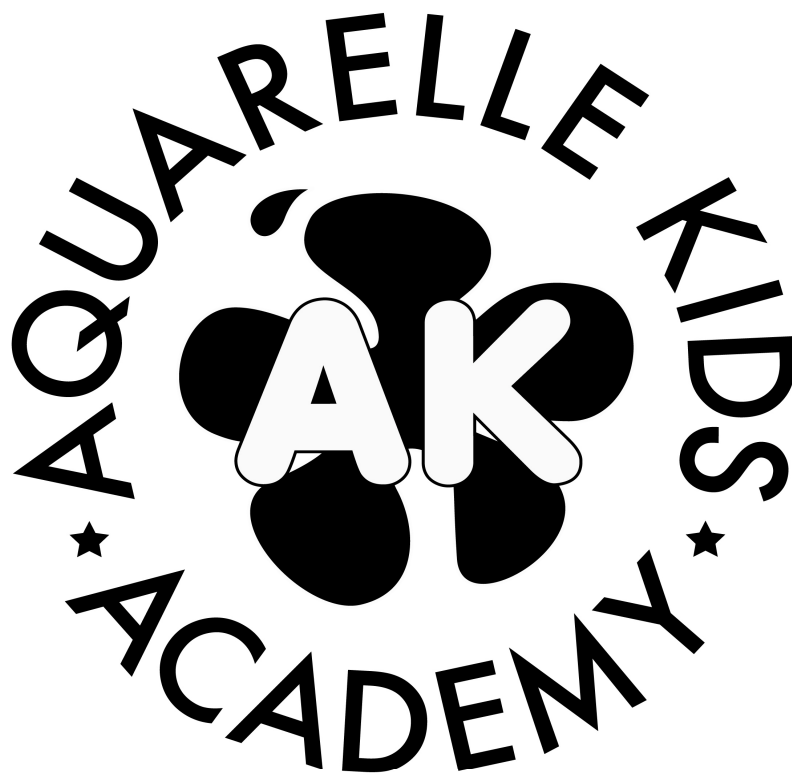


AQUARELLE KIDS ACADEMY

EMPLOYEE POLICIES & PROCEDURES HANDBOOK



HAPPY KIDS, GREAT MINDS!

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I. PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

Aquarelle Kids Academy is an institution specialized in the education of children during their early years with the mission to work together with parents in the development of happy children by providing a learning atmosphere ideal for early childhood education. We see life beyond the horizon to be recognized as a premier educational institution. Our commitment is to offer access to affordable, high quality child care and early education experiences, to enhance our children's development and to support their families in work and parenting roles.

At Aquarelle Kids Academy each child is viewed as an individual with limitless potential. Our main objective is to provide a safe, secure and positive environment in which children will be encouraged to develop physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually, and creatively.

Our goals and objectives for the children enrolled in our programs include:

- To build a strong relationship with students, families, community and staff;
- To promote the development of each child into a self-confident, self-driven learner for life;
- To promote the development of positive social and communication skills;
- To promote the development of independence, self-discipline and positive self-esteem to succeed in life;
- To promote the development of sound health and nutrition, helping children to develop good health habits;
- To promote the appreciation of cultural diversity in community;
- To promote the development of cognitive and creative skills in the areas of literacy, math, science, music, art, and language development; and overall,
- To help children to grow by enjoying learning and loving life.

II. NON-DISCRIMINATION / NON-HARASSMENT STATEMENT

Aquarelle Kids Academy is an equal opportunity employer. We will not discriminate in our hiring policies based on any race, color, national or ethnic background, pregnancy or medical conditions. We prohibit harassment of one employee by another employee or supervisor for any reason including, but not limited to, age, race, color, physical or mental disability, marital status, veteran status, national origin, religion or sex.

Sexual Harassment & General Anti-Harassment Policy Statement

Aquarelle Kids Academy affirms its commitment to ensuring an environment for all employees that is fair, humane, and respectful. In this environment, all members of the Aquarelle Kids Academy community can realize their maximum potential with employee performance supported and rewarded on the basis of relevant considerations such as ability and effort. Behaviors that inappropriately assert sexuality as relevant to employee performance are damaging to this environment. Sexual harassment is a violation of both law and Aquarelle Kids Academy policy and will not be tolerated in the Aquarelle Kids Academy community. Sexual harassment is a particularly sensitive issue that may affect any member of the Aquarelle Kids Academy community and as such will be dealt with promptly and confidentially by the Aquarelle Kids Academy administration.

Aquarelle Kids Academy prohibits sexual harassment of its employees and applicants for employment by any employee, non-employee or applicant. Such conduct may result in disciplinary action up to and including discharge. This policy covers all employees. Aquarelle Kids Academy will not tolerate, condone or allow sexual harassment, whether engaged in by fellow employees, supervisors, associates, clients or other non-employees who conduct business with Aquarelle Kids Academy.

Sexual harassment is any behavior that includes unwelcome sexual advances and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used as the basis for promotions or other employment decisions;
- The conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's job performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Aquarelle Kids Academy employees are entitled to work in an environment free from sexual harassment and a hostile or offensive working environment. We recognize sexual harassment as unlawful discrimination, just as conduct that belittles or demeans any individual on the basis of race, religion, national origin, sexual preference, age, disability, or other similar characteristics or circumstances.

No manager or supervisor shall threaten or imply that an employee's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect that person's employment, compensation, advancement, assigned duties, or any other term or condition of employment or career development. Sexual joking, lewd pictures and any conduct that tends to make employees of one gender "sex objects" are prohibited.

Employees who have complaints of sexual harassment should (and are encouraged to) report such complaints to their supervisor. If this person is the cause of the offending conduct, the employee may report this matter directly to the Director or owners. Your complaint will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Confidentiality of reports and investigations of sexual harassment will be maintained to the greatest extent possible. Any manager, supervisor, or employee who, after appropriate investigation, is found to have engaged in sexual harassment of another employee or tutor will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

If any party directly involved in a sexual harassment investigation is dissatisfied with the outcome or resolution, that individual has the right to appeal the decision. The dissatisfied party should submit his/her written comments to the Director.

Aquarelle Kids Academy will not in any way retaliate against any individual who makes a report of sexual harassment nor permit any employee to do so. Retaliation is a serious violation of this sexual harassment policy and should be reported immediately. Any person found to have retaliated against another individual for reporting sexual harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

III. EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS

1. Must have upon hire

Driver's License	CPR-Annual (Child * Infant)
Social Security	First Aid (3 years)
FDLE Screen (State & Local)	Three Personal References
Sheriff –Local Record Check	W-4 I-9 Completed
Child Abuse & Neglect Reporting	Complete Employee Application
Affidavit – Good Moral Character	Emergency Contact Information

Company will pay for screening. However, if you terminate employment within 90 days you will be required to pay all screening costs which amounts to \$40. This amount will be deducted from your last paycheck.

2. Must have within 6 months of employment

- Blood Bourne Pathogens Training
- Physical from Doctor

3. State Mandated Training Certificate (45 Hours)

All employees are required to have state mandated training. You must register to attend this training within 30 days of employment.

30 Hour - Child Care Training

5 Hour - Literacy Class (see below)

10 Hour – Infant/Toddler Appropriate Practices **or** Preschool Appropriate Practices

4. 24 hours Annual In-Service or 2.4 CEUs is required each year for Staff

Staff will be informed of training throughout the year. If you are unable to attend the scheduled training, you will need to see the Director immediately so that you can make other arrangements to acquire your 24 hours or 2.4 CEUs. You will be responsible for the cost. Upon completion of the training, you must supply verification of attendance with a certificate. This must be turned in to the Director. Training must be completed between July 1 and June 30 each year.

5. On-line Training Classes

You may register online for the following classes, which can be counted for in-service training. Log onto www.myflorida.com/childcare/training. On line training classes will require you to log in for each module. Upon completion of the course, you will need to print your certificate and turn it in to the office for your employee file. These courses are available at \$10 per course. The literacy class is mandatory; the other classes can be used towards the 24 hours required in-service training.

The classes are as follows:

- 30 Hour Training

- Basic Guidance and Discipline
- Early Literacy for Children Age Birth to Three
- Computer Technology for Child Care Professionals
- Behavioral Observation and Screening
- Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect
- Child Growth and Development
- Early Childhood Computer Learning Centers
- Director VPK Endorsement
- Child Care Facility Rules & Regulations
- Health, Safety and Nutrition
- Emergent Literacy for VPK Instructors

Remember, you need to print your certificate upon completion and turn it into the Director's office.

The Department of Children and Families require that all child care personnel must complete training within 12 months from the date training begins and may not exceed 15 months from the date of employment in the child care industry. If you do not meet this requirement you must voluntarily leave your position at Aquarelle Kids Academy. We will ask you to sign a document stating the reason you are leaving our employment.

6. Specific Training Requirements:

The drivers of vehicles transporting children must have documented training in safely transporting young children.

The cook, or individual who prepares the food, has either completed a food handler safety course or received documented training in food handling safety.

7. Date of Hire

Employment date of hire officially begins when the employee has received clearance from the Director to begin their duties. For employees who are hired with their 45 hours State Mandated Training, their date of hire will be their first day of work. This date will be used for their annual pay raise and employee anniversary. For employees who have not acquired their 45 hours of State Mandated Training, they will be eligible for pay raises one year after a certificate of completion for the 45 hours has been turned into the Director. No raises will be given to an employee who has not turned in their certificate. Pay raises will be based on performance, and other criteria as stated in this manual.

8. Drug Screening

Aquarelle Kids Academy reserves the right to require random drug testing.

9. DCF licensing

Aquarelle Kids Academy is licensed through the Department of Children and Families ("DCF"). This agency requires our staff to meet the state standards for Childcare Employment which is in accordance with the Florida Administrative Code 405-C. DCF will have three inspections of the

program each year. Inspectors will arrive unannounced and conduct a thorough inspection of the entire program.

IV. POLICIES AND GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

1. Absences: Employees must recognize that small children are most comfortable when they have a regular routine with their regular classroom teachers. Please be aware of the effect your absence has on the children in your care, as well as the parents and the other staff members. Please make every effort to come to work every day that you are scheduled. If you are absent, scheduled or unscheduled, the following procedures will apply.

- **Unscheduled Reasons:** If you must be absent for any unscheduled reason, such as illness, you are responsible for contacting the Director immediately. You may be asked to provide proof of illness in the form of a doctor's excuse for you or whoever is sick (child) causing the unscheduled absence. The Director will keep a record of all absences, and will use them in your annual employee review.
- **Scheduled Time-Off:** When requesting scheduled time off, please see the Director at least two weeks prior to the time off. **You will need to submit your request in writing** and hand it to the Director, so arrangements can be made for a substitute. The Director will keep a record of all absences and will use them in your annual employee review.

2. Attitude: Since all staff represents Aquarelle Kids Academy to the children, families, community and co-workers it is mandatory that all staff adhere to policy and procedures in attitude and action.

3. Baby Sitting Policy: We do not condone employee's baby-sitting children enrolled in Aquarelle Kids Academy. Employees may not take children off the center premises even if parents request the employee be added to the pick-up list. Employees may not solicit baby-sitting positions while on the job.

4. Background Checks: All employees are required to have a complete background check and will be screened for criminal records. Employees' fingerprints must be taken at a local law enforcement agency, and returned to the office, so they can be sent to FDLE in Tallahassee. You will be reimbursed for the cost, but you must turn in your receipt to the Director. We will receive a clearance letter and a notice letter from both FDLE and DCF. These documents will be kept in each employee file. After a period of five years, employees must be re-screened. If an employee receives a criminal charge and/or conviction during their time of employment, it is their responsibility to communicate this information to the Director immediately so a decision can be made regarding continued employment. Failure to do so will result in immediate termination.

5. Cell Phone Usage: Cell phones should not be on during working hours. If you need to check voice mails or make a call please do so during your lunch break. If an emergency arises that you need to use your phone it must be cleared through the administration. If a family member needs to reach you during working hours due to an emergency they can call the main centerline.

6. Classroom Discipline: All employees are to be thoroughly familiar with the discipline procedures as outlined in the parent handbook. All employees are to use appropriate techniques to redirect inappropriate behavior. Young children will respond to positive reinforcement and words of encouragement. No child shall ever be spanked, smacked, yanked, yelled at, hit or injured in

any way. No employee shall withhold food, water or toileting facilities from a child. All staff members are not allowed to speak harshly, use inappropriate language or curse at a child. Redirection will include moving the child to another center or area where they can resume safe play, as well as using encouraging words to tell the child what they should be doing. Positive redirection will include giving the child positive feedback, verbal praises and rewards. In the case of biting, special measures will be taken to insure safety.

7. Communications with Families: Teachers and staff are required to promote effective communication with the families at all times. Daily progress forms for students are provided for teachers to document the child's day while attending the program. These forms have areas to track napping, diaper changes and eating habits, as well as overall daily behavior. Samples of these forms can be found in the Staff Training Manual.

Communication with the families should include newsletters, phone calls and handwritten notes. All communications with families should be encouraging and positive. Conferences can be arranged for special discussions or concerns. Monthly calendars should be posted outside each classroom door to let families know about special events or activities. Monthly newsletters will be distributed through the office. Effective communications must include positive comments about the children, the classroom and the program. The Director must approve all written newsletters or notes before printing and distribution.

8. Confidentiality: All employees must adhere to the confidentiality policy of the program. Under no circumstance will any employee be allowed to discuss matters pertaining to other families, employees, or any situation involving children. Open discussions of private matters will result in immediate dismissal from employment. Private matters concerning children include behavior incidents, home situations, health issues, developmental issues, and domestic disputes. Private matters concerning employees include grievances, complaints, reprimands, home situations, health issues and other sensitive issues. Private matters concerning families include discussing another child in the classroom, discussions about other families, and discussions about employees that are hurtful and could potentially damage the reputation of the program. Any negative discussions about the Aquarelle Kids Academy owners, center Director, or co-workers will not be tolerated, as this is harmful to the center.

9. Continued Education: All employees must complete 12 hours of in-service training each year. This is a State Mandated requirement, and all training must be documented. Continuing your education emphasizes your professionalism and your desire to educate young children. Areas of training must include aspects of child-care, child development, learning environments, curriculum, communicating with families, documentation, and professionalism in the classroom. All training that is completed must be verified with a certificate, and all certificates must be turned in to the office for the employee file. Conferences, workshops and special guest speakers will be arranged so that all staff has access to obtaining their yearly in-service hours.

10. Copy Machine: Plan ahead when you need to make copies for your classroom. Copies for your class include newsletters, special announcements and those items needed for the lesson plan. You must log down how many copies you are making! This will help with the expense of making copies. Make sure you plan at least a week ahead to make your copies, as valuable teaching time is lost when you have to stop to make them on the day they are needed. All newsletters must be approved in the office before you make copies and send them home.

11. Curriculum: Aquarelle Kids Academy has chosen to use Creative Curriculum and HighReach Learning as a basis to provide rich, well planned and organized play opportunities for the children. They match our philosophy that children learn best through hands-on activities that address the needs of the whole child. In our search for an effective, developmentally appropriate curriculum, we looked for one that would keep the children active and engaged, would have measurable goals shared by all, would be research based and the content would be learned through play, investigation, and focused intentional teaching. Monthly themes are used to introduce information and learning takes place as a child explores and manipulates real objects. We also firmly believe that character education is critically needed for our young children and that the early years of a child's life are the best window of opportunity for laying the foundations for character development in children. In addition to the above curriculum, we decided to use the Character Critters program, which features stories for very young children with a message about six key elements of character development – responsibility, caring, trustworthiness, fairness, citizenship and respect. These basic elements of character are believed to be relevant for all individuals, regardless of race, creed, ethnic group, gender, politics or wealth.

12. Discipline (Employee): To facilitate cooperation with other employees and to support all legal rights and interests of both the employees and the program, we will enforce certain rules and regulations for staff members. Employee discipline procedures are in place to safeguard the program and each staff member.

Definitions:

- **Discipline:** refers to corrective measures used to redirect an employee and/or give instruction and correction.
- **Progressive Discipline:** refers to the concept of increased severity in disciplining employees who violate rules. Verbal or written reprimands are given for initial minor infractions; if the infraction continues, immediate stern disciplinary action will be taken.
- **Verbal Warning:** a verbal warning will be given on the first occurrence regarding a minor offense. All verbal warnings will be documented on the Employee Conference Form. The Director and employee will sign this form. A copy will be placed in the employee file.
- **Written Warning:** this disciplinary action is more severe than a verbal warning. A written warning will take place if the matter has not been resolved during the verbal warning or when a serious offense has occurred. The incident will be documented on the Employee Conference Form. Written warnings can be issued before a verbal warning in the event of a serious infraction. All written warnings will be placed in the employee file. Documentation will detail the reason for the action, the required corrective action and what further disciplinary measures will be taken if the performance or problem is not resolved. If more than two written warnings occur within a one month period, the employee will be placed on a 60 day probation, or a 3 day suspension, or if severe enough, both. If more than four written warnings are accumulated within a three-month period, the employee will be terminated.
- **Probation:** if the employee fails to respond to counseling and /or disciplinary notices concerning their performance, they will be placed on probation for a period of time not to exceed 60 days. The Director will observe the employee during this probationary period and may schedule a conference before the 60 days, if the recommended changes have not occurred. At that time, the Director will make the determination to place the employee on suspension or to terminate their employment. All information about the probation will be

recorded on the Employee Conference Form and signed by the Director and the employee. All documentation will be kept in the employee file.

- **Suspension:** an employee may also be suspended from their job without pay pending any investigation of allegations against the employee or due to a major offense. These allegations may either be job-related or related to a criminal investigation. Disciplinary suspensions will be no longer than 3 days and should be used sparingly as a last resort to termination. If at any time during the disciplinary cycle, a suspension occurs and the findings are not valid for the suspension, the employee will be allowed to return to work. Furthermore, all information relating to the suspension will be documented on the Employee Conference Form, signed by the Director and the employee. It will then be copied and placed in the employee file, with notice of the findings.
- **Termination:** An employee will be dismissed from their employment as a last resort for disciplinary action, and/or in the event of a critical offense (listed in the next section). If, after reasonable attempts to counsel, guide and change behavior patterns of employee have been made, and the employee fails to make changes, they will be terminated immediately. All information pertaining to the incident will be documented on the Employee Conference Form, signed by the Director and the employee. It will be copied and the documentation will be placed in the employee file.
- **Employee Conference and Supervisory Conference Forms:** Whenever an employee has to be counseled or disciplined for an infraction or corrective measure, the Director will complete a Supervisory Conference Form and/or an Employee Conference Form. These forms will include detailed information about the infraction, but not be limited to, such areas as improvement of work performance, personal problems affecting work, improper attitude, and what further disciplinary measures would be taken if the action continues. The forms are to be signed by the Director and the employee. Once the conference is completed, the forms will be completed, dated, signed and copied. The employee will receive the copies, and the originals will be placed in the employee file (Employee Conference and Supervisory Conference Forms can be found in the Staff Training Manual).

12.1 Minor Offenses: The Director will verbally reprimand employees for minor violations of policies and procedures. Such verbal reprimands will be recorded on the Employee Conference Form, copied and placed in the employee's personnel file. Minor violations are normally small or insignificant breaches of policy that can be corrected without serious disciplinary measures.

Grounds for a Reprimand:

- Unexcused tardiness including returning from break or lunch
- Failure to observe instructions
- Attending to personal affairs during working hours
- Non-deliberate failure to record attendance properly
- Minor damage to property
- Creating or contributing to unsafe/ unsanitary conditions (without injury)
- Failure to dress appropriately

12.2 Serious Offense: These offenses are violations that may not justify immediate discharge or suspension. The first offense should be a written reprimand. Additional offenses warrant further action pursuant to the plan of progressive discipline, and can also be grounds for immediate termination, if deemed necessary by the Director.

Grounds for a Serious Offense

- Two or more incidents of unauthorized absences within a 3 month period
- Excessive absences of 3 or more days in a 6-month period
- Excessive Tardiness
- Smoking
- Failure to notify Director of an emergency-based absence
- Use of vile, foul or abusive language
- Poor attitude and/or inability to support Program
- Removal of property from premises without written authorization
- Breach of confidence and professional ethics among co-workers
- Unsafe items left within easy reach of children (bleach bottles, scissors)
- Talking on a cell phone during program hours, unless pre-approved phone call by Director was arranged
- Speaking unkindly about parents or children to co-workers or other parents

12.3 Major Offense: These offenses are violations of a lesser degree than critical offenses, but which still necessitate immediate disciplinary action in the form of suspension from work or immediate termination.

Grounds for a Major Offense

- Committing 2 serious offenses within a 3-month period
- Non-notification of absence (failure to notify Director at all)
- Continued Tardiness of 3 or more occasions within a 2-month period
- Sleeping on the job
- Second offense of smoking on campus
- Disorderly conduct on premises
- Willful negligence, including leaving assigned location without authorization
- Consuming alcoholic beverages/and or using drugs
- Violations of safety standards that could result in harm to other employees or children
- Causing major damage to equipment or furnishings
- Leaving a child unattended

12.4 Critical Offenses: If an employee is charged with a critical offense, they will be placed on suspension or face immediate termination. Documentation of the offense will be compiled and placed in the employee file.

Grounds for Immediate Dismissal

- Physical assault on a child; such as hitting, smacking, kicking, slapping, biting, or any type of physical harm that would cause injury to a child.
- Withholding food, water or bathroom facilities from a child
- Screaming, yelling or verbally abusing a child/ and or a co-worker
- Willfully destroying property in the classroom or center facility
- Physical assault on a co-worker or a parent/another adult
- Threatening, intimidating or coercing children, employees or others
- Willful acts or conducts that are detrimental to children or other employees
- Harassing an employee or parent
- Removal of confidential files or records

- Theft
- Committing a felony
- Immoral or indecent conduct
- Gossiping about other students or employees
- Bypassing the proper chain of command
- Willful disobedience to a direct order given by the Director and/or owners
- Deliberate falsification of records, (employee application, student information)
- Unauthorized possession of weapons, firearms, or explosives on the premises

12.5 Procedure

	1st Offense	2nd Offense	3rd Offense	4th Offense
Minor	Verbal Reprimand	Written Warning	Suspension	Discharge
Serious	Written Warning	Suspension	Discharge	
Major	Suspension	Discharge		
Critical	ALL CRITICAL OFFENSES RESULTS IN IMMEDIATE TERMINATION			

The procedures listed above are a guide to how each offense will be handled. In the event of an incident that causes harm or injury, or an incident the Director, or center owners deem unacceptable, the employee may be terminated immediately. In the event of insubordination, the Director or owners have the right to suspend or terminate the employee. All incidents are recorded and placed in the employee file.

13. Dress Code: All employees of Aquarelle Kids Academy should take pride in their appearance and be neatly dressed in order to set a good example for our program. Attire should be appropriate for the nature of working with young children.

Employees will be required to adhere to the following dress code:

- Khaki docker style pants, capris, shorts, or skirts (shorts and skirts must be knee length)
- White dress T-shirt or Polo Shirt
- Smock. One smock per employee will be provided by the company. The smocks will be replaced every six months, if needed. If the employee needs another one in that time frame she would have to pay for it.
- Closed toe shoes are required due to the safety concern of our playground. Comfortable shoes are recommended.

As a preschool, we believe our employees must be a role-model for the children in our care. Our policy prohibits visible tattoos or body piercings on our school property. We do allow stud earrings but not hoops, as a child may accidentally pull or tear them from an ear. This also applies to chains and necklaces worn around the neck or wrist. Nail length should be short for hygiene and safety of the children.

14. Employee Agreement: All staff members are required to sign an employee agreement, which will verify that the employee knows and understands his/her job description and the responsibilities of the job. Existing employees will sign an agreement at the start of each new school year. New hired staff members will complete a 90 day probation period before they sign

their agreement. During this probation period, the Director will observe and evaluate the job performance and document the information. A conference will be arranged after the completion of the 90 days, at which time the employee agreement will be discussed, and signed. Copies of all employee agreements will be kept in the employee personnel file. Agreements can be used during employee evaluations, reviews and in the event of disciplinary action.

15. Fire Drills: Each month we are required to have a Fire Drill practice. They will be unannounced and held at random times. All staff must know the Fire Drill procedures. They are as follows:

All classrooms have a fire escape route posted by the classroom door. You must know the exit route for your classroom at all times.

During the actual drill, you will hear the Director setting off the fire alarm. Children must line up and exit quickly with the teacher and assistant safely to their designated area. Teachers of the infant class must place the children in the rolling crib. Younger children can be assisted with the use of the walking rope. All teachers must grab and carry their daily attendance sheet with clipboard and their radios as they exit the building. When exiting the building, teachers must report the headcount to the Director. When all the rooms have been cleared, the Director will give a clearance call on the radio for everyone to return to the classrooms.

The Fire Drills are required to be timed and recorded on a document posted in the office. Due to licensing requirements, monthly drills must be logged with date, number of adults, children and the recorded time of exiting the building.

All employees must be familiar with all Fire Escape Routes, which can be found on the inside wall of each classroom, offices and kitchen area.

In the event of a real fire, teachers must act quickly and safely. **DO NOT PANIC!** Staff must remain calm while helping the children to exit the building. Children will be taken to an area away from fire trucks and hoses. In the event of a large fire, the fire department will inform the Director as to where it is best to relocate the children.

All employees should also make themselves aware of the Emergency Procedures – Crisis/Disaster Response Handbook located in the Staff Training Manuals in each room. It may also be downloaded from our website www.aquarellekids.com.

16. Grievance Procedure: Whenever a large group of people work together for any extended period of time, problems and conflicts can occur. In order to ensure prompt and constructive problem solving, employees are required to first discuss the problem with the Director. At that time, the Director may arrange a meeting with both parties, or schedule an individual conference before bringing both parties together. More than one attempt may be necessary before a solution is reached. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached within a reasonable time, the problem will be brought to the attention of the owners. If a mutually accepted solution cannot be reached with the Director and owners, the employees will both be placed on probation for a period of 3 weeks. A conference will be rescheduled to determine if changes have been made and a reasonable solution has been accepted. If a reasonable solution has not been met, the Director and owner will confer to determine whether or not to terminate one or both employees. All grievance procedures will be documented and signed by the employee and the Director.

17. Insurance Benefits (Long & Short Term Disability): Once eligible for Aquarelle Kids Academy group insurance program, any premiums required to be paid by the employee may be deducted from the employee's paycheck on a pre-tax basis pursuant to Section 125 of the Internal Revenue Code. This pre-tax deduction results in greater "take home" pay for the employee.

*Separate information will be available in the future.

18. Jury or Witness Duty: Aquarelle Kids Academy will grant you non-paid time off for mandatory jury duty or a court appearance as a witness when you are required to appear as a result of a subpoena, provided a copy of the court order or subpoena is supplied to the Director when you request time off.

19. Leave of Absence: Under certain circumstances, employees who are unable to work due to extended illnesses or family emergency will be excused from duties. They will be placed on a Leave of Absence, with documentation collected and placed in the employee personnel file. If the employee is ill, their next of kin must notify the Director. If there is a family emergency, the employee must notify the Director so arrangements can be made to secure a substitute. In the event that an employee has been on a leave of absence due to an illness or injury, they must provide a clearance letter from their physician to return to work. This will be placed in the employee file.

20. Medical Disability or Family Medical Leave: Employees may be granted up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave during a designated twelve-month period due to a personal health condition or family medical leave (such as to care for the employee's child after birth or adoption or to care for the employee's spouse, child or parent who has a serious health condition). Where appropriate, the first 12 weeks of such leave will be counted against the employee's leave entitlement under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

21. Pregnancy: The staff member must receive written permission from her medical doctor to continue working in the facility. If the doctor feels that the pregnancy will be a healthy one and not be put at risk in the child care setting, the staff member and the director should execute a pregnancy plan. The pregnancy plan must be based on fairness to the expectant staff member, her coworkers and the director. This plan needs also to be flexible and accommodating to the physical limitations of the expectant worker yet, support the needs of the center. The provisions of the pregnancy plan may include changing the classroom of the caregiver or modification of duties.

22. Maintenance of Classroom: All teachers are required to maintain their classrooms in a neat and organized fashion. Rooms come equipped with furnishings and some materials, but it is up to the teachers to set up the daily stage for learning. Each teacher must display her lesson plans and goals outside the classroom door, as well as post the monthly calendar. Inside the classroom, teachers must have easy access to their first aid kit, diapering supplies, kleenex, and radio. All items belonging to the children must be clearly labeled with the child's name. Cubbies are to be labeled for each child. With the use of the HighReach Learning and Creative Curriculums the classroom should be set up with age appropriate learning centers. These areas are to be clearly labeled, as well as equipped with the age appropriate materials. All items in the classroom are to be cleaned daily with a cleaning solution. Trash cans should be in an easy to reach place for both children and teachers. In classrooms where young children are diapered, teachers must wrap the soiled diapers in a plastic bag and then place them in a trash can with a lid. It is recommended to use the spray can of disinfectant to eliminate the odors.

Soap, toilet paper and paper towels are provided in each bathroom daily. If there is a shortage, teachers must notify the office so arrangements can be made to quickly replenish materials.

Classroom maintenance also includes observations of light fixtures, windows and ceiling tiles, etc. If there is a broken fixture or equipment malfunction, teachers must notify the office immediately. All electrical outlets must be covered with the plastic electric protectors. Cords for radios and c.d. players must be kept away from children at all times. No other electrical devices are to be in the classroom; this includes cell phone chargers, crock- pots, coffee pots, electric tea-kettles, electric frying pans, toasters or other small appliances such as hair dryers or curling irons.

Teachers are encouraged to take the initiative in providing a clean and safe learning environment for the children. Clutter, excess trash and general messiness will not be allowed. Please remember that we are stewards of the classrooms and we must do our part to ensure that all classrooms are clean and sanitary. Daily cleaning check list should be completed and returned to the office daily. Teachers will also find in the Staff Training Manual under Forms, maintenance request forms, supply list forms and many other forms to complete and return to office as necessary.

23. Medications: Our licensing agency mandates that all medications must be administered in the school office. All families are required to fill out the Authorization to Administer Medication form and hand it to the Director with the medication. All medications must be clearly typed with the name of child, name of medication, dosage and times to be given. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE WILL THE PROGRAM ALLOW MEDICATIONS TO BE GIVEN IN THE CLASSROOM.** All medications must be given to the child in the office. The Director will collect the child, administer the medication, sign and document the medication log, and return the child to the classroom. All medications must be returned to the families at the end of the day. Medications must arrive in their original container and be taken to the office. Staff members must remind families of this policy. If a parent or family member requests the teacher to give the child the medicine, the staff members must send them to the office, as required by this policy. Any staff member who administers medication in their classroom will be terminated immediately, no exceptions. Staff members with children attending the program must comply by this policy and administer medications in the office.

24. Accidents/Incidents/Infestation: All accident/incident /infestation must be documented immediately. Accidents include falls, bumps, or injury to a child. Incidents include a child who has hit or bitten another child, or has caused harm by throwing an item or by pushing or pulling a child down. First Aid must be administered immediately to the injured child. Accident/Incident/Infestation Form must be filled out completely by the teacher, with solid documentation. The form then needs to be signed by the teacher, parent and Director. A copy will be made and given to the parent, with the original placed in the student file.

25. Allergies: Families are strongly urged to inform the Director and teacher of any allergies their child may have. For students with allergies to insects (bees, red ants, mosquitoes), they must provide a doctor's note and an Epi-Pen. A written notice of the allergy will be posted in the child's classroom, so that the safety of the child is considered at all times.

In the event that a child on campus has a life-threatening allergy to peanuts, the Director will make a concession for the safety of that child and declare the campus to be a "peanut free zone". All families will be made aware of this change, without revealing the name of the child.

26. Overtime Pay: One and one-half times the straight-time rate is paid for all hours worked by full time employees in excess of 40 during any work week unless otherwise defined by state mandate. **The Director or owners must approve all overtime in advance.** This means that you will not be paid overtime for clocking in or out before or after your normal starting or quitting time unless you receive your supervisor's approval to do so. When it is necessary to work overtime, you are expected to do so as a condition of your employment.

During a work week when there is a paid company holiday the holiday will count as a day worked for purposes of computing overtime that work week. Vacation time will not count as a day worked for purposes of computing overtime in a given work week.

27. Parent Handbook: All staff members are to be familiar with the contents of the parent handbook. Each staff member will receive a copy of the handbook at the beginning of school year. Included in the Parent Handbook will be information about policies pertaining to children, program schedules, fees, discipline, and emergency procedures. Staff members will be required to sign an acknowledgement that they have received and read the Parent Handbook.

28. Performance Evaluation: All staff members will receive a yearly performance evaluation. For new employees, they will be evaluated within the first 90 days of employment. Staff evaluations will include classroom visits and review of performance. Evaluations will include areas of professionalism, classroom management, punctuality, preparations of lesson plans, and overall commitment to the program. The evaluation will monitor those specific job requirements for staff. A formal evaluation document will be used and the employees are required to sign the evaluations. A space is provided for comments. Evaluations will be copied and documented in the employee file. Yearly pay increase will be based upon the employee evaluations (Performance Evaluation Forms can be found in the Staff Training Manual).

29. Pet Policy: We all enjoy being with pets and want our children to be exposed to as many different kinds as possible so that they learn about their habitat. However, we need to have consideration for the children and staff who could be allergic and/or afraid of them. Pets can sometimes act differently around a large group of people, especially excited children. We want to keep our children safe. Please refrain from bringing pets into the school unless this visit has been prearranged with the director and classroom teacher.

30. Probationary Period: The Director will evaluate new staff members within the first 90 days of employment. They will receive hands-on training by the Director and/or a Lead Teacher. During this time, the Director may move the new employee to another classroom, if it is evident that the employee is unable to perform the required duties needed for a specific class. If the new employee fails to perform the required duties and responsibilities, the Director has the right to terminate their employment.

31. Professionalism: All employees of Aquarelle Kids Academy are required to maintain an attitude of professionalism at all times. Displaying a clear and competent knowledge of program policies will ensure the families of our commitment to excellence. Do not discuss inappropriate subjects such as other students, other parents or staff members, or anything in a derogatory manner. Staff should always strive to have a positive attitude, use encouraging words and show sincerity and respect.

32. Purchasing Materials and Supplies: Teachers cannot make a purchase unless the Director has approved it. If supplies are needed for a special project, **the teacher must request them in**

writing at least TWO WEEKS before the supplies are needed. Request forms are located in the office and may be also find in the Staff Training Manual. Under no exceptions will purchases be made the day they are needed. It is the teacher's responsibility to prepare ahead of time and estimate what is needed for all lesson plans and projects.

33. Nap Time Procedures: All children will have a designated time for resting, which is called Nap Time. Children ages 12 months and above will rest on vinyl mats, which are supplied by the program. Mats are to be placed 18 inches apart on the carpeted areas of the classrooms. This is a State Regulation for Child Care Centers. Parents are encouraged to provide a crib sheet as well as a small blanket or beach towel for their children. Sheets, blankets and towels will be sent home on Friday to be washed and returned Monday. Mats are to be cleaned and sanitized after each nap period. If a mat has any small tears or rips, it must be reported to the Director, who will then replace the mat.

34. New Students: During the school year, new families will be arriving. It is vital that all teachers and staff greet the new families and go the extra mile to welcome them to the program. The Director will notify the classroom teacher of new students, as well as make the introductions to the family. Teachers should ask for general information and offer assistance to the families, which will ensure a smooth transition for the children.

35. Resignation and Termination: Continued employment with Aquarelle Kids Academy is based upon mutual consent. In the event that an employee wishes to end their employment, they must submit a resignation notice to the Director. All employees are required to give at least a two-week written notice (10 working days). This will ensure that preparations can be made for an immediate replacement for the classroom. In the event of a family emergency, the Director will waive this policy. Staff members agree not to compete, by caring for Aquarelle Kids Academy clients currently enrolled during a period of six months, following a staff member's termination.

For employees who have failed to comply with policies and procedures as stated in the section of this handbook under Discipline, the Director has the right to terminate them. The Director is also privileged to terminate the employee relationship at will.

36. Special Class Activities: The Director, prior to the actual event, must approve any class activities or party that involves parent participation. It is recommended to schedule parties for the main holidays during the school year such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter. Additional parties can include Fall Harvest, Spring Fling and Mother's Day. Activities centered on special themes or unit studies are another way to invite parent participation. Teachers should plan big events to be placed on the school calendar at the start of the school year. Individual classroom events should be planned one month in advance. Arrangements should follow these steps:

- Director Approval
- Written Notice to Parents
- Purchase/Donations (Sign-up sheet)
- Activity Prep
- Activity
- Cleanup

37. Staff Meetings: Staff meetings will be held once a month. The Director may schedule additional meetings if needed. Staff meetings are designed to inform employees of upcoming

events, review policies and procedures, discuss concerns, share prayer requests, and update staff on current practices and provide additional information regarding the program. Staff members who do not attend the meetings will be required to meet with the Director, and failure to make an attempt to attend will result in probation and/or termination. Staff meetings are mandatory and all employees must make every effort to be present. Please make alternate arrangements for your own children for all staff meetings.

Special called meetings may be necessary throughout the year, and staff will be notified by a personal contact from the Director. This can include phone calls and personal visits to the classroom. Employees will be paid for their attendance at all staff meetings.

38. Supervision of Children: Children must be supervised at all times. This includes maintaining a constant view by sight at all times. No child is ever allowed to leave the classroom unattended. All children must be with an adult at all times, which includes inside the classroom, walking in a line to and from the playground, going to the bathrooms, or walking to another classroom. According to the Florida Childcare Standards; Section 65-C, we are under Federal Law to comply with this policy. **Headcounts will be done periodically to ensure that teachers know how many children are in their care. During a Fire Drill, a head count will be required during the exit of the building. In the event any staff member loses a child, they will be terminated immediately. Any child found left alone in a classroom will also result in termination of the teacher responsible for that child. This is a serious offense, which will require a report to the Department of Children & Families, an investigation and/or a court hearing. ALL CHILDREN MUST BE SUPERVISED!**

39. Teacher Conferences: Teachers who have a concern about a child must first speak with the Director before scheduling a parent/teacher conference. Any concern must be backed up with written documentation of the concern. If it is in the area of a behavior issue, all information must be specific about the concern. This includes dates and times of incidents, as well as location in the classroom or playground, what was going on during this time and what steps were taken to redirect the child. If the concern is about an area of development, the information must include details of time, date, location, activity and outcome. The teacher must supply documentation of any concern so that the Director can review and observe the child before scheduling a conference. In the event of a child who is posing a danger to others or themselves, the Director will immediately contact the parent. All conferences will be documented, and signed by the teacher, parent and the Director.

It is mandatory that all Lead Teachers schedule a yearly conference to discuss the developmental progress of their students. Additional conferences should be scheduled if both teacher and parents feel the need. Lead Teachers will have a Developmental Checklist that can be used for this conference, as well as the results of the Ages and Stages Screening Tool. In the event that a teacher must discuss a challenging issue with a parent, they must first confer with the Director before the meeting. The Director will attend the scheduled conference.

40. Teacher Responsibilities: Lead Teachers and Teaching Assistants must be able to perform the required task listed in their job description. Each staff member must fulfill the employee requirement as stated in the handbook. Lead Teachers will have the primary responsibilities of the classroom. They will develop the lesson plans and schedule activities for their classroom with the help of an assistant teacher.

Teachers are responsible for the following:

- Preparing Weekly Lesson Plans and Goals
- Setting up and changing the classroom
- Securing supplies and materials
- Implementing Lesson Plans
- Maintaining classroom safety and cleanliness
- Managing discipline and control of children
- Communicating with families daily
- Complying with all program policies and procedures
- Attending staff meetings, in-service trainings and conferences
- Maintaining effective communication with Director/Staff
- Knowing Emergency Procedures (Fire Drills/First Aid/CPR)
- Documenting all Incidents/Accidents
- Reporting Child Abuse

Planning Time: Lead teachers are offered planning time on a daily basis. Children nap for two hours after lunch. During this time, lead teachers are given one hour for lunch and one hour for planning and preparing lessons. Assistant teachers are encouraged to help during this time with preparation. This is also a time for adding notes to children's portfolios, reading professional magazines and on-line articles. Staff can also update children's take-home folders with work they have accomplished or notes to parents.

Program Policies: All staff must be familiar with program policies, procedures, fire drills, filling out accident/incident/infestation reports and must provide effective communication with parents. In addition, all staff must comply with the local and state standards as mandated by the licensing agency, DCF. This includes following protocol for child discipline, administering medications, reporting abuse and illnesses.

Reporting Child Abuse: Employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse. Our company will never prevent you from making the phone call to the Child Abuse Registry office. However, we ask you to inform us ahead of time so that we are aware of the situation and can prepare for a minimum of disruption at our school. As with any accident/incident we require a written report describing the situation in detail. This report would become part of a child abuse investigation and should therefore be as accurate and objective as possible.

Staff Meetings: All staff must attend monthly staff meetings, which will be announced by the Director. Employees will be paid to attend these scheduled meetings. Additional In-service Training classes are required each year and all staff must make every attempt to attend. If an employee cannot attend the scheduled training, they are required to obtain their training at their expense and must provide the Director a certificate of the In-service Training Hours. All staff members are required to obtain 12 hours of In-service Training each year.

41. Time Cards/Sheets: By law, Aquarelle Kids Academy is obligated to keep accurate records of the time worked by employees. Each employee must fill out the appropriate electronic or equivalent Aquarelle Kids Academy time record each week.

Time records must be completed in accordance with the Aquarelle Kids Academy time-reporting guidelines. All time sheets/records must be reported to the Director. Any variances in worked time must be reported to the Director as soon as possible.

Overtime compensation is paid to non-exempt employees in accordance with federal and state wage and hour restrictions. All overtime work performed must receive the supervisor's prior authorization. The frequency of Aquarelle Kids Academy Payroll distribution is dependent upon an employee's employment status.

Regular hourly non-exempt employees and contingent hourly non-exempt employees are paid weekly on or by the Friday following the end of the pay week.

Every staff member/teacher must be physically present on the premises of the center to sign in or out at the beginning and ending of each work shift. This includes going and returning from meal/lunch periods.

Any staff member/teacher signing in or out for another staff member/teacher is grounds for immediate dismissal. No excuses will be tolerated.

42. Time-Off Benefits: Full time employees are entitled to paid time off after one year of employment.

The following holidays are recognized as paid holidays:

- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day
- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day

43. Time-Off for Funerals: Full time employees will be entitled to take off up to 3 work days with pay to attend the funeral or take care of personal matters related to the death of a member of your immediate family. This includes a parent, spouse, grandparent, spouse's parents, brothers or sisters, child, spouse's child by a former marriage.

44. Vacation Policy: Fulltime employees will be entitled to vacation pay based on years of employment:

- 1 Year 1 week paid vacation
- 3 Years 2 weeks paid vacation
- 5 Years 3 weeks paid vacation
- 10 Years 4 weeks paid vacation

45. Visitors: Your relatives and friends may want to visit you at our school. Please advise them that you are responsible for supervising children and are unable to have them stay with you during working hours.

46. Workman Compensation: *See separate information packet supplied to you by First Financial Company.