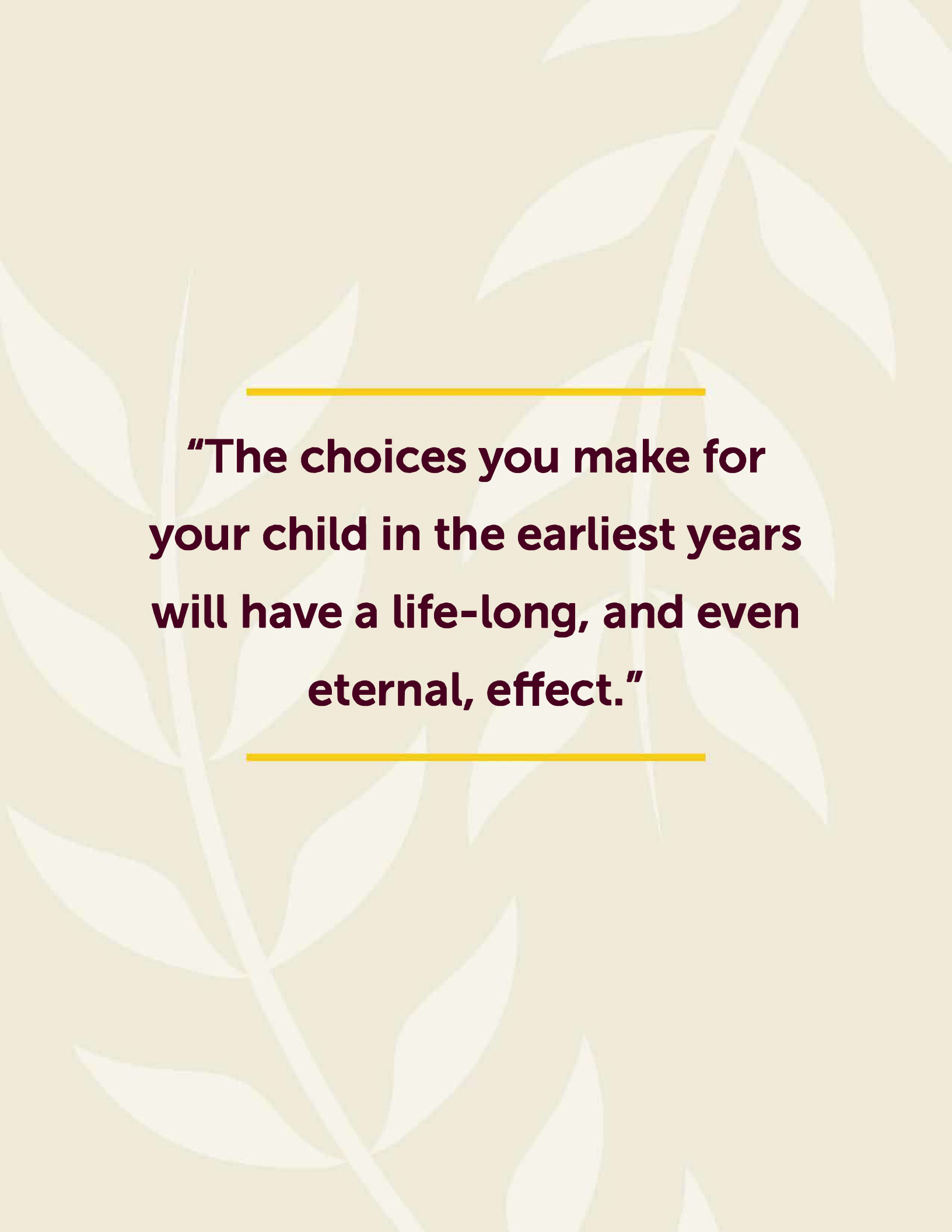




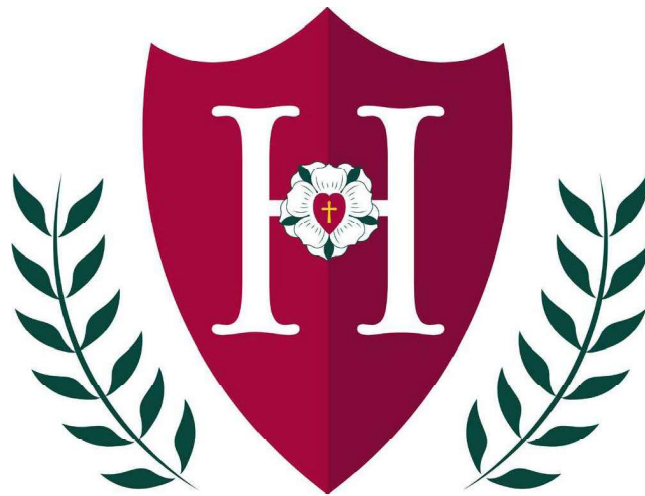
# Parent Handbook

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**“The choices you make for  
your child in the earliest years  
will have a life-long, and even  
eternal, effect.”**

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# HOPE

ACADEMY

A school where children  
LEARN to LOVE and LOVE to LEARN

*5350 Providence Road, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23464*  
*757-424-4894 | [hopevabeach.org](http://hopevabeach.org)*

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## Thank You



# Welcome

Dear Family,

Thank you for placing your trust in Hope Academy. We want to assure you our school is a safe and nurturing environment for learning, which enables children to grow through fun, intentional and challenging activities. Ultimately, we strive to create an active Christian community that fosters friendships and creates a supportive network.

We seek to form a partnership with you to advance learning and healthy development of your child. You are welcome in the center at any time. If you wish to join your child for lunch, observe your child in the classroom, or speak with the teachers, center management, or other families, just let us know and we will be happy to include you.

Enrolling in school is a big change for your child - and for you. Our teachers and center administrators are very experienced in welcoming new families and will work with you to make the process as seamless as possible.

The following are some suggestions for easing the transition for you and your child:

- **Visit the center with your child before his or her start day.** On one of those visits, let your child explore his or her new classroom while you step out for 15 to 20 minutes. This time will allow your child to associate your departure with a return, and it will allow you to observe your child at play with other children.
- **Establish a routine of talking with staff and settling in slowly.** This will tell your child that you feel the classroom is a good place to be, not a place from which you want to hurry away.
- **Bring a family photograph for your child to look at during the day.**
- **Say goodbye to your child rather than slipping out.** Your child will recognize that although you are leaving, you will be back.



We value close communication between families and teachers. We look forward to getting to know you by offering you and your child a safe, caring, and joyful educational journey.

Sincerely,  
Hannah Ruth Passmore

# About Us



Excellent education and care requires adults who nurture children and help them to learn and grow. By establishing and maintaining open and ongoing communication with families, we are able to strengthen the ties that connect the home with Hope Academy and enhance the individual development of the children. We desire to have a significant and positive influence by providing a program of the highest quality, giving children the foundation they need to reach their full potential in Christ.

## Philosophy

God created your child's brain to have endless capability to learn, form behaviors, and develop understandings about life that will last a lifetime. All children learn by experiencing, interacting with and testing their environment. With this knowledge it could be said that these years are the critical time to instill Christian values, teach and mold behaviors, and set the stage for life. This is why the Bible says to "start off a child the way they should go and they will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6.

Very young children need not only to be provided their basic needs, they require coaching and guidance, and an environment that is designed to provide the right learning opportunities which will foster their giftings. "For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well." Psalm 139: 13-14. The choices you make for your child in the earliest years will have a life-long, and even eternal, effect.



## Purpose

Hope Academy provides an environment whereby children from birth to school-age can grow, learn, and meet Jesus.

## Staff

You can feel safe and confident in the staff of wonderful people employed here at Hope. Our teachers have years of experience, a formal education, and a genuine love for Jesus. Teachers have a healthy understanding of how to manage a classroom, and how to help children become to best they can be. All staff are background checked by local, state and federal screenings and undergo a yearly physical exam..

## Licensing Information

Information about the licensing of Child Day Programs by the Department of Social Services can be found at <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/children>.

## Religious Affiliation

Hope Academy is a ministry of Hope Lutheran Church, a religious denomination.

## Capacity

Hope Academy follows VCAPE regulations for class size. Our capacity by age group is:

- 6 weeks old - 2.5 years old - 45 students
- 2.5 years old - kindergarten - 63 students
- Schools Out Ages 5-12 - 20 students
- Summer Camp - 40 students/week



# Christian Education

Selecting the right place during early childhood might be the most important thing a parent will ever do.

Research continues to show more about how children learn and the importance of building strong values early. Sharing the day with loving people who instill strong Christian beliefs and encourage behaviors needed for a productive life will lead to a stronger child ready to face the world's challenges. At Hope, we provide an environment where children will find their spiritual self. In doing so, each child will be closer to discovering what God has created them to become.

Specifically, children will gain:

- Strong spiritual, emotional, mental, physical and social skills
- Natural development in areas of responsibility, creativity, independence, forgiveness, life submission and obedience
- The value of loving God, neighbor, and country
- An understanding of society at large, and how to navigate within it as a Christian individual
- Opportunities to form a strong foundation in Christian faith, and ultimately salvation through Jesus

## Chapel Time

Chapel is held every Wednesday at 9:30 a.m. in the Main Sanctuary for all children. Time is taken to prepare a solid age relevant and biblically appropriate lesson for children in these age groups.



# Admissions & Registration



Prior to enrollment, the following must be submitted for each child:

- ☐ Preschool Registration Form
- ☐ Documentation of immunizations
- ☐ Annual Physical Exam Form
- ☐ Proof of identity and age.\*

No child will be admitted without these completed forms. See the Director for assistance with this if needed.

\*This can be done by presenting a birth certificate, birth registration, notification of birth, passport, or copy of the placement agreement. We are not required to keep the proof of identity but the state requires that we document that we have viewed this information.



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# Hope Academy Schools

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# **The Lower School**



# Infant Toddler Program

Infants and Toddlers are offered a curriculum, just as all children are here at Hope Academy.

Children at this age are changing minute by minute. Our goal is to provide an amazing environment for them to grow and to learn, while modeling the love of Christ in all we do and say.

## Our Curriculum

We utilize a combination of Creative Curriculum and One in Christ along with supplemental materials through the LCMS.

## Our Programs

Infants 6 weeks to 16 months can attend our Monday – Friday full-time program.

Toddlers aged 17 months through the 3 year old class may select three, four, or five days per week.



# Infant & Toddler Tuition

## Infant & Toddler Tuition Rates

Lower School	Duration of Care
Infant, Weekly	Up to 10 Hours Daily
Toddler, 3-Day	Up to 10 Hours Daily
Toddler, 4-Day	Up to 10 Hours Daily
Toddler, 5-Day	Up to 10 Hours Daily

Infants are children 6 weeks old to 16 months old.  
Infants are billed weekly, and tuition is automatically drafted on the first day of each week.  
Part-time rates are not available.

Toddlers are children age 17 months to 3 years old and toilet independent.  
Their tuition is billed weekly, and tuition is automatically drafted on the first day of each week..  
Three-day schedules to five-day schedules are set at enrollment and are subject to availability.  
Changes can only be made through the office and require approval from the Director.





Infant brains are wired to learn. Here at Hope Academy, infants will be provided the environment and opportunity to:

- Begin rolling, crawling and pulling up to explore the environment, which demonstrates executive function skills
- Begin to pay attention to people and things by watching, listening and responding to them
- Use their senses to investigate the world around them
- Repeatedly perform an action attempting to achieve the same outcome, demonstrating persistence, which indicates critical-thinking skills
- Develop communication skills by reacting to, recognizing and responding to verbal language
- Make simple vocal sounds and movements to express themselves
- Vocalize, babbling and forming consonant and vowel combinations
- Use fine motor skills and hand movements to hold and manipulate objects intentionally
- Calm and comfort themselves when supported by a parent or caregiver, which demonstrates the development of social-emotional intelligence
- Respond to, and engage in, caretaking routines with a familiar adult
- Form and maintain a secure attachment
- Attempt new and varied movements, including walking across the room, walking backward and marching

## What to Bring

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- ☐ Filled bottles with the date, time to feed, and child's name labeled clearly
- ☐ Diapers
- ☐ Wipes
- ☐ Diaper creams
- ☐ Non-table foods (purées, baby cereal, etc.)
- ☐ Enough clothing for four changes including shoes after three months
- ☐ Pacifier if applicable
- ☐ Crib sheet and blanket

*\*Label all of your belongings using a tag or tape, with child's first and last name.*



Never leave medications in a diaper bag. All medications brought into the school must be accompanied by the proper form. Please see the director for more information. Don't leave cash or checks in your bag. Dangerous items such as scissors, etc., must be left at home. Hope Academy provides a USDA compliant morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack at no extra charge to all children needing normal meal plans.

Lots of time cuddling and talking to your baby helps to instill trust. They provide a healthy early learning environment for movement, exploration and communication. Toys and

books help your baby develop at his or her own pace. Songs and stories encourage language acquisition and passing balls and playing games develops your child's motor skills. All staff exhibit Christ-like attitude, modeling love and Christian living to the infants.

Teachers work with the parents to develop the child's daily schedule, including nap times, play times and feeding times. All programs are customized to your child's progress, needs and age.

Your toddler is constantly testing the environment with a “fearless” spirit. Through smells, sounds, tastes, sights, and touching, toddlers are growing and learning every moment.

Teachers of toddlers are solid Christian individuals who model and encourage proper Christ-like behaviors each day.

## Toddlers will learn by:

- Singing or reciting a song or rhyme that contains alliteration
- Further developing communication skills by demonstrating an understanding of positional words such as over, under, up and down
- Grasping the writing tool using the fist or the whole hand and beginning to make precise lines or scribbles
- Describing and finding meaning in what they write
- Demonstrating a growing vocabulary by identifying people, animals and objects with words
- Participating in simple back-and-forth conversational exchanges
- Using teachers or classmates as resources when solving a problem or adopting a new solution and applying it both incorporate creativity and critical-thinking skills
- Imitating the way a classmate uses a toy or tool and finding a creative way to use the materials demonstrate executive function skills.
- Reacting and responding appropriately to the wants and needs of teachers and classmates, which are signs of social-emotional intelligence
- Showing facial expressions and responding to favored peers by moving close to them or hugging them
- Attempting to accomplish routine tasks independently, which further develops critical-thinking skills
- Separating from their parents without becoming upset and joining an activity with a familiar caregiver.



## What to Bring

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- ☐ Diapers
- ☐ Wipes
- ☐ Pillow and blanket (crib sized)
- ☐ Diaper creams
- ☐ Enough clothing for four changes including shoes
- ☐ Pacifier if applicable

*\*Label all of your belongings using a tag or tape, with child's first and last name.*



Never leave medications in a diaper bag. All medications brought into the school must be accompanied by the proper form. Please see the director for more information. Don't leave cash or checks in your bag. Dangerous items such as scissors, etc., must be left at home.

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# **The Upper School**

# Preschool & Kindergarten

Preschool and Kindergarten children should be dropped off no later than 8:30 am on the days school is in session.

## Preschool Classrooms

In order to be admitted, children must be between the ages of 3 and 5 years. In addition, children must be toilet independent to be eligible. Pull-ups are not acceptable; children must be fully toilet trained, needing minimal assistance from teachers. If your child is not toilet trained by the first day of school, they are not ready for the preschool program. We will schedule the child in the Lower School.

## Kindergarten Classrooms

To be admitted, children must be 5 years old by September 30th. Our kindergarten program has been a part of the school for many years, and is widely respected. Children who attend will be provided a rigorous curriculum full of exciting activities, provided by experienced staff.

Kindergarten will dismiss at 3:00 p.m. Children remaining at the school past these times need to be scheduled to stay in our “School’s Out” Program.

Hope “School’s Out” program opens at 6:30 a.m. and is available for children pre-scheduled to attend. See page 24 for additional information on our School’s Out program.



# Preschool & Kindergarten Tuition

## Preschool - 3 years Old by September 30

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Day	Duration of Care	Lunch
Full-time, Three Set Days	Up to 10 hours daily	Yes
Full time, Monday-Friday	Up to 10 hours daily	Yes

## Pre-Kindergarten - 4 Years Old by September 30

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Day	Duration of Care	Lunch
Full time, Monday-Friday	Up to 10 hours daily	Yes

## Kindergarten

---

Day	Duration of Care	Lunch
Monday-Friday	8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Yes
Full time, Monday-Friday	Up to 10 hours daily	Yes



Young learners continue their journey of exploration and discovery in the preschool classroom.

Teachers help them apply their developing literacy and math skills through purposeful, planned learning experiences. The lesson plans allow children to learn from their teachers and from interactions with other children.

## This private program focuses on:

- Demonstrating executive function skills by thoughtfully developing a strategy for performing a task and then finishing it
- Forming a beginning understanding of who they are created to be in Christ
- Classifying objects by color, size or shape and then reclassifying them by a distinctly different characteristic, which helps to develop critical-thinking skills
- Using math concepts by counting from 10 to 20 accurately and by grouping and regrouping objects
- Remaining focused on a task even when other activities are going on around them
- Further developing critical-thinking skills by solving problems and proposing alternate solutions without needing to experiment with or use every possible solution
- Demonstrating social-emotional intelligence by controlling their emotional responses and considering a friend's idea when it is different from their own
- Offering to share materials and space with a classmate without encouragement or prompting from an adult
- Beginning to suggest solutions to social problems in the class, which exhibits critical-thinking skills and social-emotional intelligence
- Having longer-lasting friendships with more than one classmate and relating to other peers with the same interests

## Pre-Kindergarten



Our Kindergarten Prep (Pre-Kindergarten) program helps children magnify skills in core pre-academic areas such as literacy, math, and science, as well as in other essential areas such as art, social and emotional well-being, Christian knowledge and relationship and opportunities for behavioral development.

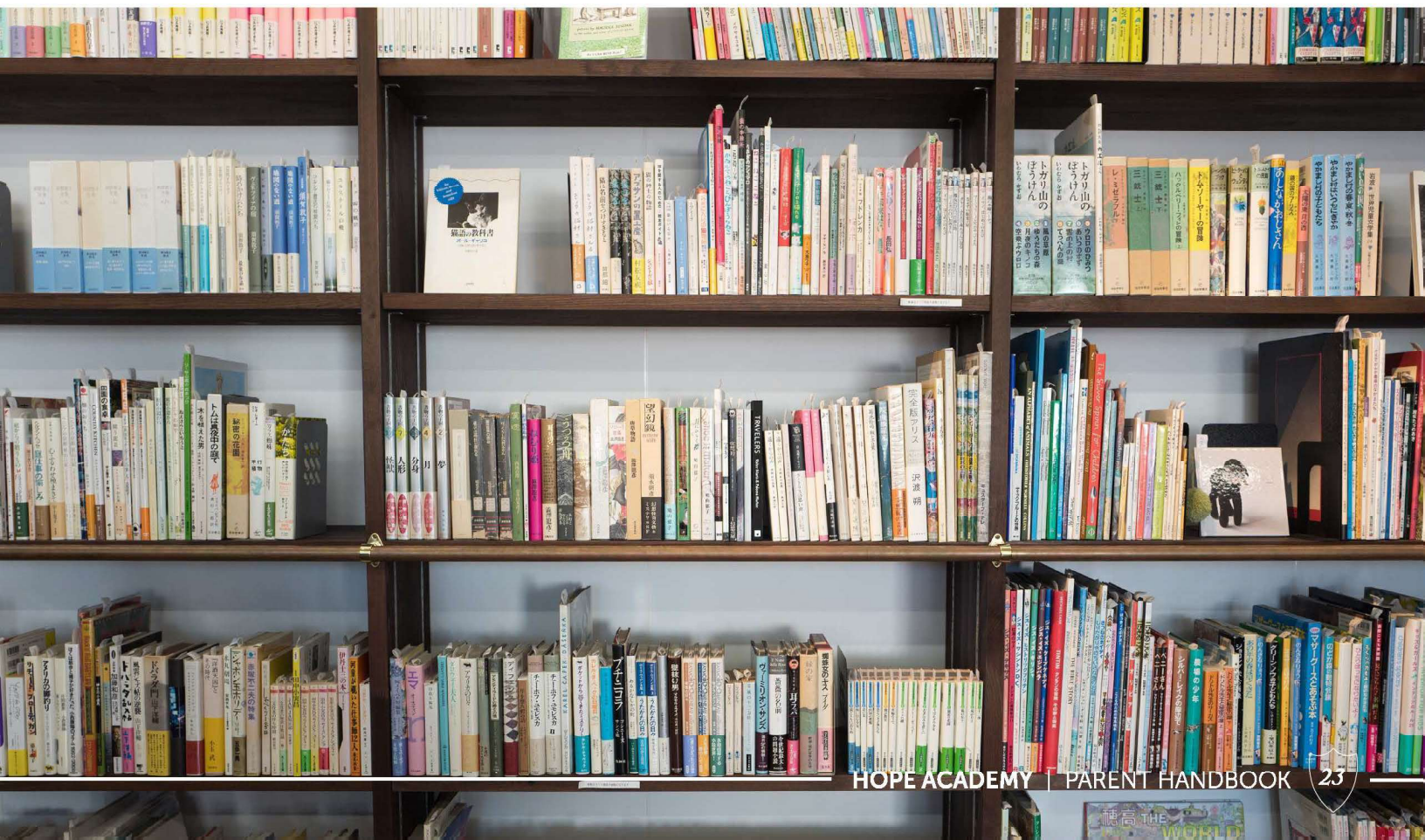
Students are exposed to a structured, diverse array of learning activities to further develop creative thinking, complex problem solving, empathetic collaboration, curious investigation, and astute decision making.



# Kindergarten

Schools in the area have a range of expectations for a child's social and academic performance.

All academic settings expect first graders to possess strong science, technology, engineering and math skills. Our school also firmly believes in allowing young children to explore the arts in order to develop a wider opportunity to discover talents and gifts. For this reason, Hope Academy has developed a challenging and inspiring curriculum focusing on STEM, reading and language skills, with a large amount of special activities such as music, drama, creative art, and much more. The classroom setting is structured, character focused, and sets high expectations for a child's best effort concerning work ethics and behavior. Teachers integrate Bible knowledge, spiritual growth, and everyday moral expectations, building a strong early childhood foundation that will carry our children through life.





# School's Out



## School's Out Before & After School Program

Before School: 6:30am – 7:50am After School: 2:40pm – 6:00pm. On days your child does not have school, you may make arrangements in advance with Hope Academy to provide all day care. We do not provide sick or other care when your child's school is in service.

## Elementary Schools Served

All times are approximate and depend on traffic, weather, and unforeseen issues at each stop.

	School Begins	Bus Leaves	Drop Time	School Ends	Pick Up	Drop at Hope
Fairfield	8:05	7:35	8:00	2:40	2:40	2:50

## Schedule

- 3:15 Snack
- 3:30 Homework / Games
- 4:00 Outside / Inside Play
- 4:30 Craft
- 5:00 Free Play
- 6:00 Close

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# Summer Camp

# Summer Camp

Registration opens February 1.

## Camp Discover

Camp Discover is for rising 1st and 2nd graders. Our campers will have a great time this summer changing from one theme to another each week! Camp includes morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack.

## Camp Explore

Camp Explore is for our rising 3rd-5th graders. Campers have the opportunity to choose the weeks they attend based on the weekly themes, which change each year!

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Day	Duration of Care	Lunch
Full-time	Up to 10 hours daily	Yes





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# Hope Academy Policies

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# Communication

## Family Communication

We are committed to creating a strong home and center connection by developing a process of open, honest communication with you regarding your child's development and experience at the school. This includes a continual exchange of information between you and the staff and administration.

## Procare Daily Activity

It is important that everyone who cares for your child has a sense of his or her daily experience, both at home and in the center. Staggered scheduling of staff makes Procare a critical communications link. The daily activity posted, which can include pictures, notes, and more will give you a sense of your child's day and keep you informed about his or her experiences.

## Notice Boards

Bulletin boards may be located throughout the center (in the foyer, hallways, and classroom entrances) to communicate news, daily events, staff notes, holiday closing dates, center visitors, etc.

## Procare messages

A message through, when necessary, is also a wonderful tool to provide families with communication about your child's experience at school.

We begin documenting your child's learning journey at the initial enrollment. This effort continues through daily communication, observations, recording learning experiences, and assessing your child's development.





## Important information

When the school has information to share with all families, this information could be e-mailed to you via the center or classroom distribution list or left on the check-in/out area.

## Family Referral Program

We are thankful when a family who is satisfied with their child's experience tells another family. To reward families for their consideration, you are eligible to earn unlimited tuition credits. When an enrolled family refers a new family and the new family enrolls, the referring family receives a tuition credit after the new family has been enrolled for 90 days.

## Progress Reports & Conferences

It is important that we communicate well and clearly. Written Ages and Stages Questionnaires twice during the year (October and May) are provided. If a Parent/Teacher Conference is desired, please contact the director in order to get it scheduled.

Although arrival and departure time may be the most convenient time to discuss concerns with the teachers, it is imperative that teachers stay focused on the children during that time. Keep conversations with teachers brief during those times, but feel free to schedule a meeting through the director during business hours for uninterrupted time.



# Arrival, Departure & Scheduling

## Arrival & Departure

Upon enrollment, turning in all paperwork and paying a registration fee, families will be entered into the system and will receive a code for signing their children in and out. Hope Academy offers many attendance options for families to choose from. In general, this facility is open from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm Monday through Friday, excluding calendar noted holidays and unforeseen emergency closure days.

Parents must park in the parking lot closest to the school entrance. All children in the parking lot must be holding the hand of an adult. See map at the end of the handbook for parking details.

Parents must walk children into the building, sign in on the Sign-In/Out Ipad, and make sure a staff member knows of the drop-off.

At the end of the day, enter the building, sign out on the Sign In/Out Ipad and be sure a staff member knows you are leaving.

Children will only be released to individuals you have designated, in writing, to do so. If any child is to be picked up by an individual other than designated, a written note to that effect should accompany the child on that day, and the person picking up the child should have some form of identification. A charge of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed for parents/guardians whose children are in our care for longer than 10 hours. Continual late pick up can result in loss of enrollment. If a child is picked up after 6:00, a charge of \$25.00 will be assessed in addition to the \$1.00 per minute charge.

## Days and Times of Operation

A calendar is provided in all enrollment packets. Please see the calendar to show what days we are open and closed. Planned closings will be posted in advance.

## Changes in Schedule

Changing a child's normally scheduled days of attendance is not permitted. Under exceptional circumstances and with the advance approval of the Director such changes may be made. Reserved days can be increased for the remainder of the year by permission, if there is space available. Schedule changes due to special circumstances are approved only by the Director at least two weeks in advance.



# Family Visitation

## Safety Note

Families of enrolled children are welcome to visit at any time during the day. However, this “open door” policy may not be used to supplement a custody or visitation schedule. In addition to security measures promoting indoor and outdoor safety on center grounds, we provide a security system and secured access, ensuring that access is available only to parents/ guardians and authorized personnel. To make certain that the center is kept as secure as possible, we ask that you not allow others to “piggyback” on your entrance or upon your departure.

## Family Involvement

Family involvement encompasses family partnership groups and committees, volunteering, family education, and special events. We believe the key to family involvement is giving families a variety of ways to be involved, if they are able, in the life of the center.

## Visiting Your Child

Parents or guardians are welcome at any time (unless prohibited by the court.)

NOTE: Section 63.2-1813 of the Code of Virginia states that a custodial parent or guardian shall be admitted to any child day program. Such right of admission shall apply only while the child is in the child day program.

## Parental Involvement

Many opportunities exist for parents or guardians to become involved, including sharing a special skill or talent, accompanying children on field trips, providing snacks and food for special celebrations, etc. Any parents or guardians who are interested in helping in these ways should contact the child’s teacher.





## Family-Teacher Partnership

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The family-teacher partnership helps children build a positive attitude toward themselves, toward language, literacy, and all other areas of the curriculum.

The best teacher and family partnerships are based on frequent opportunities to share information. You can strengthen your family's role as your child's first and most important teacher and share in learning by participating in activities at home as well as at the center.

The following are some of the many ways you can be involved:

- The center's open-door policy welcomes and encourages you to call or visit at any time.
- Christmas Program, Fall Festival, Parent Night, and other options to share in your child's experience at Hope Academy are organized throughout the year.
- Classroom bulletin boards, center calendars, posted planning forms, documentation of your child's learning, newsletters, and conferences happen regularly.
- We encourage you to share your ideas and concerns with center management and staff at any time.

# Fees & Withdrawing

## Policy Concerning Fees

Refunds are not given for missed days. There is a discount for families enrolling a second child. A \$175.00 non-refundable enrollment fee is required of all families. An opening held longer than 6 weeks will require fees paid in full to equal one week's tuition. This tuition will be used to pay the first bill. Any fees paid in lieu of enrollment are not refundable.

## Reimbursement Policy

If a child is absent from the center for any reason, (such as holidays, inclement weather, sick or vacation days, or other state regulated or administrative closings), no fees will be reimbursed.

## Transitions

We take great effort to make transitions as special and as smooth as possible for children and their families. This is done by slowly integrating children into a new program and by customizing care and communication throughout the transition period.

During a transition, current and future teachers meet with you, and your child is gently integrated into the new environment through a series of visits to the new classroom. Special attention is given to your family to support you through these changes. Please let your teacher know what communication form works best for you in order to maintain ongoing dialogue throughout your child's transition.

## Withdrawing

In the event that you need to withdraw your child, a minimum of 2 weeks notice is required. Failure to provide such notice will result in a charge for the 2 weeks.

In the event that a child requires more attention than we can provide within our design, Hope Academy reserves the right to refuse and/or terminate enrollment. Parents/guardians will be informed of the reasons for termination.

We will communicate our concerns as they arise and do what we can to assist the parents/guardians.

Parents/guardians are also expected to support the procedures and regulations as well. All of our standards, rules, policies and procedures are designed to ensure a child's wellbeing. If a parent is unable to support and cooperate with our policies and procedures, we reserve the right to refuse service. Examples of such behaviors include, but are not limited to, habitual tardiness on departure and failure to pay fees in a timely fashion, yelling or abusive language directed at staff.





# Play Policies

## Toys from Home

Please do not bring personal toys or books to school (except on show and tell days - once per week).

## Clothing

Dress casually in seasonally appropriate clothing and in rubbersoled, well-fitting shoes. We play in dirt and sand, use finger paints, water colors and glue. Stains are common; please don't let good clothes be ruined.

Extra clothing for each child should be stored at school. All clothing should be labeled.

During winter months each child will need warm coats/jackets, hats, and mittens. We go outside for fresh air most every day, weather permitting.

# Discipline Policy

## Positive Guidance

Young children are striving for understanding, independence and self-control. Children learn by exploring, experimenting and testing the limits of their environment and experiencing the consequences of their behavior. In this way, they begin to discover their own limits and appropriate assertiveness. Children learn self-control and how the world works in a relaxed, positive atmosphere of support and understanding that recognizes the child's struggle toward independence.

Behavioral guidance is viewed by adults as an important aspect of teaching and learning. Through positive guidance of behaviors and through modeling good behaviors, staff members help children to feel good about themselves and to behave in responsible ways.

Part of the curriculum structure includes teaching children the manners appropriate for school. All discipline is constructive in nature and includes techniques such as:

- Using limits that are fair, consistently applied, and appropriate and understandable for the child's level providing children with reasons for limits
- Giving positively worded direction
- Modeling and redirecting children to acceptable behavior
- Helping children to constructively express their feelings and frustrations to resolve conflict
- Arranging equipment, materials, activities, and schedules in a way that promotes acceptable behavior
- Natural and logical consequences are used to motivate and empower children to make responsible decisions about their behavior.
- Behaviors such as cooperating, helping, negotiating, and problem solving are encouraged

There are times when behaviors are not easily modified. When this occurs, the child is removed from the activity and has a one-on-one talk with staff regarding the behavior, including what the child might do differently and alternative behaviors next time. If the behavior is not corrected after several attempts, the parents will be called to talk to the Director and staff involved.



At last resort, or upon threatening and/or violent behavior toward others, children can be expelled from Hope Academy.

The following methods of discipline are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment, including spanking.
- Shaking, jerking, squeezing, or negative physical aggression.
- Shaming, humiliation, or verbal abuse.
- Labeling, such as indicating a child is a “bad” girl or boy, or otherwise implying that he or she, rather than the behavior, is the problem.
- Using bribes, false threats, or false choices.
- Withholding of food or drink, outdoor time, or unrelated activities (e.g., special events) as punishments.
- Retaliating or doing to the child what he or she did to someone else.
- Punishment for soiling, wetting, or not using the toilet.



# Confidentiality

## Handling of Confidential Information in Incidences of Children's Aggressive Behavior

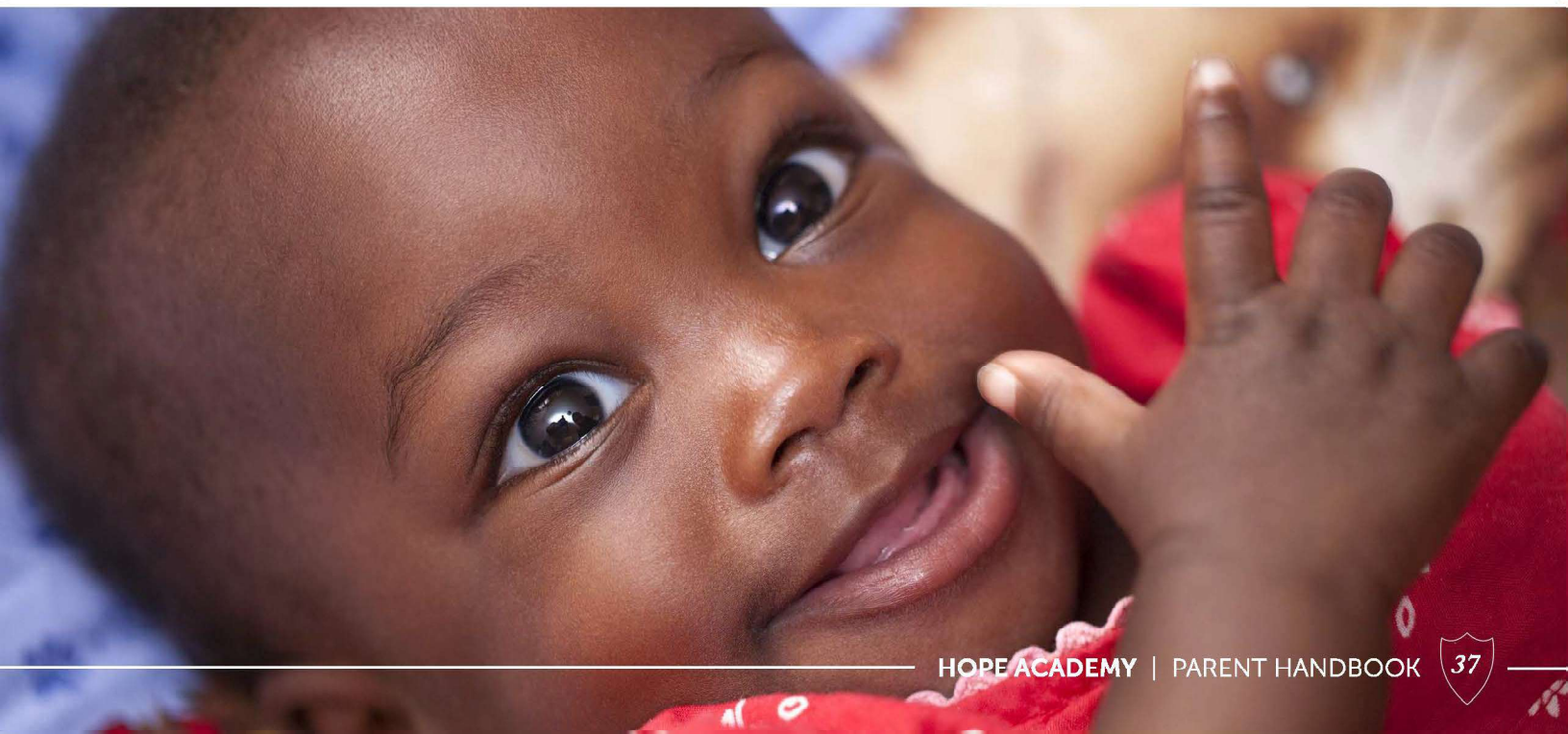
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Before children learn to talk and communicate well, around age 1 ½ to 2 ½, the desire to communicate their feelings and the need to assert themselves as individuals may often be expressed in non-constructive ways. Children at this stage in their development may sometimes express themselves by hitting another child, grabbing toys, or even biting.

We understand the developmental context in which these behaviors may occur, and we provide an environment where children can develop and grow as individuals as they learn more constructive ways of interacting with their peers.

When incidences of aggression do occur, parents/guardians of the children involved are informed of the incident and of any specific information pertinent to an understanding of the situation. The information shared typically includes the details of the incident itself (e.g., the time and the place, preceding and subsequent events, the specific steps taken to comfort the child who was hurt and, more generally, to handle the situation).

The identity of the child who engaged in aggressive behavior is not disclosed, even at the request of the parent/guardian whose child has been the target of that aggressive incident. Knowledge of the aggressor's identity is not necessary to parents'/guardians' understanding of an incident of aggression, or of the actions taken by the center staff to ensure the well-being of their own child. In fact, such knowledge may serve only to stigmatize the other child unnecessarily (and inappropriately, given the developmental context of such behaviors). It may even add to the stress of this child's parents/guardians, who already find themselves in the midst of a difficult situation.



The interfamilial conflicts that could also result add nothing constructive to the situation and may hinder its speedy and natural resolution.

Therefore, it is in the best interests of all involved parties to maintain a policy of confidentiality in such cases. This policy is consistent with standards for excellence in early childhood education, and it is one practiced consistently by other high-quality child care organizations.

If, in our judgment, any child's behavior places the well-being of others at risk of injury, we will act quickly and decisively to resolve the situation (e.g., through closer supervision, redirection to more appropriate activities, removal from tense situations, firm and consistent limit-setting, and/or provision of alternative outlets for the expression of feelings).

If the aggressive behavior continues after exhausting our resources, we may conclude it is in the best interest of the program to suspend a child's enrollment until appropriate outside resources are identified and implemented to both support the child in our program and to reduce the opportunity for injury to others. Our commitment is to provide a quality group-learning environment for every child.





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# Health & Safety

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# Nutrition & Health

## Nutrition

A menu listing of foods to be served during the week will be posted at the front of the building. AM snack, lunch and a PM snack are served free of charge to all children attending full-days. Special diets and allergies should be made known during registration. Any dietary limitation preventing your child from having a USDA approved diet (such as an allergy to milk) must be accompanied by a physician's written statement. No food may be brought from home.

On special occasions, such as the child's birthday, children are permitted to bring a celebration treat for the entire class. These snacks must be pre-packaged or store-bought. When food is brought from home, the food container must be sealed and clearly dated and labeled to identify the owner. Unused portions of opened food will be discarded by the end of the day or returned to the parent/guardian. Staffmembers will sit with the children when not serving food.

## Health and Safety Practices

We maintain stringent health and safety practices. Our health and safety policies and practices are based on National Health and Safety Standards, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association, and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education.

Staffmembers undergo a thorough screening and hiring process, including a state-required background check. Staffmembers who are certified in first aid, CPR, and bloodborne pathogens (infection control) are present in the center at all times. Comprehensive health and safety checklists are completed and routine fire and emergency drills are conducted on a regular basis. If an emergency requires the center to evacuate and leave the premises staff will be in contact with parents to notify them of the situation and where to meet the children. Always keep your contact information updated.





# Illness & Medication



## Illness

Children with contagious illnesses (fever over 100 degrees, recurrent vomiting or diarrhea, or a communicable disease (flu, pink eye, measles, head lice, etc.) may not attend until they are symptom-free for 24 hours and/or present a physician's written note stating they are not contagious.

If a child needs to be excluded because of illness, parents/guardians will be notified by phone as soon as possible after the signs or symptoms are noticed. Should a child become ill while at school parents/ guardians will be expected to pick the child up as soon as possible.

Parents/guardians should notify a staff member if a child has a contagious illness. Parents/guardians **must inform the school within 24 hours or the next business day** after their child or any member of the immediate household has developed any reportable communicable diseases, as defined by the State Board of Health, except for life threatening diseases which must be reported immediately. If your child has had a reportable communicable disease, you may be asked to present a note from a physician saying it is ok for the child to return to school.

If children have been exposed to a communicable disease listed in the Department of Health's current communicable disease chart while at school, parents/guardians will be notified within 24 hours or the next business day after we've been informed unless forbidden by law, except for life threatening diseases, which will be reported immediately.

No credit or makeup days is given for absences due to illness.

## Disease Prevention

Children's hands will be washed with soap and water before eating snacks, after toileting, and after any contact with body fluids. All staff will wash their hands with soap or germicidal cleansing agent and water after helping a child with toileting, after the staff member uses the toilet, after any contact with body fluids, and before feeding or helping children with feeding. Whenever any surface has been contaminated with body fluids it will be cleaned and sanitized.

# Infant Safety



## Infant Sleep Safety

- Until their first birthday, babies will sleep on their backs for all sleep times.
- Some babies will roll onto their stomachs. Staff will always place your baby to sleep on the back, but if your baby is comfortable rolling both ways (back to tummy, tummy to back), then staff will not return your baby to the back.
- If your baby falls asleep in a car seat, stroller, swing, infant carrier, or sling, staff will should move him or her to a firm sleep surface on his or her back as soon as possible.
- A crib that meets the safety standards of the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is used along with a tight-fitting, firm mattress and fitted sheet designed for that particular product. Nothing else will be in the crib except for the baby.
- If you are worried about your baby getting cold, you can provide infant sleep clothing, such as a wearable blanket.
- Staff can swaddle your baby. However, the baby will always be on his or her back when swaddled. The swaddle will not be too tight or make it hard for the baby to breathe or move his or her hips. When your baby looks like he or she is trying to roll over, we will stop swaddling.
- The American Association of Pediatrics recommends giving a pacifier at nap time and bedtime. This helps reduce the risk of SIDS, even if it falls out after the baby is asleep. It's OK if your baby doesn't want a pacifier. You can try offering again later, but some babies simply don't like them. If the pacifier falls out after your baby falls asleep, staff will not put it back in.

# Health & Insurance



## Sunscreen & Insect Repellent

We will only apply sunscreen or insect repellent with permission from parents. If desired, parents or guardians should complete the appropriate permission paperwork.

In the event of an emergency requiring immediate medical care, the staff will either call the Rescue Squad or transport the child to the nearest hospital. Every effort will be made to notify a parent or designated emergency contact as soon as possible.

## Accidents & Insurance

Hope Lutheran Church carries accident insurance for children while in our care. At least one staff member, who is trained in first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and rescue breathing, will be on the premises during the school's hours of operation and on all field trips.





# Emergencies

An Emergency Preparedness Plan that includes an evacuation plan and a shelter-in-place plan has been established.

Staff will immediately call 911 to report the situation if able. In the event of an emergency requiring an evacuation of the building, children will be evacuated to the Friends Church. In the event of an emergency (e.g., tornado) requiring children to stay inside the building (shelter-in-place), children will be taken to the inside center classrooms with no windows. After all children are accounted for and safe, the Director or Teacher will contact the parents by cell phone and/or school phone. A message will also be sent to local radio stations. If the routes of transportation are cut off, the children will be kept at the school until the routes are passable. A copy of the Comprehensive Evacuation Plan can be viewed in the Director's Office.

## Inclement Closings

At the discretion of the Director, Hope Academy may close during extreme weather conditions. If a severe storm makes it necessary to close before noon, parents will be notified via the email you provided to the school upon enrollment. For this reason, it is critical all parents provide updated emails and other information on a regular basis. Hope Academy follows the Virginia Beach Public Schools schedule for inclement weather closings for all classes. No credit will be given for emergency closings.

## Missing Children

In the extremely unlikely event a child is ever missing, staff members report the missing child to the Director. The staff checks in and around the building, and if the child is not found, the police are immediately called. The parents are then called. All such incidents are documented by the staff.

## Reporting Suspected Abuse/Neglect

Staff members are required by law to report suspicion of child abuse or neglect to the Protective Services Unit of the Department of Social Services.



# Transportation Safety



## Transportation Safety

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When students are transported in a vehicle all Virginia state statutes about safety belts and child restraints will be followed, children will remain seated and each child's arms, legs, and head will remain inside the vehicle, doors will be closed properly and locked, at least one staff member or the driver will remain in the vehicle when children are present.

All children will enter and leave the vehicle from the curb side of the vehicle or in a protected parking area or driveway. When crossing streets, children will be accompanied by an adult and will cross at corners, crosswalks or other designated safe crossing points.

## Preschool & Other Field Trips

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Parents/guardians will be notified of field trips at least three days in advance of the field trip. Parents/guardians will be given the opportunity to withdraw their child from the field trip.

Because all staff will accompany children on field trips, those children who choose not to participate in the field trip may not attend on days when field trips are taken (refunds will not be given). If you can help, please let us know what you would be willing to do and the times you are available.



**Thank you.**

We welcome you to Hope Academy, and  
look forward to nurturing your children and  
watching them grow and thrive.



**Please sign and return the Hope Academy Parent  
Handbook Document Agreement Page.**



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