

Parent Handbook



V. Contact Information

Aleph Academy

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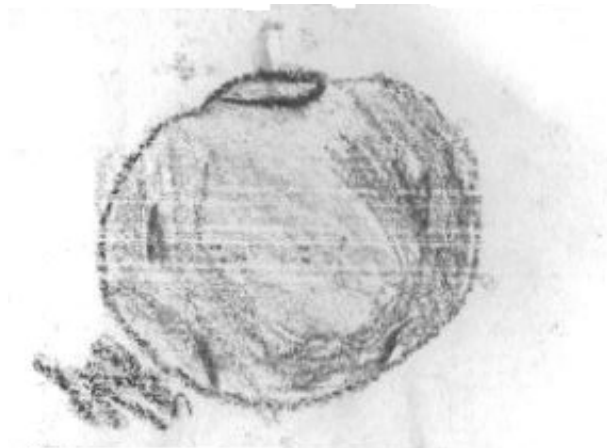


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I. Our School

Welcome to Aleph Academy! A child's educational journey encompasses the unique qualities of his/her family as an integral part of the learning experience. It is our hope that your entire family will become active participants in our greater school community and all it has to offer. In our pursuit for excellence, we welcome your questions, concerns, suggestions and ideas.

School Philosophy

Aleph Academy recognizes and respects the unique qualities of each child. In their quest for wisdom, understanding and knowledge, our school's primary mission is to foster a love for life long learning in our students. The curriculum skillfully weaves artistic and academic disciplines, along with Jewish values, into everyday activities. Students learn to follow their curiosity, to think creatively, and to work both independently and cooperatively with others.

At Aleph Academy our goal is to create a vibrant community of children, teachers and families. We promote an environment of rich learning experiences which our name, Aleph, reflects. As the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, it signifies both the concepts of connection and potential, giving children the best opportunities to succeed.

Preschool Curriculum

Aleph signifies both the concepts of connection and potential. Connection to Jewish values, our environment and larger community and the potential of every child to become an active, engaged learner.

Using an "arts" based approach, Aleph Academy teachers engage children in activities focused on relationships and inquiry. The environment has been designed to support rich learning experiences and social-emotional growth. As an emergent, Reggio inspired curriculum in which Jewish values form the backdrop, the learning topics become negotiated between children and teachers. After careful observation and reflection, teachers offer additional materials and continually challenge children to go deeper with their learning. Documentation is used to demonstrate how our curriculum meets or exceeds Nevada State standards.

School Clinician

To ensure excellence in all aspects of our school, Aleph has a school clinician on staff. The clinician specializes in child development. Parents may utilize the clinician for any questions that they may have regarding the physical, emotional or cognitive development of their child both at school and at home. If a child is having difficulties in the school setting, there are times when additional services may be needed. Our clinician and staff will partner with parents to determine the appropriate services necessary for your child to succeed.

After School Clubs

Clubs are offered during the scholastic year, after program hours, for an additional fee. Please see flyer for details.

Elementary School

This handbook covers all of Aleph Academy's policies and procedures for all grade levels (Preschool-Fourth Grade.) Additional information pertaining specifically to our Elementary program (K-4) is available in a separate booklet.



Meals and Snacks

Aleph Academy provides lunch and two daily kosher snacks, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, that are included in tuition. Menus are posted. Snacks are healthy and kid-delicious. If your child has any food allergies, notify the Director and Staff. Since we are a kosher facility, we ask that no outside food be brought to school.

We will allow children to choose what and how much of each food to eat. All food will be offered to children at the same time; we will not hold back treats as a reward for eating certain foods.

Birthdays

We would love to help celebrate your child's birthday. All birthday celebrations must be arranged in advance. Please do not bring any lollipops, hard candy or loose balloons. Kosher cupcakes can be purchased for your child's celebration for a small fee. In addition, staff cannot distribute personal birthday party invitations.

Cell Phones

Aleph Academy is a cell phone free zone. Please turn off your phone during drop off and pickup.

Personal Belongings

Aleph Academy asks that toys and other personal belongings from home stay at home. We cannot be responsible for belongings brought to school.

Rest Time

Children that stay for a full day are required to have a rest period. A child who cannot sleep will be provided with quiet, restful activities. We provide a cot for every child; parents need to send in a washable blanket and a fitted sheet inside a pillowcase with a small pillow, transitional object or special snuggly clearly labeled with the child's name. These will be sent home weekly to be washed.

Goals for Children

To develop positive and nurturing relationships with adults and peers

To develop a sense of trust and security

To identify and solve problems

To express thoughts and feelings

To think critically

To respect the feelings and rights of others

To use creativity and imagination

To work independently and with others

To develop literacy, numeracy, reasoning and decision making skills that form a foundation for school readiness

Goals for Parents

To feel good about their role as parents and about their children

To gain insight into the behavior of young children in general and their child in particular

To provide an atmosphere of caring, acceptance and support so parents and Aleph Academy work as partners in the child's education

Kindness Clause

Aleph Academy models and teaches core Jewish ethical values. Kindness or "chesed" is the social and emotional connection that holds the Aleph Academy community together. As we strive for excellence, an integral component is that of strong relationships, creating an important foundation for life.

Both staff and parents model kindness and respect in their daily interactions.

- We approach one another with good will and compassion.
- We stand up for kindness, especially in the face of unkindness.
- We actively reach out to one another, especially in times of need.
- Kindness in our community is measured by our actions, words and behaviors.
- Even in the face of conflict, we choose our words thoughtfully and our actions consciously.

II. Creating Community

Parent Partnership

Parent participation is an integral component of the Aleph Academy experience. There are numerous opportunities throughout the year for parents to partner with us. Aleph Academy's "open door policy" encourages parents to visit and/or participate in the daily activities whenever possible. Parents have unlimited access to their children while they are in our care.

Parent Orientation and Open House

Parents and children are invited to join us for a visit prior to the school year. While children get to meet the staff and become familiar with the class environment, parents will participate in an informative, hands-on orientation. See our school calendar for date and time.

Windows to their World

A parent meeting is held one evening after the start of the school year. Teachers will review classroom rhythms and routines as well as give you an overview of our curriculum. This evening is a window into your child's world at Aleph Academy.

Family Studio Night

Twice a year we will hold a special family after school art program where you can create art with your child. We hope that this experience will create rich memories and add to the family heirlooms.

Monthly Parent Events

Everyone in our community is a life-long learner. As you partner with us, we offer opportunities for text-based learning and dialogue. These meetings are built to strengthen the partnership between home and classroom. These alternate between an evening book club and a morning activity.

Toilet Learning

Children do not need to be able to use the toilet independently to enter our program. When a child shows signs that they are ready to learn toilet independence, we will make it convenient for the child to use the toilet and provide help as needed.

Parents can assist in toilet learning by dressing the child in underwear and loose fitting clothing that the child and caregiver can easily remove. Use of diapers or pull-ups is recommended during nap time.

We will be available and helpful but will not hover or push children. We will not force a child to remain on the toilet or punish a child for wetting or soiling his/her clothing. Our school policy is to keep the door of the bathroom open while changing a child. All children will be instructed and assisted in washing their hands after using the toilet.

Injury

In case of simple injury, we will perform routine hygienic measures such as washing wounds and applying bandages. An accident report will be filled out and given to the parent upon their arrival.

In case of medical emergency, a parent (or other emergency contact if parent cannot be reached) will be called and will be asked to take the responsibility for obtaining the necessary medical treatment.

If circumstances require immediate or professional care, 911 services will be called. We will respond as necessary until emergency services arrive. We will not transport children to an emergency facility. Parents are responsible for all fees related to the transport of their child to a medical facility.

Sunscreen

Parents are urged to apply sunscreen every morning, prior to arrival at school, and parents are responsible for providing sunscreen for staff to apply to their child while at school. The use of hats and other sun-protective clothing is also recommended. We cannot share other children's sunscreen with your child. We will make every effort to protect children from sunburn. Sunscreen will be applied to the exposed skin of all children with a completed sunscreen form, with the exception of the eyelids, prior to exposure to the sun.

IV. General Information

Clothing and Diapers

Children participate in many engaging, and sometimes messy, activities. Please send one complete change of clothes labeled with your child's name on it. This should include underclothes and socks and should be appropriate for the season. These will be kept in his/her cubby. Remember to label all coats and outerwear that your child wears to school during the winter. Soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag in your child's cubby. Staff members are not allowed to rinse the clothing. Please check the cubby daily.

Comfortable, sturdy, washable clothing that allows your child freedom to participate in all activities without undue concern for spills and accidents is best. Children may not wear any type of backless shoe such as clogs, sandals or flip flops.

State Childcare Regulations state that parents must provide their child with a supply of diapers and wipes if needed. We are not permitted to use other children's supplies on your child. Supplies should be replenished weekly. Diapers are checked regularly. All diaper changes are marked on your child's daily chart.

Hygiene

Frequent hand washing is the most effective method for controlling the spread of infectious disease. Children will be encouraged to practice good hygiene habits while at the center. Children will be guided by teachers to wash hands with soap and water before and after meals or snacks, after coming in from outside, after using the toilet, and before engaging in any cooking activity.

Guidance and Discipline

It is our desire to help children develop self-control and to assume responsibility for their actions. The center's daily schedule, curriculum, classroom arrangements and staff members are chosen to promote positive and enjoyable learning experiences, including respectful and trusting relationships between adults and children. The teacher's response to a child's behavior will focus on redirecting the inappropriate actions and offering alternate choices.

An awareness of the developmental stages of children will enable the teacher to determine whether the behavior is inappropriate for the individual child.

Parent Volunteer Program

To continue to keep the cost of tuition competitive, Parents are expected to volunteer ten hours of their time over the course of the school year. Parents can log their hours on the school website or in the office. In June, \$15/hour will be assessed for any incomplete hours. Volunteer opportunities are included in your registration packet.

Leadership Meetings

Monthly leadership meetings will be held with one educator and one parent liaison (counted toward your volunteer hours) from each classroom along with the administration. These will be held during nap time. Please let us know if you would like to be the liaison for your child's room. These meetings are open to anyone that would like to participate.

Lunch Dates

Parents are invited to have a special lunch date with their child from 11:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. daily. Please let us know at least 24 hours in advance that you would like to join us for lunch. There is a nominal fee of \$5 per adult.

Walking Trips

Throughout the year, weather permitting, children and teachers will take walks in the community. A teacher will carry a cell phone and first aid kit on these trips in case of emergency.

Enrichment Activities

Aleph Academy offers enrichment opportunities during school hours. We invite local professionals and artists from the larger community to share their skills and creative talents with our children. Collaboration with the children takes on many fascinating forms. Examples of this are an art show with the children's work in the same medium as a featured artist, a play starring Aleph kids and directed by a local thespian, or an experiential outdoor activity with a local landscaper. We try to vary the activities from year to year so that your child receives exposure to all different types of arts. The cost of these programs is included in tuition.

III. Administrative Information

Licensing

Aleph Academy is licensed through the Washoe County Department of Social Services, as a licensed preschool to care for children ages 0-18, license #.

Anti Bias

Aleph Academy is a non-profit, non-discriminatory, educational institution under the auspices of Chabad of Northern Nevada. We do not deny services to any person on the basis of religion, color, ethnic group identification, sex, age, physical or mental disability.

Staff and Teacher Training

In accordance with Washoe County Department of Social Services, the staff at Aleph Academy has received training in Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases, Certification in CPR and First Aid, and Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect. In addition, each staff member is required to take 15 hours of continuing education each year.

Admissions Procedure

Parents need to schedule a tour with the Director of Admissions. Both parents are encouraged to attend. After the tour, parents will need to complete all registration forms and submit the initial (non-refundable) registration fee. If the class is full, child will be placed on a waiting list. You will be notified as soon as space becomes available. Annual re-enrollment will be available for presently enrolled children first, followed by siblings and then the general community.

Non-Refundable Deposit

A non-refundable two week deposit, based on the number of days that your child is enrolled, is due prior to your child's start of the school year. This deposit is applied towards your last two week of care or the last two weeks of the scholastic year.

Grant and Aid

During annual enrollment, there will be a formal grant and aid program available for families that need financial assistance. A specific timeline and parameters will be set to determine eligibility. A limited amount of funds are available.

Ending of Partnership by Parents

Advanced written notice of two weeks must be given for disenrollment from our center. Please fill out the "Ending of Partnership" form available in the office. Your two week initial deposit will be applied to these two weeks of care, regardless of attendance. The initial deposit is good for the number of days signed upon registration and cannot be changed. Tuition refunds will only be given for months without any attendance. If even a portion of the month has already begun, no refund will be given. Refunds will not be given for the months of April, May or June, regardless of attendance. There will be no exceptions.

Ending of Partnership by School

Aleph Academy will do our best to provide proper placement of each child. Aleph Academy will provide a safe, respectful and peaceful atmosphere and reserves the right to terminate a family at any time for any reason. The final decision will be at the discretion of the Director. When a child leaves a class, the departure is made in a supportive, nurturing manner consistent with the children's ability to understand the situation.

Grievances

Misunderstandings do occur, and will be handled in a professional manner. All grievances must be presented to the Admissions Director or Educational Director. Failing to reach a settlement in a conference with the director, you may submit a written statement of the situation requesting that the grievance be reviewed. A copy of this statement will be kept in your child's file.

Halacha

Aleph Academy adheres to the Code of Jewish Law. In all cases where there is a halachic question, a Rav (Rabbinic authority) will be approached for proper counsel.

Waiting List

Parents will need to complete all registration forms and pay the initial non refundable registration fee of \$125. If we are full, Aleph Academy will maintain a waiting list and will contact applicants as vacancies occur. Parents have 2 weeks to accept a space, or to be placed back on the waiting list. To hold the spot for up to 1 month, a non-refundable two week tuition deposit is required. This deposit is applied to the last two weeks of care, regardless of attendance. Families currently enrolled at Aleph and those from the Jewish Community will be given priority for available spaces. Any additional space will be open to the community at large. We welcome all children to join our program.

Tuition

Please see accompanying tuition rates. There are four tuition options, a one time full payment, bi-yearly semester payments, or ten monthly payments. Tuition payments are due on the 20th of each month for the following month.

Facts Management

Facts is the tuition management service used by Aleph Academy. Facts allows us to efficiently manage the tuition process while offering convenience to families. There is a small enrollment fee for this service. More information regarding Facts Management will be provided during the registration process.

Change of Program Fee

In the event of voluntary change of your child's days of attendance, a fee of \$100 will occur to cover the cost of lost tuition. This fee will not apply if you choose to increase attendance. Parents can only change their child's days of attendance through March. Aleph will not allow any program changes in the months of April, May or June. There will be no exceptions.

Yearly Tuition Increase

Increases in tuition will be limited to cost factors we incur to assure a quality program and to pay our employees living wages. There will be a yearly tuition increase of approximately 3-5% that reflects this. Parents will be notified in the Spring of tuition increases. The new tuition prices will be effective the following September.

Hours of Operation

Aleph Academy is open Monday through Friday. Our program hours are from 8:30 am to 3:30 p.m. with extended care offered from 7:30 a.m. until 5:15 pm. Please be prompt. If a staff member must stay beyond 15 minutes of the time your child is scheduled to leave (5:30p.m.), you will be charged a \$25 late fee. This fee will be charged directly to your account through Facts Management. Parents who continuously pick up after extended hours will no longer be provided with this service.

Drop In Policy

If you need an additional day of care, please contact our office at least twenty four hours in advance to see if space is available. If you need extended care for your child and are not signed up for our extended care program, you must notify the office by 12:00 p.m. on the day that care is needed. Due to ratio and staffing requirements, we cannot provide your child with care if we are notified after 12:00 p.m.

Arrival and Dismissal

The center is open at 8:30 a.m. each morning. We encourage children to arrive by 9:00 a.m. for the morning activities. Children perform their best when they begin the morning on time with the rest of the children. Please try to be punctual as this gives your child the greatest advantage of participation in Aleph Academy.

Parents must always accompany their children into their classroom and sign in on the attendance sheet. State childcare regulations require that children be signed in and out each day, including first and last name and time of arrival and departure.

Children will be released from Aleph Academy only to authorized persons whose names appear on the registration form. If a different adult will be picking up your child, we will need prior written notice from you. For safety reasons, we cannot release children to older siblings. Anyone who is picking up a child and is unfamiliar to staff must show identification before the child will be released. Anyone who does not provide identification will be turned away.

In the event that you are unavoidably delayed, please call Aleph Academy and let us know so that we may reassure your child that you are in fact coming. (See Hours of Operation for appropriate Late Fees).

Friday Dismissal

From November through February there will be an early Friday dismissal because of Shabbat. Extended Care is available during these winter Fridays until 4:15 p.m. On all other Fridays, dismissal will be at 5:30 p.m. Fridays are wonderful days filled with the aroma of fresh baked challah bread in honor of Shabbat.

Absences

Please notify the school when your child is absent, and the nature of the illness, especially if your child has a communicable disease, so that we can alert other parents. There are no tuition credits for absences.

Emergency Contact Information

Parents must provide a list of names and phone numbers of individuals who are authorized by the parent to care for the child in case of illness or emergency if the parents cannot be reached.

Emergencies

In case of emergency (i.e. flooding, evacuation of school) we will attempt to reach all parents by telephone to inform you where to pick up your child. If we are unable to contact you, evacuation locations will be posted on the school doors and announced on local radio stations.

Aleph Academy has created an emergency response plan and staff members are trained to respond appropriately in an emergency. Fire drills are conducted monthly in each classroom. Emergency drills are conducted quarterly. All staff members receive training in CPR and first aid.

Calendar, Holidays and Days off

Please review the Aleph Academy Calendar. This will allow you to plan ahead for the days we are not in school. There is no credit for days when school is closed, this is averaged into the tuition cost and balances out with the longer months.

Severe Weather

Aleph Academy follows the Washoe County School District Schedule. If the schools are closed or have a delayed start, so will Aleph Academy. Please call for an accurate update on school closures.

Sick Child Policy and Immunizations

All children must have a copy of their immunization record and a well child check from their physician at the time of registration.

We follow the sick child guidelines of the Washoe County Health Department. If your child is ill, please be considerate and do not send him/her to school. Illness includes heavy nasal discharge, a constant cough, fever or vomiting. If your child becomes ill, gets a fever, or develops symptoms in school, we will call you to pick up your child immediately. Children sent home from school can only return 24 hours after the symptoms have diminished or with a doctor's note.

Children's Records

Children's records are confidential and will only be shared with the child's parents. State Childcare Regulations require the following items be completed and on file before a child can attend the center:

- Completed Aleph Academy Registration
- Consent Form
- Certified Washoe County Health Dept. immunization record for child care
- Well child statement with physician's signature

Medication

Should your child need medication at school, you must send the medicine in its original container, securely sealed, with a completed and signed Medical Release Form (available in the school office). This will tell us when we need to give your child the medication, and will tell you when we administered it, and by whom. We will not store medication overnight. It must be sent in on a daily basis.

Child Abuse Reporting

All employees of Aleph Academy are mandated by NRS 432 B to report suspected child abuse and neglect. The report must be made to a law enforcement agency immediately but no later than 24 hours after there is reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected.