



STAR  
ACADEMY  
CHARTER SCHOOL

## Parent Engagement Handbook- PREK



2025-2026 School Year



STAR  
ACADEMY  
CHARTER SCHOOL

Greetings Pre-K4 Parents:



STAR Academy Charter School highly values parent involvement and engagement. Research indicates that a parent's involvement in their child's schooling experience is one of the primary indicators of student success.

By contributing to your child's school and classroom you will be showing your child that you value learning and hard work. It will help your child realize that you believe school learning is important and needed in the real world. You will be able to more directly praise your child's efforts and progress. The benefits are numerous.

To welcome you and your child, we have created this ***Parent Engagement Handbook***. It offers guidelines and policies to clarify classroom needs and parent responsibilities. We look forward to partnering with you during the school year as we all work toward empowering families and enhancing the academics of students.

We hope this information answers any questions you may have. If you have any suggestions or concerns, please contact the school.

Warm regards,

Janice R. Brown, Director  
STAR Academy PreK4  
3260 James Road  
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(901)-387-5050

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## WELCOME TO EARLY CHILDHOOD

**Dear Pre-K Parent(s),**

Welcome to STAR Academy!

We are excited to partner with you and your family as your child begins their journey in our Early Childhood Program. Thank you for trusting us with this important stage of your child's development—we are honored to be a part of these foundational years.

As your child's first and most important teacher, your involvement is key to their growth and success. Our dedicated staff is committed to working together with you to support your child's development and help them reach their fullest potential.

We warmly invite you to visit our program at any time, and we look forward to a joyful and successful year ahead.

With warm regards,

Janice R. Brown, Director  
STAR Academy Charter School, Pre-  
K 4 program

### Important Contacts

Name	Position	Contact Information
Jeanene Trent	Pre-K 4 Lead Teacher	taylorj@staracademycharter.org
Rosalyn Jones	Pre-K 4 Educational Assistant	jonesr@staracademycharter.org
Jacquelyn Williams	Pre-K 4 Educational Assistant	jacquelynwilliams@staracademycharter.org
Janice Brown	Principal/Pre-K 4 Director	jbrown@staracademycharter.org
Cheree Ray	Assistant Principal	cheray@staracademycharter.org
Brooke Overton	Director of Counseling and Engagement	boverton@staracademycharter.org
Main Office		901 (387-5050)

## ABOUT OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM

### **Comprehensive Early Childhood Services**

At STAR Academy, our Early Childhood Program is designed to support the development of the *whole* child. While our classrooms provide developmentally appropriate activities to prepare children for kindergarten, our program goes far beyond academics.

Children in our program benefit from rich, engaging experiences that promote social, intellectual, physical, and emotional growth. At the same time, we offer a variety of resources and support to families, recognizing that parents and guardians play a vital role in each child's success.

### **Program Benefits**

#### **For Children:**

- Individualized education plans tailored to each child's needs
- Creative and challenging learning activities
- Nutritious meals and snacks provided daily
- Regular health screenings and follow-up services
- Specialized services for children with disabilities
- Diverse and inclusive classroom communities
- Clean, safe, and sanitary facilities
- Low teacher-to-child ratio (1:10)
- Highly qualified and credentialed teaching staff

#### **For Parents/Guardians:**

- Access to social services and family support resources
- Opportunities to participate in parent groups and meetings
- Volunteer and foster grandparent programs
- Emergency assistance when needed
- Crisis intervention services for families in need

## ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

### STAR Academy Early Childhood Program

Regular attendance is essential to your child's success in the Early Childhood program. Our goal is to maintain a **90% attendance rate**, and we are committed to working with families to support consistent, on-time attendance.

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#### Daily Attendance Requirements

- Children are expected to attend school **every day the program is in operation**, unless they are ill.
  - **Each school and center determines its specific hours of operation.** Student dropoff time is between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. each day.
  - If your child will be late or absent, you must notify your child's **teacher** as early as possible—**within 1 hour of school start time for absences.**
  - Daily attendance is monitored for program compliance and all students are expected to be present for at least 85% of the school year, or 148 of the 180 school days.
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#### Tardiness Policy

- If your child arrives late, you must report to the school's **administrative office in person** before entering the classroom.
  - Continued late arrivals will result in a **referral to program management.**
  - After **three (3)** instances of unexcused tardiness, a meeting will be scheduled with your Student and Family Support Specialist to develop an **Attendance Support Plan** to address the challenges and provide assistance.
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#### Pick-Up Expectations

- Children must be **picked up on time** each day, no later than 3:30 p.m..
- If an emergency occurs and you anticipate being **5–10 minutes late**, you are required to **call the school immediately** to inform staff.
- Families must arrange for an **alternate authorized pickup person** if they are unable to arrive

on time.

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## Absences

- **Each day your child is absent**, a staff member will contact you.
  - After **three (3) consecutive unexcused absences** without parent communication:
    - A **home visit** will be conducted to determine the reason for the absences.
    - If no one is home, a “**Notice of Enrollment Status**” will be left at your residence.
    - You must respond within **48 hours** of the home visit/notification. Failure to do so will result in an **Enrollment Termination Letter** being mailed to your address on file.
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## Chronic Absences

- If a child shows a pattern of inconsistent attendance (e.g., attends 2 days, misses 2 days), we will work with you to:
    - Understand the cause
    - Provide appropriate support
    - Explore alternative child care options, if necessary
  - If attendance goals continue to be unmet despite support, the enrollment slot may be given to a child on the **waiting list**.
- 

## Our Commitment

We understand that life circumstances can sometimes make attendance difficult. Our staff is here to help. We will provide every opportunity and support service available to help your family meet attendance requirements and ensure your child receives the full benefit of our Early Childhood program.

If you have questions or need support, please reach out to your teacher or Director of Counseling and Engagement.



## PARENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### My Rights as a Parent

As a parent in the STAR Academy Early Childhood Program, I have the right:

- To provide input on decisions that affect the planning and operation of the program.
  - To help shape adult education programs that benefit both my family and me.
  - To be welcomed and feel comfortable in my child's classroom.
  - To choose whether or not to participate in program activities **without affecting my child's enrollment or rights**.
  - To receive regular updates on my child's growth, development, and progress.
  - To expect support and guidance from teachers and staff that promotes my child's overall development—socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually.
  - To be involved in programs that enhance my personal skills and open opportunities for employment.
  - To be informed about community resources related to health, education, and family well-being.
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### My Responsibilities as a Pre-K Parent

As a participating parent, I understand that I have a responsibility:

- To learn as much as I can about the Early Childhood Program.
- To see the program as an opportunity to improve the quality of life for my child, myself, and my family.
- To engage in the classroom—either as an observer or volunteer—and contribute in ways that enrich the program.
- To take on a leadership role by voting in parent elections, advocating for the program, and encouraging other parents to be involved.
- To attend required parent-teacher conferences and actively support my child's development at home and in school.

- To work cooperatively with teachers, staff, and fellow parents.
- To participate in learning opportunities that enhance my understanding of child development.
- To get involved in community programs that aim to improve the health, education, and welfare of all families.
- To attend parent meetings, trainings, workshops, and school events that foster strong parental involvement.

## Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

To ensure a safe and smooth start and end to each school day, please follow the procedures outlined below:

### Morning Drop-Off

- **Drop-off begins at 7:30 AM.**
- A **teacher will meet you at your vehicle**, bring the **sign-in form**, and assist your child out of the car. Siblings are allowed to enter the building with the prek staff member.
- The parent or authorized adult will sign the child in at that time.
- The teacher will **escort your child into the building**.

**If arriving after 8:00 AM**, please bring your child to the **main office** for late drop-off and sign-in.

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### Afternoon Pick-Up

- **Pick-up begins at 3:00 PM** at the **sibling pick-up side** of the building.
- A staff member will call your child's name/number, and a **teacher will walk your child to the car**.
- The parent or authorized adult will be required to **sign the child out** at that time.

### Late Pick-Up

- If you anticipate being late, **please notify the teacher immediately**.
- **After 3:45 PM**, all remaining children must be picked up from the **main office**.

## Authorization of Pickup/Drop-Off

To ensure the safety and well-being of all children enrolled in the STAR Academy Early Childhood Program, the following procedures must be followed:

- At the time of enrollment, parents/guardians are required to complete an **Authorization of Pickup/Drop-Off Form**, listing all individuals permitted to pick up or drop off their child.
- **No exceptions will be made**, including for day care providers. Only individuals listed on the form will be allowed to pick up or drop off a child.
- If staff are unfamiliar with the person picking up a child, they will request a **valid photo ID**. The name on the ID **must match** the name listed on the authorization form.
- Children will **not** be released to anyone not listed, even if the individual is known to the parent.

### Updating Authorization Information

- Parents may add or remove individuals from the pickup list by completing a **Change of Status Form in person** at the Pre-K site.
- **Phone calls, emails, faxes, or verbal requests will not be accepted.**
- In cases involving joint custody, removal of a parent from the authorized list **requires legal documentation** or other verifiable proof.

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## Late Pickup Policy

The Early Childhood Program adheres to the **Memphis-Shelby County Schools** late pickup policies. Children must be picked up at the **authorized time** provided at enrollment unless alternative arrangements have been **approved in advance** by Family Engagement staff.

Star Academy does not offer before or aftercare services for prek students.

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## Daily Procedures

- **Sign-In/Sign-Out:** Parents must sign their child **in and out each day with the designated prek staff member**. If the parent does not conduct drop off or pick up, an authorized pick up person (Adult) must sign the child in and out, as well as present a valid ID. Parents do not need to exit their vehicle for pick up or dropoff. The prek staff will receive the child at arrival in the morning and escort the child to the vehicle at dismissal.
  - **Daily Parent Report:** Each morning, parents must share a brief report, when warranted, with the teacher regarding their child's:
    - Eating habits
    - Bathroom routine
    - General mood or any emotional/behavioral observations  
This helps staff provide the most attentive care possible.
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## Health & Safety Checks

- Every child receives a **daily health check** upon arrival.
- The check includes visual observation of:
  - Stomach, back, arms, legs, eyes, and nose
- Staff will check for signs of:
  - Contagious illness (e.g., flu, chickenpox)
  - Any bumps, bruises, or scratches that occurred before arrival

If signs of illness are present, **the child will not be admitted for the day**, and a **doctor's note** will be required before returning to school.

Parents are also asked to notify staff of any medical concerns or illnesses that could impact the child's ability to participate in daily activities.

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## Safety and Staff Discretion

- Children **will not be released** to any individual whose behavior suggests **drug or alcohol**

**intoxication, rage, or aggressive behavior.**

- STAR Academy staff reserve the right to **refuse release** of a child to ensure their safety.
  - Any threatening behavior may result in the individual being **banned from school property**.
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## Inclement Weather & Emergency Closures

In the event of severe weather or emergencies, STAR Academy may:

- **Close early**
- **Close for the full day**

### Communication

- Parents should monitor **local media, STAR Academy's website**, and the **Memphis-Shelby County Schools website** for announcements.
- In the case of early closure, notifications will be sent through **ParentSquare**, our automated communication system.
- Parents are expected to **pick up their child immediately** after receiving notification of early dismissal.

## Family Engagement

At STAR Academy, we believe that **parents are their children's first and most important teachers**. We strongly encourage families to be active participants in their child's educational journey and in the life of the Early Childhood Program.

### Purpose of Family Engagement

Our family engagement activities are thoughtfully designed to:

- Support **family well-being**
- Strengthen **parent-child relationships**
- Encourage families to become **lifelong learners**

- Help families navigate **key transitions**
- Connect families to their **community and peers**
- Empower parents to become **advocates for their children**

By building strong partnerships with families, we aim to improve outcomes not only for children, but for the entire family unit. We also focus on creating a smooth transition process for children, families, and staff throughout the school year.

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### **Why Family Engagement Matters**

When parents actively participate in the Pre-K program:

- Children recognize that their parents value their learning and well-being.
  - Children take pride in seeing their family involved in their classroom and community.
  - Families become more connected to the school and empowered in their child's education.
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### **Ways to Get Involved**

Once approved, families are welcome and encouraged to participate in a variety of activities, including:

#### **At the School or Center:**

- Parent meetings and educational trainings
- Volunteering in the classroom
- Scheduled classroom visits
- Parent-teacher conferences and transition planning meetings
- Participating in center events or classroom projects
- Adult education opportunities

#### **In the Community:**

- Community service and outreach

- Health and nutrition workshops
- Budgeting and money management classes
- Leadership and advocacy opportunities
- Collaborations with community action groups

#### **At Home:**

- Implementing learning activities that extend classroom experiences
  - Supporting academic skills through games, reading, and creative play
  - Identifying areas where your child may need support or enrichment
  - Praising and encouraging your child's growth and learning
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### **The Impact**

Your child benefits greatly when they see you actively involved and invested in their Pre-K experience—whether it's through volunteering, attending a meeting, or simply asking about their day. This shared investment fosters a stronger home-school connection and lays the foundation for lifelong learning and community engagement.

## **Top Five Reasons to Be Involved in Your Child's Early Childhood Program**

### **Parent involvement leads to:**

- A sense of ownership and pride
- A better understanding of what is expected at school
- Being more equipped to reinforce learning at home

### **The Research Is Clear**

Decades of research show that when parents are involved, children are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates
- Have better school attendance
- Show increased motivation and higher self-esteem
- Have lower rates of suspension, substance use, and violent behaviors

*Family participation in education is twice as predictive of a child's academic success as family income or background.*

## **Benefits of Involvement**

- Boosts student achievement
- Strengthens the home-school partnership
- Improves morale for students and teachers
- Builds stronger community connections

What Your Presence Tells Your Child:

- *"I care about what you do here."*
- *"I am proud of you."*
- *"You are special."*

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## **Family Services & Community Referrals**

Our Family Engagement staff are here to support you and your family. We provide referrals to trusted community agencies (e.g., United Way, Driving the Dream) to help with:

- Affordable utilities
- Safe and affordable housing or home ownership
- Homeless services
- Food and clothing assistance



- Family literacy training
- Affordable medical and dental care
- Adult education and job training
- Employment resources
- Financial literacy education
- Substance abuse services
- Domestic violence support
- Child development and disability services
- Mental health and emotional wellness
- Parenting resources
- Personal safety and child protection (e.g., *Keeping Kids Safe* curriculum)

#### Emergency or Crisis Support

Unannounced home visits may be conducted when:

- There are consistent attendance concerns, or
- The family is experiencing an emergency or crisis situation

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## Parent Communication

We value open and ongoing communication between school and home. Teachers and Family Engagement staff will make every effort to connect with families daily through:

- Virtual meetings
- Phone calls, texts, or emails
- Written reports or notes
- STAR Academy's ParentSquare automated calls

#### Important Communication Notes:

- If your child has a difficult or unusual day, we will notify you verbally and/or in writing.
- For serious incidents, a follow-up incident report will also be provided.

We ask that parents also communicate with staff about:

- Any unusual behavior or incidents that happen at home
- Any changes to family routines that may impact your child

#### Methods of Communication:

- Face-to-face conversations
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Monthly newsletters/calendars
- Daily activity reports
- Home visits
- Virtual meetings (Zoom, Teams)
- STAR Academy website, Facebook pages, and ParentSquare alerts

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#### Your Role in Program Planning

We strongly encourage you to:

- Attend parent meetings and training sessions
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Help plan events, programs, and even parts of the curriculum
- Stay engaged with your child's development—even when a daycare provider or another adult brings your child to school

This ensures that you:

- Stay up to date on events and opportunities
- Are informed about your child's progress and any areas of need

Reminder: Always keep your child's emergency contact information current. Notify the teacher or Family Engagement staff of any updates, and ensure that the school's main office receives this information as well.

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## Parent Orientation

### Attendance is Required Before Your Child Starts School

Each year, we host Parent Orientation to ensure that families are fully informed and prepared. During orientation:

- Parents/Guardians meet the teachers and staff
- The Early Childhood program structure and expectations are reviewed
- Required forms are completed
- Families receive a Parent Engagement Handbook and additional resources

## HEALTH SERVICES

**A current physical examination is necessary before children can start school. The physical exam must be current and completed within the last 12 months.**

### MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

If a child requires medication during school hours, the parent/guardian is responsible for ensuring that all necessary medication, supplies, and equipment required to administer the child's medication are provided to the school. Under no circumstances are children allowed to transport medication containers (full or empty) to or from the center. All transfer of medication containers will be between parents and school staff.

The parent/guardian is responsible for providing instructions and supporting documentation to school staff on any equipment or supplies required to properly administer the child's medication.

- The parent/guardian is responsible for notifying school staff and providing any required documentation whenever their child's medication is changed or discontinued by the doctor (this will require a written medical statement).

- Parents are encouraged to give their child his/her morning dosage of medication at home as required by the physician before coming to the program.

### EMERGENCY/RESCUE MEDICATION AT SCHOOL

Children who require emergency/rescue medication will not be able to attend school without the medication. The Student and Family Support Specialist and school staff will assist the parents with completing and acquiring the required documents.

## PROGRAM CARE OF SICK CHILDREN

- 1.) Teachers are required to conduct daily health checks. If a child is found to be ill or becomes ill while at school, parents will be notified by Family Engagement staff that your child should be picked up. In school-based classrooms, the teacher or designated staff will notify the parent.
- 2.) Children that are ill **must** be picked up within **1 hour** after the parent has been contacted.
- 3.) Parents will be notified if children have the following symptoms:
  - Fever 100 F (or above)
  - Diarrhea (3 episodes in one day) ~~COB~~
  - Vomiting
  - Discolored discharge from eyes
  - Discolored discharge from nose (accompanied by other symptoms)
  - Rashes (example: ringworm)
  - Difficulty breathing (example: wheezing)
  - Symptoms associated with contagious (communicable) diseases

**Note:** A doctor's statement to return to school should be provided to the school.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

All staff will follow procedures indicated in the STAR Academy's Emergency Operations Plan. Parents will be notified when emergencies require that children be picked up. Evacuation and emergency procedures are posted in each classroom.

***During emergency evacuation drills (fire, tornado, etc.), parents will not be allowed to sign children out of the classroom. All children, staff, parents, and visitors in the building during the time of the evacuation drill are expected to follow the program's***

*safety protocols (proceed to emergency exits, remain in the building, etc.).*

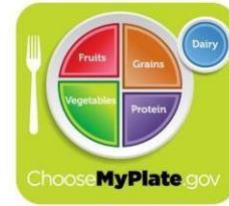
## **CHILD INJURY**

1. All child injuries will be reported to the child's parent and the school staff.
2. OSHA practices and First Aid procedures will be followed to handle all child injuries. (Refer to Shelby County School District's policy.)
3. If a child needs to be transported to the hospital, parents will be notified immediately.

## **HEALTH RECORDS AND IMMUNIZATIONS**

1. Children's records must be updated and maintained. The immunizations must be on the Tennessee Certificate of Immunizations.
2. Family Service staff will work with parents and health providers to ensure children's immunizations are maintained and updated.
  - No child is allowed to attend class without being properly immunized according to current Department of Health guidelines. Parents or guardians must provide documentation that their children have received the required doses of vaccines.
  - Immunization waivers may be given for children who have a medical condition that prevents them from receiving immunizations. Such waivers must be documented. Religious and other waivers must also be documented by parents on the immunization waiver form or a signed statement by a parent/guardian indicating the vaccination conflicts with their religious practices.
3. **A complete physical examination is necessary before children can start school.**
  - Physical exams must be renewed every 12 months. A copy of the physical and well-child exam must be presented to Family Service staff when updated.
  - The child cannot attend school if the physical exam has expired. Parents will be notified by the family services worker, at least 30 days in advance of the physical's expiration date.
4. All parents must present a copy of their child's updated health and immunization records **after every appointment** to Family Service staff or teachers

## NUTRITION SERVICES



All children enrolled in the program are provided two (2) meals and a snack (breakfast, lunch, and snack) at no cost to the parent.

**Children are NOT allowed to bring outside food into the school unless there are special dietary needs as diagnosed by a physician. This includes fast foods as well as peanut products. The prek classroom is a “NO PEANUT” zone.** At this age, children are still learning about personal space and how to determine if foods are safe for them to eat. Many of our children have allergies to specific foods. For that reason, only food that is safe for ALL children will be provided by Memphis Shelby County Schools Nutrition Services.

In the event of special occasions or events, Teachers are required to let parents know at least 72 hours in advance if there will be food in the classroom for teaching purposes/rewards, class parties, celebrations, etc. All food must be pre-packaged, have proper labeling, and not contain any allergic contents. No home baked goods will be allowed. The program will respect all cultures when planning such activities. (This activity is voluntary by the classroom.)

All dietary restrictions must be reported to the classroom teacher during orientation, no later than August 4th or as needed upon entry to the program. If your child has a medical dietary restriction, this **MUST** be supported by a doctor’s statement and an alternative must be indicated. Meals will be prepared for children with such dietary restrictions.

## EDUCATION SERVICES

Star Academy offers developmentally appropriate classroom practices and activities that focus on school readiness and enhance cognitive, physical, and social emotional development. Creative Curriculum is utilized to offer a variety of educational opportunities that will enhance children’s learning.

Creative Curriculum for Pre-K is a proven-effective comprehensive early learning program that embraces children’s natural curiosity and encourages them to explore and connect to the world around them.

## SCREENING/ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Children will be screened and assessed using the **Brigance** tool. As a screening tool, Brigance allows teachers and staff to form a clear idea of the child's knowledge and motor ability in a consistent format. As an assessment, Brigance helps teachers to identify developmental skills/areas that need to be strengthened. It helps your child's teacher to set goals for your child and individualize lessons to meet your child's educational needs. It is also used to measure your child's progress.

## SERVICES PROVIDED TO CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Inclusion in the early childhood setting provides children with disabilities an opportunity to learn, play, and live with non-disabled children. Inclusion helps children develop healthy attitudes about each other and themselves and starts them down the path toward becoming responsible, aware participants in adult society.

Children are eligible for special education services if they are professionally diagnosed as having a disability. Staff will work closely with Memphis Shelby County Schools Exceptional Children and Health Services Department to ensure that children receive a continuum of appropriate services. Children with a current Individualized Education Plan (IEP) may benefit from the program. Exceptional Children and Health Services and Pre-K staff will meet with the family to develop one service plan that is inclusive of all necessary supports, services, and modifications to ensure that your child is able to fully participate in the development of secure, trusting relationships and exploration of the environment. Conversely, all concerns about the development of a young child should be referred, with parent consent, to the local education agency (LEA).

## VOLUNTEERING IN THE CLASSROOM

Parents are encouraged to volunteer in the classroom and at the school when requested. Your involvement can make a big difference for your child, your child's school, and your community. All parents that volunteer more than 20 hours must complete a background check.

***Appropriate activities that a volunteer may perform include, but are not limited to:***

1. Talking, offering encouragement, and providing support to staff and students
2. Listening, reading, singing, or playing games
3. Comforting a child or acting as an example
4. Encouraging appropriate behavior
5. Supporting and participating in lessons or long-term projects
6. Assisting the classroom teachers in carrying out or preparing for lessons
7. Sitting and eating meal served with the children during mealtime (family style dining)

8. Attending field trips and/or special events

## SCHOOL READINESS GOALS

Throughout the school year, activities are implemented to help the children achieve their school readiness goals. We wholeheartedly promote the collaboration between parents and staff to develop the most effective school readiness goals for the program and the child. We facilitate this collaboration by:

- Providing opportunities (through parent meetings, surveys, and correspondences) to review and contribute input on school readiness goals, the School Readiness Plan, and outcomes.
- Reviewing and analyzing outcomes and scores three times a year to ensure that progress is being made toward school readiness goals and/or determine if modifications are needed.
- Using the results of their child's assessment to identify individual school readiness goals in order to develop an Education Partnership Agreement.
- Providing the opportunity to serve on the School Readiness Team.

STAR Academy uses the School Readiness Plan that outlines the adoption, alignment, and implementation of these goals to ensure that: 1) children will be academically ready to be successful in educational settings as they transition; and 2) parents are actively engaged in preparing their child to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

## HOME VISITS AND PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

- 1) Teachers are required to conduct **two parent-teacher conferences** each year.
- 2) Goals, assessments and objectives for the child will be formed, developed and discussed during meetings.
- 3) Parents are expected to participate in all conferences and home visits.
- 4) All visits and conferences will be conducted virtually during remote learning.



## PARENT CUSTODY MATTERS

The program will remain neutral in custodial issues and adhere to requests from official institutions such as court orders, attorney/legal documents, etc. A professional relationship will be maintained with both parents and/or guardians of enrolled children. All information provided to the program will be confidential in accordance with program policies and procedures. In the state of Tennessee, the program is mandated to report any suspected cases of child abuse, neglect, or child endangerment.

We will release your child to either parent or legal guardian, or any person listed on the enrollment application. In the event of divorce, dissolution, or separation of the parents, the program staff will continue to follow the authorized contact information on the application form unless we receive written official instructions such as a change in custody agreement from the court or legal representative. A copy of the document must be presented to the program for record-keeping. The program will follow any instructions outlined in the court order. It is the responsibility of the parent/s or legal guardian to inform the program of any criminal indictments that would prevent a person from being on school property with children or any other specified person. (Documentation will be requested to support reported information and for the program to comply accordingly.)

## CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

1. If child abuse or neglect is suspected, staff are required by law to report suspected cases to the Tennessee Department of Children's Services.

### **Reportable situations include, but are not limited to:**

- ◆ Bruises, sores or other injuries observed on the child's body, even though the source or event of injury is unknown;
- ◆ Abandonment of a child by a parent or guardian;
- ◆ Suspected sexual abuse;
- ◆ Absence of proper parental control or care including medical or other care of control necessary for the child's well-being. This may include failure to follow up on educational, medical or safety concerns identified by staff (i.e. leaving children unattended in the car or ongoing neglect of ensuring children are in proper child safety restraints).

Parents will be provided with this information at enrollment orientation and continuously throughout the program. Training on the detection of abuse and neglect, as well as the program's reporting procedure is reviewed annually for employees and parents. All new employees are trained on child abuse, neglect identification, and reporting during orientation.

## VEHICLE SAFETY

Safety is a priority for children and families. We value the health of all children that are on our property; therefore, no young child is to be left in a vehicle ***alone***. No exceptions will be tolerated; parents are required to bring all children inside the center during drop-off and/or pickup. The staff is required by law to notify the Department of Children's Services and the Memphis Police Department immediately with vehicle make/model and the identity/description of persons involved in leaving a child in a vehicle alone.

### SAFETY FIRST

- Check your back seat
- Avoid locking doors until all children are out of the vehicle
- Always transport young children in an age-appropriate car seat or booster seat

### CAR SEATS/SEAT RESTRAINTS

A parent/ legal guardian should not transport a child under eight (8) years of age in a motor vehicle without properly securing that child in a back seat in an appropriate child passenger restraint system meeting federal motor vehicle safety standards.

- Children aged one (1) through age three (3) weighing more than twenty (20) pounds must be secured in a child safety seat in a forward-facing position in the rear seat, if available, or according to the child safety restraint system or vehicle manufacturer's instructions.
- Children aged four (4) through age eight (8) measuring less than four feet nine inches (4'9") in height must be secured in a belt-positioning booster seat system meeting federal motor vehicle safety standards in the rear seat, if available, or according to the child safety restraint system or vehicle manufacturer's instructions. **(Note: If the child is not between age four (4) and eight (8) but is less than four feet nine inches (4'9") in height, he/she must still use a seat belt system meeting federal motor vehicle safety standards.)**

Parents are asked to ensure that children are properly restrained before leaving the school campus. Parents may request additional information or assistance on safety seats from their Student and Family Support Specialist.

## PERSONAL SAFETY

When coming to your child's school to drop off your child or to pick up your child, always remember to secure your vehicle.

Car burglars will seize the opportunity to enter unlocked vehicles. Don't make your car an easy target by leaving your car doors unlocked.

- Avoid locking doors until all children are out of the vehicle.
- Always lock your doors.
- Spare car keys should not be stored in or on your car; thieves know where to look.
- Don't forget to close windows and sunroofs.
- STAR Academy is not responsible for any stolen items.

## PEDESTRIAN TIPS FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

### Walking in Traffic

The safe transport of our children should be an important topic for everyone. Walking is a mode of travel that places young children at as much risk as traveling by passenger vehicle or school bus.

**Protect yourself and your family by doing these things:**

- **Walk on the sidewalk or off the side of the road**
  - Children should always walk on the sidewalk.
  - If you must walk on a road without sidewalks, walk facing the traffic.
  - Cross at intersections if possible. Most people are hit by cars when they cross the road at places other than intersections.
  - ALWAYS hold your child's hand when crossing the street.
- **See and be seen**
  - Drivers need to see you to avoid you.
  - Stay out of the driver's blind spot.
  - Make eye contact with drivers when crossing busy streets.
  - Wear bright colors or reflective clothing if you are walking near traffic at night.
  - Carry a flashlight when walking in the dark.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Do not let children play near traffic or cross the street by themselves. Children are small and drivers may not see them if they run into the street.

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- **Watch your kids**

- Children should not cross streets by themselves or be allowed to play or walk near traffic. Children are small, unpredictable, and cannot judge vehicle distances and speeds.
- Children should know three things to do before they cross the street.
  - 1. Try to cross at an intersection if possible.**
  - 2. Stop at the edge of the road.**
  - 3. Look left, right and then left again to make sure no cars are coming.**





## PROGRAM GUIDELINES AGREEMENT



**The intent is for your child to gain the greatest possible benefits from this Pre-kindergarten experience.**

As space is limited, selection to the program is a privilege that requires parental responsibilities. **Each parent is asked to carefully consider the following guidelines for participating in the program.**  
Your signature will acknowledge that you understand and agree to abide by these guidelines.

### **I agree to:**

1. Attend all academic meetings to discuss my child's progress and goals.
2. Read the **School and Parent Engagement Handbooks** and abide by the policies and guidelines set forth.
3. Stay informed and up to date about events and issues at the school by reading notices, newsletters, notes and emails.
4. Respond promptly (within 2 school days) to school communications including permission slips, surveys, emails, phone messages, etc.
5. Support my child at home by reviewing and discussing schoolwork. Offer assistance that reinforces weekly lessons.
6. Ensure that my child attends school every day, on time, and is ready to learn.  
Ensure that my child is picked up on time every day.
7. Read and listen to my child regularly and make reading part of my child's day.
8. Notify the Prek staff and Main Office within 1 hour of the school's start time if my child is going to be absent.  
If perceived absence is pre-scheduled due to a family matter (medical, emergency, etc.).
9. Ensure that my child does not bring outside food to school.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Code of Conduct



Thank you for your contribution to the school and the children. The following code of conduct was developed to ensure an optimum learning experience for all. We appreciate your willingness to abide by the code.

- When working in the classroom, your role is to support the teacher/s and all the students in the class. When observing in the classroom, please be as quiet and as unobtrusive as possible to support the learning process.
- Cell phones will be turned off while working in the classroom.
- In order to provide full attention to the teacher and students, siblings will not be allowed to attend while parents are volunteering.
- Follow the teacher/s/staff directions and modeling. Teachers will make decisions professionally, not emotionally. Follow their lead.
- In all communications seek first to understand – then to be understood. Keep lines of communication open and flowing. Reserve discussions for after class for students to receive maximum attention during class. Remain focused on the priorities developed by the teacher.
- Maintain student confidentiality. Avoid ever discussing students with other students, parents, or outside parties.
- Respect all people and their ideas, beliefs, and opinions. Be a caring person and model this for the students.
- Be an advocate for school programs and philosophies. Demonstrate pride in the school, teachers, and students.
- Address any incidents of concern to the teacher as soon as possible.

Any criminal activity or threatening behavior on the school property will be reported to the appropriate officials of the program and, may result in a parent or any visiting person being BANNED from the premises. (Please refer also to Memphis Shelby County School District policies and procedures.)

As a parent of a Memphis Shelby County Schools Pre-Kindergarten student, I acknowledge the importance of the above code for the purposes of helping to establish and maintain a positive environment for students and productive relationships with my child's teachers and other school staff. As such, I agree to abide by this code.

**Child's Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_



## PARENT INVOLVEMENT RESOURCE FORM

Name (Parent or Guardian) \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Best way to get in contact with you \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to volunteer at home \_\_\_\_\_

I prefer to volunteer in the classroom \_\_\_\_\_

*(Day of the week / or no preference)*

*(morning or afternoon / or no preference)*

**Ways to be involved (have fun) Please check your preferences.**

\_\_\_\_\_ assist with arts and crafts

\_\_\_\_\_ assist with recipes and cooking activities

\_\_\_\_\_ assist with center time activities

\_\_\_\_\_ assist with classroom preparation (sorting, gluing, cutting, stapling, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ assist with parties

\_\_\_\_\_ read to the class

\_\_\_\_\_ chaperone a field trip

\_\_\_\_\_ help with and/or attend school events (field day, programs, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ complete take- home packets at home

**Students are our greatest assets and parents are our greatest resources. If you have any talents or special interests and would like to volunteer your services, please state what they are. Thank you.**



## PARENT ENGAGEMENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My signature below acknowledges that I have:

- read and understand my rights and responsibilities as a parent of STAR Academy' Early Childhood program.
- been given a program overview and informed about the hours of program operation along with the behavior, sickness, attendance and pickup policy of Star Academy's prek program
- been advised of the permission for photo release in which  
\_\_\_\_\_ YES my child may be photographed/video recorded for social media and marketing purposes at special events and activities.  
  
\_\_\_\_\_ NO I DO NOT give my permission for my child to be photographed/video recorded for social media and marketing purposes at special events and activities.

I, the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby acknowledge that I have read and received a copy of the Parent Engagement Handbook and that the program's teacher or designated staff member has discussed these policies and procedures with me.

**Parent Name (Print):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Staff Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Staff signature verifies that the Star Academy Parent Engagement Handbook was reviewed with the parent and that the parent was given a copy.*





## ATTENDANCE COMMITMENT



The Memphis Shelby County Schools Division of Early Childhood would like to thank you for taking time to come and invest early in your child's education. We believe that children and families who are ready for school and schools who are ready for children and families can generate positive outcomes for long term success.

The Division of Early Childhood has set an aggressive goal of a 95% attendance rate program wide. Studies show that when students attend school regularly the students maintain higher achievement, better behavior, grade-by-grade promotion, on-time graduation, and other educational and social and emotional success. Some of the social and emotional benefits of timely regular attendance are as follows:

- Sleeping and eating patterns are regularized with good effects on health.
- A predictable schedule builds the child's confidence in the caregiver and in the environment.
- Children know what to expect when they enter the classroom.
- Children recognize they are a part of the community; their peers expect and include them. This promotes self-confidence, social skills, and empathy.
- Ongoing conversations and learning can be built upon.
- Children are increasingly able to control their emotions by recognizing the effects of their emotions upon their peers and their own performance.
- Teachers spend less time "bringing a child up to date" and more time in supporting continuous learning.
- Families recognize one another and the community of caring is extended. Parents are better able to support and engage with each other. Information is shared.

It is the expectation of Star Academy that children attend school regularly barring any unforeseen circumstances where conditions would not permit the student to do so such as illness, family situations, death, hospitalization, etc.

By signing this letter, you agree to adhere to the attendance policy of the program.

**Parent Name (Print)**

**Parent Signature**

**Date**

*Memphis Shelby County Schools offers educational and employment opportunities without regard to race, color, religion, sex, creed, age, disability, national origin, or genetic information. By signing this application, you will be receiving services from the collaborative partnership between Head Start and the Pre-K dual enrollment program. Furthermore, you are expected to participate in required programmatic, parent, and family related activities.*