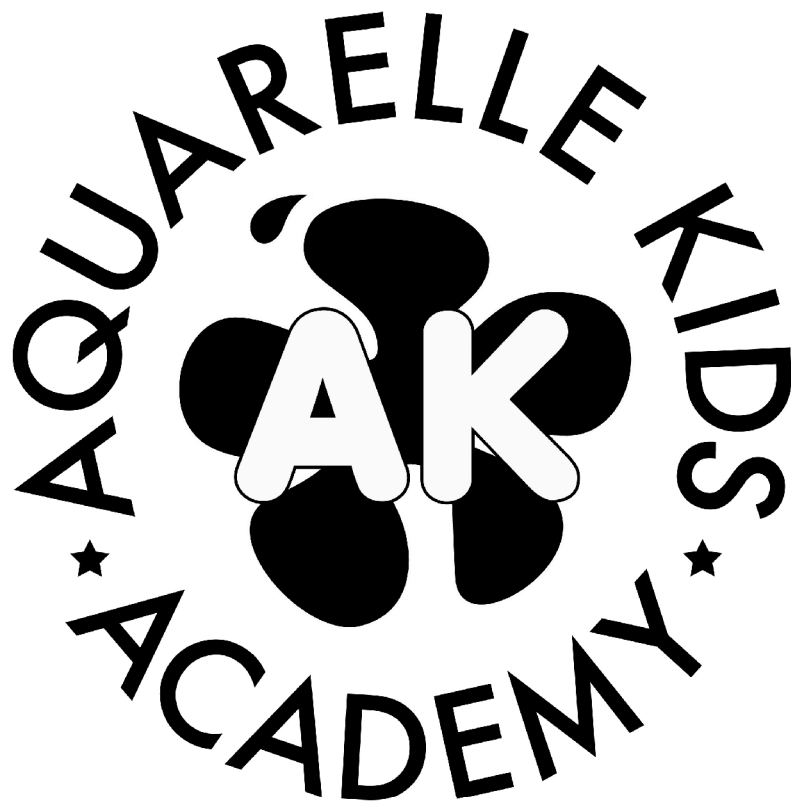


AQUARELLE KIDS ACADEMY

PARENT HANDBOOK



HAPPY KIDS, GREAT MINDS!

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1. WELCOME TO AQUARELLE KIDS ACADEMY

Dear Families:

Welcome to Aquarelle Kids Academy! We are pleased that you have chosen our school and we want you to know that you have joined a family that strongly believes in making your early care and education experience a rewarding one.

At Aquarelle Kids Academy we maintain a warm and loving atmosphere and are committed to educational excellence. Our goal is to provide a wonderfully happy, safe and motivating environment filled with all the tools and guidance your child requires to develop a strong foundation for success; educationally, emotionally, physically and socially. In addition, our entire team works diligently to ensure the safest and most healthy environment, so you can feel confident that your child is happy, safe, healthy and educated. What better gift to give your child and yourself!

Our teachers and staff at Aquarelle Kids Academy provide personalized care for families seeking a well-rounded approach to child care. Through these early steps into learning we help shape the future and it is our belief that there is no greater legacy than to have influenced the life of a child.

Aquarelle Kids Academy has established a number of policies concerning program and classroom practices. These guidelines have been developed to comply with both state licensing standards and national accreditation criteria, and to reflect input from teachers, students and parents. In addition, we have developed our programs based on the most current and proven research, taking into account the needs, interests and abilities of the children.

Thanks for taking the time to get to know more about us. We would love to meet and welcome you into our family. Please feel free to contact us or our staff with any questions you may have.

2. PHILOSOPHY AND OBJECTIVES

Aquarelle Kids Academy is an institution specialized in the education of children during their early years. Our mission is 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-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.

3. ENROLLMENT POLICY

Aquarelle Kids Academy will admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin and grant rights, privileges, programs and activities to all students of Aquarelle Kids Academy. We will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national and ethnic origin in the administration of our educational and admission policies and procedures.

Parents should review, complete, sign and return the Enrollment Packet to the center, along with a \$75 registration fee. The Enrollment Packet is available at the center's front desk. If space is not immediately available, your child will be added to our wait list. To hold a slot on the waiting list, parents are required to pay the \$75 enrollment fee. This fee is 100% refundable prior to receiving an available space. Downloadable forms along with detailed information regarding our center philosophy, curriculum and facility can be found at our website www.aquarellekids.com.

4. LICENSING INFORMATION

- **Governmental Licensing Information:** DCF licensing 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.
- **Accreditation Information:** During the next year our goal for the school is to become nationally accredited. Accreditation of schools was established to assist us in providing quality enhancements for children, professional development opportunities for staff, and effective management skills for administrators and owners. We are aware of the process and already have many of the components completed. Parent questionnaires are a very important component and it is mandatory that you complete this questionnaire for us. You will receive updates on our progress during the upcoming months.

5. TUITION POLICY

- **Enrollment Fee:** An initial enrollment fee of \$75 is due at the time enrollment application is submitted. The enrollment fee is NOT refundable once a slot has been allocated. An annual re-enrollment fee will be charged May 31 of each year. If your child's initial start date falls between March 1 and May 31, your annual re-enrollment fee for that year will be waived.
- **Supplies and Materials Fee:** An initial supplies and materials fee of \$60 is due at the time of enrollment. The supplies and materials fee is not refundable. An annual supplies and materials fee will be charged May 31 of each year. If your child's initial start date

falls between March 1 and May 31, your annual supplies and materials fee for that year will be \$20.

- **Tuition Payment:** TUTION IS DUE EACH FRIDAY FOR THE FOLLOWING WEEK. Tuition is based on a weekly rate only. No discounts will be made for holidays or other days on which the facility does not operate.
- **Late Payment:** Tuition is considered late if not received by close of business Friday. There is a \$10 late fee for all payments received from Monday and a \$40 late fee for all payments received after Wednesday. If payment is not rendered by the end of the week, your child will not be allowed to return until payment in full is received.
- **Returned Checks:** If your check returns for any reason, a \$25 non sufficient fund (NSF) fee will be charged to your account. If we receive two NSF checks in one three month period, payment must be in cash only.
- **Payment Disputes:** If the center is required to take legal action for non-payment and/or nanny placement fee, the parent will be responsible for any legal/attorney fees incurred by the center.
- **Subsidized Care:** We will accept vouchers from state and federal offices for subsidized child care providing we are eligible to be a provider for these agencies. We will consider each voucher on an individual basis.
- **Family Discounts:** We offer a family discount of 10% for each additional full time child after the full price of the youngest child is paid.
- **Returning Students:** To maintain enrollment status, qualifying students will be given the opportunity to re-enroll each spring with notification and appropriate forms being provided by the administration. Re-enrollment forms will be given out, and a designated period of time will be allowed for returning the necessary forms. At the conclusion of the designated period, the privilege to reserve available spaces cannot be guaranteed.

Please refer to separate Tuition and Program Information Form for more detailed fee information.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY

All families and employees must adhere to the confidentiality policy of the program. Under no circumstance will families and any employee be allowed to discuss matters pertaining to other families and their children as well as other employees. Open discussions of private matters will result in immediate dismissal from our school. Private matters concerning children include behavior incidents, home situations, health issues, developmental issues, and domestic disputes. Private matters concerning families and 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. Student records are confidential and will not be read by anyone but the family of the student and school staff. Families have the right to request anything in the file to be removed or corrected. These records will not be sent to another agency or school without family permission. 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.

7. MANDATED REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

Under Florida Law (Chapter 415) all child care employees and teachers are among those professions legally obligated to report child abuse and/or neglect to the Department of Children and Families. It is our policy in Aquarelle Kids Academy to follow up on every incident, which is in any way suspected.

8. PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

We have established the following rules to protect our children and staff. We ask you to refrain from all actions and/or behaviors that may cause disruption to our program, including but not limited to the following:

- Swearing/cursing;
- Threatening of staff, parents or children;
- Physical/verbal punishment of your children or other children;
- Smoking inside the building, on the playgrounds and parking lots;
- Abusing our safety policies;
- Quarreling with other parents or staff;
- Violating the confidentiality policy;
- Not following our dress code policy.

9. OPEN DOOR POLICY

We have an open door policy. Parents are welcome to visit the school anytime. We request that you please sign in and out through the front office.

- **Volunteer Parent Aid:** We always appreciate the cooperation and help we receive each year from our parents both in the classroom and during special events. We ask that when you are assisting in these areas you follow the teacher's dress code and do not wear inappropriate clothing. We want to thank you for your cooperation in this matter. Please sign in and out through the office.
- **Child's Classroom Folder:** Your child's classroom folder is a primary form of communication between the teacher and the parent. Included in your child's folder will be a daily sheet (children 2 and under) providing important information regarding your child's day as well as any communications regarding items we need from you (diapers, formula, change of clothes). Also included in your child's folder may be activities that your child is currently working on (cutting, writing, language activities, etc.). Please review these activities with your child so that you may understand what a wonderful day of learning he/she has experienced.

10. DISMISSAL POLICY

The center reserves the right to dismiss any child for any reason at any time deemed necessary, such as behavioral issues that may affect the safety of other children, non-payment for services and non compliance with administrative policies. We expect children to conduct themselves appropriately and abide by the discipline policy. Termination would occur only as a last resort.

11. WITHDRAWAL POLICY

A minimum of two weeks written notice is required prior to disenrollment. You are responsible for payments for those two weeks whether your child attends school or not. Accrued vacation time cannot be used for withdrawal notice.

12. COURT ORDERS AFFECTING ENROLLED CHILDREN

If you have a court order which will affect us caring for your child in any way, it is advisable to share these court decisions with us. We would require a copy of the order to be kept in your child's file so that referral can be made at the appropriate time. If a change is made to the order, please remember to update our files. We will discuss the court order with all parties involved so that we are all clear of our obligations.

13. ATTENDANCE POLICY

Each day is a unique teaching/learning experience. Attendance is compulsory unless unavoidable by illness. The full weekly tuition will be due regardless of the number of days attended. Please be sure to call by 9:00 a.m. if your child will not be attending. Students may not be dropped off between 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Excessive absences may result in your child not being able to adjust to the teacher, other students, or to the classroom routine. It may also result in poor developmental achievements. If there are excessive absences, a parent, teacher/director conference will be called.

It is extremely important that parents instill the value of being punctual to their early childhood age child. It is disturbing to the teacher and class when students arrive late. Excessive tardiness will lead to a parent/teacher/director conference. We urge the parent to cooperate in this vital area by bringing their child to the classroom on time. Please remember it is embarrassing to the child to come in to class consistently tardy.

14. DROP OFF - PICK UP PROCEDURES

All students should be dropped off and picked up by a parent or authorized person over eighteen (18). NO student should be allowed to walk to class alone. Please enter the building through the main lobby. A photo ID will be required of anyone picking up your child which will be matched against our records. Students **MUST** be signed in and out on a daily basis in the main office.

- **Late Pick Up:** A late pick-up fee of \$1 per minute per child will be charged for any child picked up after 6:30 p.m. This fee must be paid by the end of the week, or your child will no longer be enrolled. Please, contact the center immediately as soon as you realize that you will be late. If we do not hear from you by 7:30 p.m. and all the attempts to contact you and your emergency contacts have failed, the center will call the Clermont Police and the Florida Department of Children and Families.
- **Emergency Contact Information:** All student files should contain at least two alternate emergency phone numbers in case parents cannot be reached by phone. If there are any changes in these numbers, please notify the school of the new numbers. It is very important that current numbers are on file at all times.

15. HOLIDAYS / VACATION

Aquarelle Kids Academy will be closed to recognize the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving and Christmas Day. The center will close at 3:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. If a holiday falls on Saturday, the center will be closed the prior Friday. If a holiday falls on Sunday, the center will be closed the following Monday. There is no reduction in tuition for these holidays or other days on which the facility does not operate or opens late.

Two weeks vacation will be given after six months enrollment for full time students, and one week vacation will be given after six months enrollment for part time students. The vacation week(s) will not be carried over from year to year. Parents must complete a vacation form at least two weeks in advance of their vacation. Please remember that vacation time cannot be used toward the two week withdrawal notice.

16. TRANSPORTATION

We offer before and after school transportation to Sawgrass Bay Elementary School. Drop off and pick up at other schools will be considered, depending on the distance and time schools begin and end. Our before and after school programs are for children up to eight years of age. We will also offer transportation for field trips during our school camps. Children being transported must adhere to strict behavior rules in order to keep them safe. If your child does not follow these rules we will ask you to find alternate transportation arrangements. If there is a day your child does not need transportation, we ask you to call us in advance.

17. SCHOOL CALENDAR

You will find our school calendar posted in the lobby. You will also find a copy of this calendar, detailing the days we will be closed, inside your orientation packet.

18. EMERGENCY AND INCLEMENT WEATHER CLOSING INFORMATION

In the event of severe weather, such as a hurricane, we will follow the course taken by Lake County Public Schools. Please listen to your local radio or television broadcast for school closure. There is no reduction in tuition for days on which the facility does not operate or opens late in the event of severe weather.

19. CURRICULUM INFORMATION

- **Hours/Days of Operation:** Aquarelle Kids Academy will be open Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m.
- **Daily Schedule of Activities:** Our classroom schedule will be posted in each classroom. We will make every attempt to follow the schedule depending on the needs and moods of the children.
- **Class Assignments:** Lesson plans for each age group will be posted in each classroom. These lesson plans are changed each week and reflect our curriculum and individual goals of the children. Teachers are permitted to make changes to reflect current events.

- **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.
- **Nap/Rest Time:** 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. 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.
- **Educational Supplies Needed:** An initial supplies and materials fee of \$60 is due at the time of enrollment. The supplies and materials fee is not refundable. An annual supplies and materials fee will be charged May 31 of each year. If your child's initial start date falls between March 1 and May 31, your annual supplies and materials fee for that year will be \$20.
- **Change of Clothes:** Each student should have a change of clothes in a gallon size zip lock bag placed in their cubby. If a student has an accident at school the teacher will assist them in changing and place the wet clothes in the zip lock bag. Please be sure another set of clothes is put back in your child's cubby. If a student has an accident and does not have clothes to change into, the parent will be notified to bring them clothes.
- **Birthday Celebrations:** Birthdays are a special occasion for young children. We encourage and welcome parents to send in fruit or cookies. In accordance with Health Department regulations, we are not allowed to serve homemade goodies. The students will share these treats with their classmates during snack time. Please notify the teacher in advance if you would like to send in special treats. Invitations to parties outside the school may be handed out at school if every child in the class is invited. Otherwise, invitations should be handled by mail to prevent any hurt feelings.
- **Parent / Teacher Conferences:** Telephone conferences are scheduled at any time a teacher believes it is important, or a parent wishes to have one. If you wish to talk to a teacher, please call the office and leave a message. If a telephone call cannot solve the situation, the teacher will schedule a conference. Please follow the above procedure and do not engage the teachers in discussion before, during, or after class, when attention needs to be with the students.

- **Graduation:** During the year we will have open communication with the local elementary schools to ensure that the transition going from preschool to kindergarten is a smooth and happy experience for your child. Children of this age are unable to understand the traditional graduation programs with caps and gowns and many become very stressed over this ritual. Instead we will celebrate with you in the familiar classroom environment. We will enjoy a slide show highlighting the accomplishments of the children. In the room we will display projects and photographs. The children will sing to you before presenting you with a Memory Book. Refreshments and a time to socialize will follow. You will be invited in the upcoming months to assist with the planning and help personalize the celebration.

20. DISCIPLINE POLICY

The use of corporal punishment is never permitted at Aquarelle Kids Academy. At Aquarelle Kids Academy we are committed to building children's social and emotional development through the implementation of positive guidance and discipline strategies. Our approach is based on research and developmentally appropriate practices. To ensure our teachers and parents are well trained and receive ongoing support we have collaborated with an early education consulting firm to offer ongoing professional development training to our staff. Please refer to separate discipline policy.

21. DRESS CODE POLICY (Optional)

The dress code for students is as follows:

- Khaki, blue or black pants, or shorts (must be uniform style);
- School logo T-Shirt (purchased through school office);
- Close toe shoes.

22. TOYS FROM HOME

It is very disappointing when a special toy is broken or lost; therefore, please instruct your child to leave their toys at home. Occasionally the teacher will have special Show & Tell days and will send home a note outlining what the students may bring in. Please do not allow your child to bring any type of sword, gun or any other type of sharp object or weapon to school even for Show & Tell.

23. HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

- **Health and Immunization Forms Requirements:** In accordance with Florida State Law, parents must present the following current state forms within 30 days of enrollment (excludes school age children) and/or within 30 days of form expiration date:
 - ✓ DH Form 3040 – Student Health Examination
 - ✓ DH Form 680 – Florida Certification of Immunization, Part 1-A, B or C.

Immunization and physical forms must be current and original copies. We will make you a copy for your records if you desire. If forms are not received within the time frames aforementioned, your child will no longer be enrolled until forms are received.

- **Illness Policy:** Aquarelle Kids Academy reserves the right to temporarily deny any child admittance to the facility for reasons of obvious or perceived illness, or to request early departure should symptoms become apparent during the course of the day, for the well being of all children at the center. Children with temperatures above 101°F, vomiting, with rashes, eye drainage, excessive cough, nasal drainage or having diarrhea at home should not be brought to school. **If an episode occurs at school, they will not be allowed to remain at school.** We gently request your full cooperation by picking up a sick child within one hour when you are called to do so. Students must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school or present a note from your doctor's office stating they may return to school.
- **Communicable Disease:** Aquarelle Kids Academy will notify parents if your child has been exposed to a communicable disease that has been introduced into the center. In the event that your child has a communicable disease, a release form from a medical source may be required before your child re-enters the center.
- **Dispensing of Medication:** Prescription medications require the pharmacy label and must be in the original container. Prescriptions must include the name of the child and the amount to be distributed. Aquarelle Kids Academy will distribute prescription medication at lunchtime. We will not administer medications that can be given at home before and after school (i.e. once, twice or three times a day). Non-prescription medications, vitamins and herbs are to be in the original container. The first dose of medication needs to be taken at home. **If it is an antibiotic, twenty four (24) hours need to pass before attending school.** All prescription and non-prescription medications, including any diaper rash creams and other non-prescription creams, will require parents to complete an authorization to dispense medication form.

I hereby authorize any needed medical care, in the event of an emergency involving my child, and if Aquarelle Kids Academy cannot contact me. I further agree to be fully responsible for all medical expense incurred during the treatment of my child and to hold harmless and release Aquarelle Kids Academy from all liability.

- **Biting:** There are many reasons why a child bites, which evokes strong emotions from all those involved. When the injury breaks the skin, you will be called immediately. Our experienced teaching staff will take steps to help the child with this behavior and protect the other children in the program. We will observe the child to find a reason and solution to the situation. We will also work with the parents and if needed have the child referred to a behavior specialist for further help.
- **Fire / Tornado Drills:** Aquarelle Kids Academy will conduct monthly fire drills and at least two tornado drills per year to ensure students' quick, safe exit from the building in case of fire or other hazard. The continuous ringing of the fire alarm signals the drill. Teachers will have instructed their students in proper procedures. Students should follow these quickly and quietly. Fire drill / tornado routes as well as alternative routes are posted in every room.
- **Incident/Accident Reports:** You can be assured that protecting the safety of your child is our most important goal. However, if an incident or accident does occur you will receive a phone call from our school office and a written report from the classroom teacher.

- **Foods Policy:** Snacks are included in the weekly tuition for full-time and part-time children age 1 to 5, and will be served to all children in attendance at 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Menus will be posted on a weekly basis outlining the snacks for that week. Parents must bring lunches for their children. Lunches requiring refrigeration should be dropped off in the kitchen and include the classroom and child's name. No candy, gum or soda should be included in these lunches. **If your child has specific allergies please inform their teacher so it can be documented on the classroom allergy sheet.** Parents must not offer children food without express permission from the center.
- **Food Allergies:** Children with specific food allergies must have a physician's note with recommendations for alternate foods on file. Parents must provide substitutes if menu items cannot be served.

24. STAFF / PARENTS POLICY

- **Nanny Placement Fee:** Hiring of our teachers by parents is highly discouraged. If a parent does hire a teacher for a position of employment (i.e. nanny) then the parents shall immediately be obligated to pay Aquarelle Kids Academy a \$1000 placement fee.
- **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 pickup list. Employees may not solicit babysitting positions while on the job.

If parents arrange with a staff member for after hours, off-premises care of their child, that staff member undertakes such service on his or her own behalf, and not as a staff member of Aquarelle Kids Academy.

25. GRIEVANCE POLICY

We, at Aquarelle Kids Academy, strive to keep a harmonious relationship with parents, students and staff. Should you have any concerns pertaining to our facility or staff, please notify the Director. The Director will discuss the situation with you and make arrangements to set up a conference with the necessary staff to resolve the situation.

26. LOST AND FOUND

Please label all of your child's jackets, shirts, pants, shorts, nap towel, etc. This will help us in returning them if misplaced. Articles not claimed within 30 days will be given to a charitable organization.

27. PHOTO GALLERY POLICY

Student pictures will be set up through a professional photographer at least once a year. On occasions, we may film or take a picture of your child(ren) in a group setting and/or with their art work during a special event or evaluation. The reproduction of the aforementioned video, photographs, or voice recordings, may be used, at the center's discretion, for the purposes of education and/or promotion of the school, in advertising materials or posted to the aquarellekids.com website for your enjoyment and for the enjoyment of those viewing the website materials. Should this be a problem, you must notify the center's management in writing.

28. SCHOOL READINESS FUNDED STUDENTS

Children attending Aquarelle Kids Academy with vouchers from state coalition offices will be required to meet with the director before enrollment commences. During this interview, payment of tuition will be discussed.

Payment by the coalition is based on the number of days per week your child attends our center. If your child is absent for more days than the monthly limit set by the coalition, the coalition payments stop and you are responsible for full payment of the tuition.

All families or guardians of children must understand that full payment of tuition must be met and paid in a timely manner at the end of each week for the following week. Our tuition rate must be met through a combination of payment from the coalition office and your parent fee. By signing our contract, you agree that if for any reason the coalition office does not forward payment to us, you will be responsible for the balance.

29. YEARLY ASSESSMENT

We utilize a system known as Portfolio Assessment on each child. The observation tool will enable us to monitor your child's growth and development. This information is strictly confidential, and will only be shared with you, the Director and the teacher. By signing the Parent Handbook Disclaimer you are giving us permission for your child to be assessed.

30. TAX STATEMENTS

Annual tax statements will be provided upon request, and we require 48 hours to produce the report.

31. CENTER'S INFORMATION

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