



Parent Handbook

&

**Operational Policy
Manual**

Dear Parents,

Friedens Early Learning Academy welcomes you and your child to our program. We are committed to providing a stimulating environment in which happy and wholesome physical, mental, emotional and spiritual growth can take place. We are licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. We are governed by our Early Learning Academy Board which is appointed by the church council.

You are always welcome to come by and visit here at Friedens Early Learning Academy. We try to make ourselves available during our hours of operation. However, if you ever have any concerns please feel free to call us at any time. Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your child's life.

Bonnie Neumann, Barbara Pape
Directors

Office # (830) 303-7729

Our Philosophy

Friedens Early Learning Academy believes that the preschool child should be able to develop at their own pace in a structured, yet relaxed atmosphere. This atmosphere should encourage spiritual, intellectual, social and physical growth. We encourage each child to use their thinking and reasoning skills in all daily activities. All children are taught that they are very special and unique individuals. We teach the children that God is love, God created all living things, and that God cares about everyone.

1. Curriculum and Activities-Our curriculum will introduce phonics, numbers, letters, science, safety, manners, arts, crafts, songs, and Bible stories. Activities designed to enrich communication skills and language development will be included. The children will enjoy playing outside on the playground and will have the opportunity to play with educational toys and manipulative materials as well. There are weekly chapel services with Pastor John Roberts and praise music in the classroom activities. Our teachers prepare weekly lesson plans. From these plans, monthly calendars are sent home.

2. Admission Policies-Friedens Early Learning Academy does not practice racial or religious discrimination, and offers care to children 2 years to pre-kindergarten. The directors will provide prospective students and their parents with information about enrollment, school policies and any other information they may request. The enrollment packet must be entirely completed and returned one week prior to the first day the child attends. This includes the child's shot record, physician's statement and vision and hearing form for children 4 years old and above. If parents choose not to have their children vaccinated, they must supply FELA with a signed Affidavit from the Health Department.

3. Payment Policies-You will receive a statement on the 25th of each month for the following month. Drop-ins will be billed the following month. Drop-in rates are \$30 for a full day and \$20 for mornings only.

You may change your child's schedule with one month's notice, if there are openings available to do so.

In order to maintain high standards of child care, it is necessary that no refunds be made for absences up to two weeks (10 days).

We allow NO credits for vacation, holidays, illness or school closings, except where noted. If a child must be absent for an extended period due to illness or personal crisis, special consideration may be given with the director's approval. If a child must be withdrawn from Friedens Early Learning Academy, a two week notice should be given. This enables the office to prepare the account for closing.

The non-refundable registration/supply fee is used to purchase supplies.

4. Dropping Off and Picking Up-Parents are required to bring their child into the school at the time of arrival and turn the child over to a staff member. The parent must come into the school to pick up their child and check out with a staff member. This is necessary so that our records can remain accurate. Never send a minor sibling of the child to pick up or drop off. Parents should leave cell phones in their vehicles when bringing in

their child. Parents must **NEVER** leave young children unattended in the car. Once a child is signed out, the parent is responsible for their **COMPLETE** supervision. If parents need to discuss their child's progress or any concerns, a scheduled conference is needed. Teachers are busy supervising children and need to have their focus on the classroom. If any FELA staff feels that a parent who is picking up a child is intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, they will notify local law enforcement. We are obligated to report any such occurrences.

5. Verification of Legal Custody-When there is a non-custodial parent, it is the responsibility of the parent with legal custody to notify the school. We will not withhold a child from their parent on the request of the other parent without a divorce decree or restraining order legally signed and notarized. We will follow custody agreements exactly as written. The agreements we receive must be valid copies from a judge. In the absence of a court order, both parents have equal rights. The FELA staff will not become involved in custody battles.

6. Student Conduct-Some discipline measures we use include talking with the child about the incident and what can prevent its reoccurrence, taking away a privilege, cleaning the area, or sitting in an area away from the group (time out is one minute per age of the child). Following the consequence, appropriate apologies, discussion of the incident, and hugs are given. The following will NOT be used as a consequence: cruel, harsh or unusual punishment, spanking, withholding food or prohibiting bathroom privileges. Our goal, in accordance with the Texas State Minimum Standards, is to ensure the safety of ALL students. Biting and injury to other children may require a conference with the staff, director and parents to discuss a plan of action. Every child in our care deserves to feel safe.

7. Termination of Enrollment-Friedens Early Learning Academy may terminate the enrollment of a student for extreme discipline problems. Every effort will be made to assimilate the student and correct disruptive behavior. The following steps will be taken to solve behavioral problems:

1. The child will be disciplined in accordance with previously outlined policy.
2. A scheduled parent-teacher conference will be held.
3. After these options have been exhausted and the child's behavior continues to interfere with the orderly care and education of the other students, the disruptive student will be dropped from our program.

8. Late Fee Charge-Any parent who picks up their child after the designated pick-up time is considered late and will be charged a late fee of **\$1.00 A MINUTE**. This fee will be added to the following month's statement.

9. Parent Information-We have a parent information bulletin board in the hallway where we post a copy of the Minimum Standards, our most recent state inspection report and other important information.

If a parent needs to be made aware of a particular action or incident about their child, the teacher will notify the parent with a written report. In some cases, the teacher may call the parent immediately.

The director will send each parent a notice about any enrollment or policy changes for the school. A parent signature will be required to verify acknowledgment of the changes.

Parent conferences can be requested by the teacher or parent, as needed.

Parents are urged to take time to talk with their child's teacher. Be sure to check your child's cubby and folder daily. Take time to get to know your child's teacher and take interest in their class activities.

We also recommend that you read your child's calendar every morning to keep you up-to-date on all activities.

10. Reminder-Please notify Friedens Early Learning Academy immediately if your address or phone number (home or work) changes. Also, let us know when your child receives any type of immunization. This is to ensure our records are kept accurate.

11. Liability Insurance-Friedens United Church of Christ carries liability insurance which exceeds TDFPS requirements. Our insurance carrier is Church Mutual. Additional information is available in the church office.

12. Snacks and Lunch-Parents are responsible for sending nutritious lunches and snacks. We encourage those foods to be eaten first. (Ex: fresh fruit, yogurt, carrot sticks) **Sodas and candy should not be sent. Clear fruit juice, milk or water** is recommended for drinking. (It doesn't stain our tables.) **Please include a fork or spoon, if needed**, and a napkin in the lunchbox. All meals should be assembled beforehand. All lunches and snacks should be marked clearly with your child's name.

13. Naps-All children staying in the afternoon will be required to take a nap or have quiet time. Your child's first four-fold nap mat will be

provided. If a replacement mat is needed, it will be charged to your account. A soft comfort toy can be kept at school. After nap, the comfort toy must be kept in the child's cubby basket. **Please include names on all items.**

14. Child's Personal Items-Each child will have his/her own cubby basket in their classroom. Parents are required to provide the school, at all times, with 1 set of extra clothes for their child. The child's extra clothes will be kept in his/her classroom. If a child should wet or dirty their clothes, the teacher will assist the child in cleaning up and changing into clean clothes. The dirty clothes will then be placed in a plastic bag and put in the child's cubby. The school will not wash soiled clothes. If a parent does not provide the school with extra clothes or when the child uses the extra clothes, then the parent will be contacted to bring in another set of extra clothes. Please label all personal items with your child's name. We are not responsible for lost items. **Children should NOT bring toys to school from home.**

15. Medication-Administration of medication at school will be considered on a case by case basis. If sunscreen or insect repellent is to be applied, it must be applied by the parents before school. At some time we may have a child enrolled who has not had immunizations.

16. Sick Children-Any child who appears ill will not be admitted to school unless his/her attendance has been approved in writing by a doctor. Any child with fever or who has vomited or had diarrhea before school should not attend that day. If the parent feels that their child is too sick to play outdoors, he/she should be kept at home. Children may return to school when they have a normal temperature and have been without vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours. No sleeping child, whether well or ill, will be accepted.

If a child should become ill during the day, he/she will be taken to the office where a staff member will take the child's temperature. Should the child have a temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater, the parent will be notified to pick up their child. The child will be able to lie on a mat in the office or another supervised area until the parent arrives. A record will be kept of any accident or illness a child might experience while at school. This will include, but is not limited to, loose stool, vomiting and fever. A staff member certified in CPR and First Aid is always on duty to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation or first aid as necessary.

If a child is critically ill or injured, the school will implement emergency procedures. These may include, CPR, first aid, child taken to his/her doctor, hospital, or call for ambulance. Parents will be notified immediately for any of the above.

17. Closing Due to Inclement Weather-Should hazardous driving conditions unexpectedly prevent Friedens Early Learning Academy opening at the designated time, it will open as soon as employees can arrive safely. If forewarned of such conditions, the staff will close the school and notify parents by radio announcement. If the Navarro school district closes due to bad weather, then Friedens Early Learning Academy will also close. If Friedens Early Learning Academy should need to close early because of bad weather or some other reason, the parents will be called to pick up their children and the radio station will be notified to make announcements regarding such a closing. This should occur only rarely, and the staff will be sensitive to the needs of working parents in such cases.

18. Toileting for Children-We require that all children who are not toilet trained wear disposable diapers only; **no cloth diapers**. All diapers, pull-ups and wipes are supplied by the parents.

Our goal is for all children to be potty trained by age three. Our policy on toilet training is to assist the parents in training their child in a positive and non-stressful manner. The parent should take time to talk to their child's teacher to see if the child has shown signs of readiness at school. If the child has shown signs of readiness, they should then discuss with the teacher their plan on how to train the child. Parents should never expect their child to wear training pants at school if they are still wearing diapers at home. This is too confusing for the child.

19. Visitation-We always encourage parents to visit our school. You do not have to tell us when you plan to come. Please stop by anytime to see your child and teacher in action. We would love for you to share some time with us! We also have a place in our church nursery for moms to breastfeed, should the need arise.

20. Birthdays-Birthdays are a fun and special time! We love to help celebrate your child's special day! Please notify your child's teacher and let her know what you have planned. Special snacks may be brought for the birthday; we ask that these be store bought items. Party invitations cannot be handed out at school unless every child in the class will be receiving one.

21. Child Abuse-It is required by the Texas state law that any person, i.e.: staff member, parent or etc., report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the Texas Department of Human Services or any law enforcement agency. Confidential reports may be made by calling the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services at **1-800-252-5400**. Failure to report suspected child abuse is punishable by fines up to \$1, 000 and/or confinement up to 180 days.

22. Clothing & Footwear for Students-We encourage parents to dress their children in clothes that are comfortable and easy to move in and that are appropriate for the weather of the season. Tennis shoes are the best footwear while your child is at Friedens Early Learning Academy. Sandals and slide on shoes are hard to run/walk in on the playground. Cowboy boots are not allowed.

******Parents should contact the child-care center director, during office hours, with any questions or concerns about school policies and procedures.***

Parent's Acknowledgment

This is to acknowledge that Friedens Early Learning Academy has provided me with a Parent Handbook.

I have read the handbook and have a full understanding of the school policies.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please return this page to the School Director to keep in your child's file.