

BS'D

# Parent Handbook



2024-25

## **Table of Contents**

<b>I. Our School</b>	<b>p.3</b>
<b>II. The Social Emotional Connection</b>	<b>p.5</b>
<b>III. Scholastic and Summer Programs</b>	<b>p.6</b>
<b>IV. Program Information</b>	<b>p.7</b>
<b>V. Creating Community</b>	<b>p.8</b>
<b>VI. Health and Wellness Policies</b>	<b>p.10</b>
<b>VII. General Information</b>	<b>p.16</b>
<b>VIII. Contact Information</b>	<b>P.25</b>

## **I. Our School**

Welcome to Aleph Academy! A child's educational journey is part of a larger family journey as well. 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, comments, suggestions and ideas.

### **Vision**

Aleph Academy strives to be a model of excellence in all aspects of early childhood care and education. Through harnessing children's innate wisdom, understanding and knowledge, nurturing their curiosity as co-learners, and in partnership with their families, we will create a community of lifelong learners.

### **Philosophy**

Aleph Academy recognizes and respects the unique qualities of each child. Our school's primary mission is to foster a love for lifelong 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. Our goal is to create a vibrant community of children, teachers and families.

### **Curriculum**

Using an arts and play 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 and the natural cycle of the year form the backdrop, the learning topics become negotiated between children and teachers. After careful observation and analysis, teachers offer additional materials while continually challenging children to explore their interests in more complex ways. Documentation is used to demonstrate how our curriculum meets and often exceeds Nevada State standards.

### **Assessments**

Children are assessed for academic achievements and developmental milestones both formally and informally several times throughout the year. Assessments are conducted using a multi-pronged approach that utilizes input from parents, teachers or other staff that your child is familiar with. Parents submit the ASQ-3 and the ASQ-SE twice per year. Teachers create a portfolio consisting of children's work and anecdotal records that align with the Nevada Pre-K Standards. Twice yearly, in the early winter (January) and then again in the summer (June), the Brigance Screener is administered to every child. Following its administration, a printed report of the child's scores then is shared with parents. This allows for broad input on where a child is at in all domains and helps inform curriculum and general planning for overall program improvements.

### **Core Values**

**Relationships-** Studies have shown that the quality of a child's early relationships directly affect their success later on. At Aleph, children, teachers and parents collaborate and support each other to create a vibrant community. Our staff are passionate about what they do and demonstrate that through their educational background and continued professional development. As a community, we continue to learn and grow together.

**The Environment**– From our beautifully designed indoor space to our play based, natural playscape, we believe that an intentional environment enhances learning experiences. We nurture young children's minds by letting them interact with nature, provide them with open ended toys and quality art materials. We also respect our larger world by letting children care for and manipulate their own environment. Principles like responsibility, repurposing and recycling all come into play during both our indoor and outdoor exploration times.

**Experiential Learning**– Children are given authentic experiences, based on the natural cycle of the year, to learn how to express themselves physically, emotionally, playfully and creatively. Children have an innate sense of joy, wonder and curiosity. We respect children and let their ideas guide our curriculum. We encourage children to take ownership of their learning, allowing them to become active stakeholders in the creativity of the learning process.

**School Readiness**– Our daily rhythm provides for opportunities to develop the skills needed to enter school. Painting, clay work, cutting and pasting develop writing skills. Group discussions, songs and listening to stories develop literacy skills. Critical thinking and appreciation for the natural world fosters a love for science and math. Research has shown that knowledge of a second language has been shown to increase proficiency in a first. We expose children to Hebrew from a very young age to broaden their minds.

### **Judaics**

Judaics is an important part of our program. Our goal is to imbue children with a love and joy for Jewish tradition. The customs and history are made relevant and meaningful to all students using a hands-on approach with a focus on Hebrew language and Jewish values. Activities include Challah baking, Hebrew letter yoga, and heirloom quality art. On Fridays we celebrate Shabbat by baking challah bread, and celebrating our week together as a community. During our Shabbat party, students may be served 1/4 cup of 100% grape juice.

### **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, mathematical, 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 can work as partners in their child's education

## **II. The Social Emotional Connection**

### **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 actions, words and behaviors.
- Even in the face of conflict, we choose our words thoughtfully and our actions consciously.

### **Pyramid Model**

Nevada Pyramid Model (formerly PYRAMID MODEL) is a statewide initiative designed to create a sustainable, statewide system that promotes social emotional development in young children. The Pyramid Model is a framework for intentionally supporting the social emotional foundations for early learning. It is a tiered prevention and intervention model designed to prevent and address children’s challenging behaviors. As a Demonstration Site, Aleph Academy has demonstrated competence in using the Pyramid Model with our children.

### **Guidance and Discipline**

In accordance with Washoe County licensing regulations we will only use supportive, positive guidance at all times. The term ‘discipline’ will be understood as guiding and/or directing a child from random, impulsive, testing-out behavior into controlled purposeful behavior. We want to ensure a safe environment for the entire Aleph community. Rules and requirements should be minimal, clear and reasonable. Staff always models and reinforces acceptable behavior.

### **Policy for Suspension, Expulsion and other Exclusionary Measures**

The goal of Aleph Academy's guidance and discipline policies is to eliminate, when possible, the use of suspension, expulsion and other exclusionary measures.

When addressing challenging behavior, the following steps are taken in order of practice:

- Assess the function of the behavior utilizing PYRAMID MODEL tools, as well as assistance from our internal coach
- Meet with parents using a solution-based approach
- Utilize a Prevent-Teach-Reinforce strategy when developing an individualized plan for addressing the behavior
- Present challenging behavior situations at the PYRAMID MODEL leadership meeting
- Consult with our external PYRAMID MODEL coach
- Share external resources for family support including but not exclusive of consultation with the Nevada Early Childhood Mental Health Program

Exclusionary measures are only considered once all other possible interventions have been exhausted and there is an agreement between the school and the parents that exclusion is in the best interest of

the child. All recommendations from outside resources will be taken into consideration. In the event that exclusionary measures must be taken, Aleph Academy offers assistance to the family in accessing appropriate services and the possibility of placement in a new early education setting. Aleph Academy's exclusion policy complies with all federal and state civil rights laws.

### **Classroom Placement**

Parents can request a desired classroom, however the spot in a specific room or with a specific teacher is not guaranteed. All classroom placement will be made at the Director's discretion and takes into account several different factors. Placement is determined by both ability and age. Groups generally transition together, from one room to the next in the summer or fall. Utilizing a peer cohort model, Aleph staff stays with the same group of children for the duration of the entire school year. This allows for continuity of care where children form strong relationships with both their peers and classroom teacher over a duration of 10-12 months. In specific circumstances, a child may be transitioned from one class to another. If deemed necessary, this is done utilizing a team based approach with staff and parents working together to support the child during this transition.

Children who are eligible are expected to transition to kindergarten. Aleph staff can be a great resource in helping you decide which kindergarten fits your family's needs and child's learning style. A kindergarten readiness meeting will be held for families of our PreK classes to answer questions that you may have about this next stage in your child's life.

### **III. Scholastic and Summer Programs**

Diverse age groups give the opportunity for children to develop friendships with others who match, complement or supplement their own needs which research has shown is critical for young children.

Aleph is a school-based program and follows a scholastic calendar of 180 days. Due to the popularity of our summer program, we can only enroll children who are enrolling in the new scholastic year. Those children that have graduated and are moving onto Kindergarten are no longer eligible for our summer program.

#### **Toddler Classrooms– Additional Handbook Provided**

##### **Rishonim and Ketantanim**

Our Rishonim and Ketantanim toddler nursery is for children age 12 months and older and focuses on the importance of relationships for young children. Our small class size and low ratio of four children to one teacher allows the children to get the personalized attention that is so critical at this age. There is additional pricing and policy information for this program.

##### **Gan**

Our Gan toddler class focuses on physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development in a warm and loving environment. Children are given many opportunities to explore their world and discover its wonder while learning the basics of interactions with others.

#### **Pre-K Classrooms**

##### **Gimmel**

Our Gimmel Preschool program focuses on children 3 years of age. Children in this class will practice leadership skills, patience, and social skills to solve their problems with minimal help from adults. These self-help and social skills will be supplemented with emerging math, literacy and science that is developmentally appropriate for the current needs of the class.

##### **Gesher**

Our PreK program is geared towards children 4-5 years of age. Our PreK curriculum focuses on school readiness in all developmental domains. Still using an interest based approach to curriculum, teachers prepare their students for the transition into elementary school while extending their love for learning. S.T.E.M. forms the backbone of the curriculum in our Gesher classroom. We strongly encourage children who are preparing for Kindergarten to attend 5 days a week. To be eligible for our PreK program children must independently use the toilet.

##### **Yetzirah**

Yetzirah students, ages 3-5, engage in all early childhood education domains within an art inspired curriculum. Using visual arts and performing arts, teachers incorporate standards such as literacy, math, science, and physical development into daily explorations and activities. Yetzirah children take pride in their beautiful artwork and the ability to do things on their own, in addition to cultivating their relationships with both teachers and friends at school.

**Teva-Additional Handbook Provided**

Teva is an immersive outdoor program for children age 3-5 years old that independently use the toilet. Our Teva program brings together the best of Europe's Forest Schools coupled with the Reggio inspired approach. Children spend their morning interacting with their classroom teacher and fellow students in our Natural Playscape. Interactive provocations foster inquiry based learning, scientific discovery, and school readiness in an authentic outdoor environment. Teva is the first fully outdoor preschool program in Northern Nevada.

**Summer Program– Camp Explore!**

Aleph runs a seven week Summer camp to supplement our school program. After registering for the Summer, parents are welcome to choose a different schedule than the traditional school year. Dates for our Summer program can be found in the calendar. Detailed information on the summer program is available in the Spring.



## **IV. Program 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 years and accepts children ages 1-5, license #3219.

### **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. Aleph Academy strives to provide an inclusive environment for children of all abilities .

### **Child Abuse Reporting**

All employees of Aleph Academy are mandated by NRS 432 B to report suspected child abuse and neglect immediately to a law enforcement agency.

### **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, Child Development, Nutrition and Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect. In addition, each staff member is required to take 29 hours of continuing education each year.

### **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.

### **QRIS**

Aleph Academy has been given five stars as a participant of Nevada's Quality Rating and Improvement System. We are proud to offer families access to a high quality program, measured against national standards. Working with a trained early childhood coach, staff at Aleph consistently work on improving the quality of childcare in Northern Nevada.

### **NAEYC**

Aleph Academy is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. This demonstrates that Aleph Academy follows national recommendations for quality childcare in all aspects of our program.

## **V. 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. Research has demonstrated the positive effects of parent involvement on a child's learning and development. Aleph Academy's "open door policy" gives parents unlimited access to their children while they are in our care. We invite you to join us throughout our year as we celebrate your child's educational journey.

### **Open House**

Parents and children are invited to an open house prior to the start of the scholastic year. Children, along with their parents, meet the staff and become familiar with the class environment. See our school calendar for date and time.

### **Curriculum Night**

We welcome our parents to join us as you hear about new updates and learn about curriculum goals in your child's classroom. This takes place during the first few weeks of school.

### **Handbook Review**

All parents are required to attend our Handbook Review annually and sign off that they understand all policies.

### **Parent Meetings**

Everyone in our community is a life-long learner. Our parent meetings are built to strengthen the partnership between home and classroom in an informative, hands-on learning environment. Meetings focused on our curriculum, PYRAMID MODEL and Kindergarten Readiness as well as an MLK service day are planned. We highly encourage all parents to attend.

### **Parent Volunteers**

Parents are expected to volunteer by participating in a role to help students or staff. Parents can donate their time, treasure (\$150), or talent to meet this requirement. The PTA President and Vice President coordinates participation. You will have an opportunity to sign up for a position of choice during the Fall. Volunteering more than one time is welcomed and encouraged.

### **Parents as Volunteers**

Parents are always welcome in our classrooms. Parents who volunteer for a special project or activity must be with, and supervised by, regularly scheduled teaching staff at all times. Parents who want to volunteer on a consistent basis will need to complete all staff licensing requirements. Please see the administration for more details.

### **Portfolios**

Teachers create a portfolio of samples of your child's work along with photos to capture your child's learning and developmental milestones throughout the year. The portfolio is then shared with parents at Windows to their World and Parent Conferences. At the end of the school year, portfolios are sent home for families to enjoy.

## **Parent Teacher Conferences**

You are always welcome to request a meeting at anytime with your child's teacher. Parent Conferences are mandatory and scheduled mid-year for all children. They last 15 minutes and go over your child's strengths, goals and assessment results.

## **Kaymbu**

We use Kaymbu as a daily communication system. Kaymbu include both a web- and app-based interface ([www.kaymbu.com](http://www.kaymbu.com)). Parents will receive a daily report that includes meals, snacks and your child's nap schedule with the ability for pictures, videos, and other important announcements. In addition, a weekly storyboard and monthly school newsletter are sent out through Kaymbu. This will allow us to further reduce our dependence on paper products and better communicate with you. You can also access daily reports through your web browser and email. This service is included in tuition.

## **Classroom Updates**

We use Kaymbu, emails to teachers' accounts, occasional postings on our private Facebook page, and weekly stories to give you a window into your child's world. These posts highlight special moments in our program and may include photos, children's quotes, teacher's reflections and educational standards met.

## **Walking Trips**

Throughout the year, weather permitting, children and teachers may take walks in the community. Parents will be notified and are welcome to participate. An administrator will join and carry a cell phone and first aid kit on these trips in case of emergency.

## **Birthday Celebrations**

In the spirit of community, teachers create a unique birthday ritual for their classroom. Rituals may include creating a birthday book or poster or inviting parents to donate a book to the classroom or sharing some whole fresh fruit in honor of the birthday child. We honor these rituals and do not encourage you to bring any other treats or prizes. In addition, staff cannot distribute personal birthday party invitations.

## **PreK Graduation**

Our graduating families host our end of year celebration and graduation. A \$50 fee is automatically charged to your TADS account in May for these extras. We ask the parents to participate in planning this special celebration and helping with set up and clean up.

## **Personal Belongings**

Aleph Academy asks that special toys and other personal belongings from home stay at home. **Please label everything. If we don't know whose belonging it is, it may get thrown out.** We cannot be responsible for belongings brought to school.

## **Cell Phones**

Drop off and pick up are great opportunities to touch base with your child's teacher and hear about your child's day. To encourage interactions, Aleph Academy is a cell phone free zone. We appreciate you not using your phone during drop off and pickup times.

## **Community Partnerships**

Aleph strives to bring the community into our school as well as contribute to the greater community. By partnering with other local organizations, our children benefit tremendously. This allows us to provide the most up to date best practices and expose your children to the amazing world around them.

## **Childcare Arrangements**

We view our staff as early childhood professionals. Any arrangement for child care outside of Aleph Academy programming with any Aleph staff members is solely at the discretion of parents, guardians, and/or caregivers to make those arrangements. Such arrangements are private agreements, outside the course and scope of staff members' employment and job duties at Aleph Academy and for which Aleph Academy is not in any way liable for any accident or injury out of or relating to this arrangement. Aleph Academy staff is never allowed to transport children in a vehicle. All staff members are liable when using their personal vehicle. The Aleph Academy, Chabad of Northern Nevada, or its insuring companies are never responsible for any staff member or child in a staff member's care outside of Aleph Academy. Aleph is in no way liable for any incident or injury arising out of or relating to this arrangement, or any demands, losses, causes of action, damage, lawsuits, or judgments stemming there from.

We expect professionalism and boundaries to be maintained at all times. Personal arrangements cannot conflict with Aleph's school schedule or interfere with a staff members duties at Aleph. Action will need to be taken if any conflicts of interest arise. Any childcare arrangements made outside of school hours are at your own discretion.

## VI. The Health and Wellness Policies

### Partners for Your Child's Health

Aleph Academy believes that the school and parents are partners in your child's growth and development. We encourage parents to partner with us in promoting lifelong health for your child with good nutrition and physical activity at home. It is important for children to get a good night's sleep and to come to school well rested. Periodic updates on our health and wellness plan will be provided in emails and at parent meetings.

### Immunizations

All children must have an up-to-date copy of their immunization record, that follows the Washoe County guidelines, and a well child check from their physician at the time of registration. Immunizations must be current within 2 weeks of the child's birthday or the child will be excluded from our program until they can provide evidence of immunization. Parents are responsible for providing Aleph with an updated copy of the most current immunization record. Vaccination exemptions are accepted pursuant to Nevada revised statutes only. If an outbreak of vaccine-preventable disease should occur, an exempt child will be excluded from the child care facility by the child care facility administrative head for a period of time as determined by the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health based on a case-by-case analysis of public health risk.

We will accept NEW students that are current with their immunizations or have a medical exemption only. No exceptions will be made.

For your child's safety and comfort, we require you keep your child home for the rest of the day after receiving immunizations.

### Sick Child Policy

We follow the sick child guidelines of the Washoe County Health Department. We consult with them if there is an outbreak or if we have any questions regarding illness.

Please keep your child home if they are showing any signs or symptoms of sickness including fever, cough, body aches, or shortness of breath. Any child with a temperature of 100.4 or above will be sent home immediately. Children must be symptom free, for 24 hours before returning to school without the aid of a fever reducing medication. While at school, if your child has any outward signs of illness we will ask you to pick up your child within 30 minutes of our phone call and keep them home for at least 24 hours. The child may wait in a designated area until they are picked up. If you have multiple children, and one child has a fever or symptoms at drop off, your other child will not be able to attend. Children who do not return to school symptom free within 72 hours will be required to get a doctor's note allowing for their return. If you, your spouse or other members of your family have a temperature or are sick, we respectfully request that you keep your child home.

If your child has any illness and needs to be seen by a physician, returning to school is only allowed with a doctor's note. Exclusions may differ during an outbreak situation, as deemed by the Washoe Health District recommendations.

### COVID-19

We follow guidelines developed by the CDC and adjust our regulations accordingly.

## **Emergency Health Situation**

In the case of an emergency health situation like, but not limited to a Pandemic, we will follow the guidance and direction of local, State and National authorities to determine a course of action that considers the health and safety of our children and staff. Decisions will be made that may impact school closure or adjusted hours, limited entry to our facilities, daily health checks, limitation on items allowed into the Center and limitation on visitors, parents and guardian access. All protocols and procedures will be instated for the duration of the emergency health situation and communicated to parents via email.

## **Late Arrival**

All children must be dropped off by 10:00am each day. We do not allow drop-offs after this time. In addition, if you pick up your child early from school to attend an appointment, they will need to stay home for the duration of the day. This helps with consistency and routine within our classrooms.

## **Absences**

Please notify the school, by email, when your child is absent, and the nature of the absence. Emails can be sent to [admin@alephacademy.com](mailto:admin@alephacademy.com) and your child's class email. All illnesses must be reported to the administration, especially if your child has a communicable disease, so that we may alert appropriate authorities as well as other parents. Following a communicable disease or contagious illness, a doctor's note is required stating the child is able to return to school. There are no tuition credits for absences.

## **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 upon arrival, before and after meals or snacks, after coming in from outside, after using the toilet or a diaper change, and before engaging in any cooking activity.

## **Toilet Learning**

Children do not need to be able to use the toilet independently to enter our toddler 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 assistance as needed. We can also provide resources for parents to determine when your child is ready and for more information on how to proceed with the process.

Parents can assist in toilet learning by dressing your child in underwear and loose fitting clothing that the child and teacher can easily remove. More than one pair of extra clothes is pertinent for child and teachers to have successful days. The 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 use or 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.

Children need to be toilet proficient to enter our Gesher and Teva classes. If you have an individual concern, please speak to our directors to work out a toileting plan.

## **Injury**

In case of simple injury, we will perform routine hygienic measures such as washing wounds and applying bandages. An injury report will be filled out for parents to sign and placed in your child's file. We can provide parents with a copy at their request.

In case of non-emergency situation, 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 treatment. We cannot provide transportation for children to a medical facility.

In a case of emergency where circumstances require immediate or professional attention, 911 services will be called. We will respond as necessary until emergency services arrive. Parents are responsible for all fees related to the transport of their child to a medical facility.

## **Medication**

- We prefer that parents come to the school to administer any medication needed. This does not apply to EpiPens used in case of emergency. In the event that a parent is unable to do so, medication will only be administered when accompanied by a signed physician's note and written permission with instructions from the parent, which are to be left in the office.
- Only our designated staff member who is trained to administer medication or a staff member trained by the parent of the child, can administer the medication. Administering of the medicine must be logged by the staff that administered it, with a date and time and kept in the child's file. Parents can ask to see the log.
- Prescribed and non-prescription medication must be kept in the original container, contain the name of the child for who it is prescribed and stored in a locked cabinet inaccessible to children.

## **Children with Special Medical or Dental Needs**

In the Reggio Approach, a child with special needs is considered a child with special rights. When Aleph Academy has a child requiring specific medical or dental management procedures ordered by a physician, a copy of the order will be placed in the child's file. In addition, Aleph requires an adult trained in the procedure, and approved by licensing, to be on-site while the child is in attendance. Aleph will partner with the parents to arrange for this.

## **Developmental Specialist**

To ensure excellence in all aspects of our school, Aleph consults with a developmental specialist. Parents may utilize this service for any questions that they may have regarding the physical, emotional or cognitive development of their child both at school and at home. There are times when additional services may be needed. Our specialist and staff will partner with parents to determine the appropriate services necessary for your child to succeed. As an inclusive facility, we will be happy to advocate for your child and attend an IEP meeting or other supplemental service setting.

## **Emergencies**

In case of emergency (i.e. flooding, evacuation of school) we will send out an urgent message through Kaymbu as well as provide a contact number of where we can be reached. 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 that is shared with staff members and used to train staff members to respond appropriately in an emergency.

Fire drills are conducted monthly; emergency drills are conducted quarterly. All staff members receive training in CPR and First Aid and have updated certificates showing their compliance on file at all times.

### **Severe Weather**

Aleph Academy follows the Washoe County School District weather schedule (with the exception of smoke- see below). If the District schools close or have a delayed start due to the weather, so will Aleph Academy. This will always be the case for snow. You will be updated by Kaymbu regarding delayed starts and weather closures as we receive notifications from the District. There is no refund given for weather closures.

Since Aleph's calendar does not always coincide with WCSD, if they are closed for vacation and inclement weather occurs, we will send out an early morning Kaymbu update if our status is closed or delayed. While Aleph makes every effort to remain open, the safety of our students and staff is paramount.

As per licensing regulations, children will be taken outside daily for a minimum of 30 minutes but our goal is to be outside for at least 45 minutes for toddlers and 60 minutes for preschool age kids. Children that come sufficiently prepared for the weather, truly enjoy this time. Please ensure that your child has snow boots, waterproof pants, a jacket, hat and gloves during our winter months. Please ensure that your child has a bathing suit, towel, sun hat, water shoes, water bottle and sunscreen during the summer months. We utilize [airnow.gov](http://airnow.gov), news and weather reports to make an informed decision about the amount of outdoor time we offer. We are also the only member of the School Flag Program in the state of Nevada.

### **Air Quality**

Aleph Academy is part of the School Flag Program, a national program run by the EPA. Aleph Academy staff checks the local air quality regularly via the [airnow.gov](http://airnow.gov) website. Aleph has put in extra measures to keep the air within our building safe for children and staff. As long as the air inside is at a safe level, we will do everything within our control to remain open.

When the air quality is in the "good" or "moderate" range, Aleph students follow their regular schedule. When the air quality is in the "unhealthy for sensitive groups" range, students may play outside for up to forty five minutes. Aleph students do not play outside when the air quality is in the "unhealthy" range or above.

To help maintain the best possible air quality by the school, Aleph Academy asks parents and other caregivers not to leave vehicles idling during drop off and pick up unless necessary to maintain interior or engine temperatures.

### **Sunscreen**

Parents must apply sunscreen each morning, prior to arrival at school. Parents are responsible for providing sunscreen for staff to apply to their child while at school. Each bottle of sunscreen must be clearly labeled with a signed consent sticker stating instructions of use and signed by the parents. Staff will not apply sunscreen without this information. Sunscreen will be applied to the exposed skin of all children with a completed consent sticker, with the exception of the eyelids, prior to exposure to the sun. Sharing of sunscreen is not allowed. The use of hats and other sun-protective clothing is also recommended. We will make every effort within our ability to protect children from sunburn.



## **Physical Activity**

We provide a minimum of 60 minutes a day of physical activity opportunities. Children in extended afternoon care are offered an additional 60 minutes. Research has shown that children exercise best in small bursts of time so we also add a physical activity component into our structured indoor explorations. Physical activity is not used as a reward or punishment.

## **Outdoor Exploration**

The environment, also known as the "third teacher," plays a crucial role in the learning experience of children. Our natural playscape is meant to engage the children in micro-environments. Aleph students take an active role with the outdoor space by helping to plant our vegetable and sensory garden. All produce grown in the garden is sent home for tasting. In addition, our dedicated teachers work to make outdoor exploration time an educational opportunity through integrative art and science projects.

## **Technology**

We believe that technology should be harnessed as a learning tool for research and inquiry. Children may have access to digital cameras, video cameras as well as internet accessible computers and an Ipad. Technology is used as a research tool for children to learn and reflect with their teachers, they are not used for entertainment and will be kept to a maximum usage of 30 minutes per week.

## **Clothing and Diapers**

Children participate daily in many engaging, and sometimes messy, activities. Please send two complete changes of clothes labeled with your child's name on it and put in a Ziploc bag. 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 and sent home with your child. Staff members are not allowed to rinse the clothing. Please remember to replace clothes that are sent home the following school day.

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. You may be asked to bring an extra pair of shoes for your child that they can wear indoors.

Child care regulations state that parents must provide their child with a supply of disposable diapers (no cloth diapers) and wipes if needed. We are not permitted to use other children's supplies on your child. It is critical that supplies be replenished weekly; if not, parents may be called to bring supplies during school hours. Teachers check diapers regularly and record all diaper changes on Kaymbu.

## **Healthy Way to Grow**

HWTG is a national, science-based, early childhood technical assistance program to help reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by improving practices and policies in early childhood programs. Aleph Academy is proud to be a HWTG Gold center (one of only three in the nation!) We have implemented a wellness policy with visible, measurable, sustainable actions and meet program criteria to promote nutrition, physical activity, screen time and infant feeding which also align with national best-practice guidelines, including Let's Move! Child Care. Healthy Way To Grow is another example of Aleph's strong community partnerships.

## **Meals and Snacks**

Aleph Academy provides daily healthy kosher snacks- one in the morning, one in the afternoon and one during our extended aftercare program. All snacks include a fruit or vegetable plus one other healthy snack item. Children must bring a personal water bottle daily and are encouraged to drink their water. Drinking water is also available in each classroom.

Our focus is on whole, fresh food that is prepared on site. We do not serve sweetened drinks or snacks. Menus are changed seasonally and posted in every classroom and can be found on our website. Meals for our nutritious lunch program are healthy- we avoid excess salt, saturated fat, trans fat and sugar. Age appropriate portion sizes of whole grains, vegetables, fruits and protein are provided, based on USDA's most recent guidelines. As per those guidelines and being that we are a kosher facility, when we serve milk it is in the form of a non-dairy milk substitute (i.e. an approved alternative like rice or oat milk.)

The children and staff eat together family style. Family style eating encourages relationship building, good health practices and fewer food related issues. Children are able to choose what and how much of each food to eat as well as assist in the routine clean up. All food will be offered to children at the same time; we do not use food as a reward or punishment.

If your child has any food allergies, notify the Director and classroom teacher. We do not allow any outside food to be brought to school. The only thing that can be brought is a closed lid cup or water bottle. Out of sensitivity to those who may have an allergy, please do not bring anything containing nuts into our facility.

## **Water Bottles**

Children are required to bring a clean water bottle daily with their name clearly labeled on the bottle. Water bottles will be stored in individual cubbies or on a surface where they do not touch other bottles. These will be sent home at the end of each day to be cleaned and disinfected. Drinking water is also available in each classroom.

## **Quiet Rest Time**

Children that stay for a full day are required to have a minimum half hour rest period. A child who cannot sleep will be provided with quiet, restful activities. As advocates for children, we will not force a child to stay awake during rest time, even on parent's request. If you need to pick up your child during this time, we suggest our designated half day pick up time as a more appropriate option.

We provide a cot for every child; each child must have a fitted crib size sheet for their cot, along with any other top blanket, pillow and/or transitional object. All items must be clearly labeled with the child's name. These will be sent home every Friday to be washed and returned the following week.

## **Allergies**

At Aleph, we partner with parents on behalf of your child's well being. If your child has a food allergy, please email us prior to registration to see if we can accommodate you. Once your child is enrolled and upon notification of a food allergy, we will provide you with our Food Allergy Emergency Care Plan form to be completed by your child's allergist. Allergies will be posted in each classroom and in the kitchen upon receipt of the Food Allergy form. As allergies can change over time, we do require that this form be updated annually by your child's physician.

Our menus change seasonally. If you notice a food item on the menu that your child is allergic to, please let us know immediately so that we can modify our menus if possible. For special occasions and with pre-approval from the director, whole uncut fresh fruit may be brought to school. We do not allow any

other outside food to be brought into our facility. This helps ensure the health and safety of all the children in our care.

If your child has environmental allergies, please keep in mind that the outdoor classroom plays a huge role in your child's day at Aleph.

### **Asthma**

If your child has asthma, an Asthma Action Plan will need to be completed by your child's physician. Upon completion, parents will need to meet with their child's teacher(s) to help ensure that they are trained in identifying the specific triggers, administration of medication and asthma emergency plan unique to their child. Any medications that your child needs will need to be kept at school and will stay at school while your child is enrolled. It is your responsibility to check that it is current and change it when needed.

### **EpiPens**

If your doctor indicates that your child needs an EpiPen on the Food Allergy form, we will need you to provide us one for school. The EpiPen must have the student's name on the attached prescription label. The EpiPen stays at Aleph while your child is enrolled. It is your responsibility to check that it is current and replace it upon expiration.

## **VII. General Information**

### **Supportive Transitions**

We understand that transitions can be difficult. Therefore, transitions are carefully planned for children and families. We will be happy to assist in transitioning your child into our program once all registration forms are complete. We believe that each child and family is unique, which is why we support your family by customizing your transition process with an initial playdate and additional short classroom stays if needed.

### **Admissions Procedure**

Parents need to schedule a tour, and both parents are encouraged to attend. After the tour, parents will need to complete enrollment and submit the initial (non-refundable) fee to apply for our waitlist. Parents will be notified as soon as space becomes available. Annual re-enrollment will be available for presently enrolled children first, followed by siblings, and our waitlist. Priority is given to members of the Jewish community, members of the military and essential workers. We try to accommodate as many children as possible while still maintaining NAEYC recommended ratios and group sizes. We welcome all children to our program.

### **Wait List**

We maintain a waitlist once a class is full and for children who are not yet old enough to join our program. To join, parents need to fill out enrollment and pay the \$75 non-refundable waitlist fee (applied towards registration.) Aleph will contact applicants as vacancies occur. To hold the spot, families will need to pay the remainder of their registration fee (\$125) and initiate the registration process within a two week window.

### **Supply Fee**

There is an annual \$200/child supply fee to support our well stocked classrooms which is charged with the first tuition payment. As a Reggio inspired program, supplies in good order are extremely important. Also, as we follow the interests of the children, we never truly know what extra supplies we may need. Supplies are a consumable item that has to be restocked on a regular basis. New supplies are purchased as the need arises as they are truly unique to each classroom.

### **Holding a Spot**

Parents have several options for a future spot for their child at Aleph. Putting your child on our waitlist tells us that you are interested to know when a spot becomes available.

However, once a spot becomes available, you will be notified and have two weeks to decide if you would like to register your child. If your child cannot start immediately but you would like to guarantee the spot for your child at Aleph during our scholastic year, tuition must be paid in full using the regular payment schedule through TADS, whether or not your child is in attendance. No discounts can be given during the guarantee period. This can only be done during our scholastic year and is on a space availability basis only.

We understand that circumstances can change; any tuition already paid will not be refundable even if your child has never attended. We do require a two week notice for any schedule changes that may occur.

During this period, regardless of attendance, your child is considered enrolled in our program. All policies in our Parent Handbook apply.

## **Emergency Access**

During enrollment, parents provide a list of names and phone numbers of individuals who are authorized by the parent to pick up and care for the child in case of illness or emergency if the parents cannot be reached. This is also written on your Emergency Consent Form. It is the parents responsibility to email us with any updates or changes that occur.

## **Children's Files**

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

- Aleph Academy Registration Form & Emergency Consent Form (to be updated annually)
- Certified Washoe County Health Dept. immunization record for child care
- Well Child Statement with physician's signature
- ASQ3 and ASQ-SE2 Developmental Profile– to be completed twice a year
- Signed Tuition Agreement
- Food Allergy form with physician's signature (when applicable)

## **TADS**

TADS is the tuition management service used by Aleph Academy and the only way we accept tuition. TADS allows us to efficiently manage the tuition process while offering convenience to families. There is an annual enrollment fee for this service.

## **Tuition**

Please see accompanying tuition rates and payment options for installments. The first installment includes a two week non-refundable deposit, applied to the last two weeks of care. Tuition payments are due on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month for the following month. Any tuition paid after the due date will incur a TADS administered late fee. Consistent late payments or failure of payment may result in immediate dismissal from our program. To hold your child's spot in our program, we require you to sign up with TADS and pay the enrollment fee. Please note that August, September, April, May and June tuition are not refundable, regardless of attendance. All tuition questions can be addressed to Sarah Cunin who can be contacted at [sarah@alephacademy.com](mailto:sarah@alephacademy.com)

## **Children with Multiple Households**

Parents are required to provide documentation of custody arrangements. Aleph must be notified immediately of any change in arrangement and any scheduling changes must be made in writing and signed off by all parties. All custodial guardians are welcome to participate in all Aleph family events and activities. Under special circumstances where tuition payments are shared between multiple households the percentage arrangement is set up during the registration period on TADS and cannot be changed once the school year begins. When this occurs, each party signs a tuition agreement on TADS which itemizes payment responsibilities.

## **Unplanned Closure**

In the event that we need to close the school due to circumstances outside of our control and without much warning (i.e. a national emergency or Pandemic) we will initiate an emergency protocol that will impact tuition. Families will be charged full tuition for the first month of closure and staff will be paid during that time. Enrollment will only be maintained during a closure period as long as all commitments to Aleph are fulfilled.

In the event of an extended, unplanned closure, Aleph will share with you a plan that is appropriate both for the situation and the children involved.

### **Holding Fee for Unplanned Closure**

In the event of a closure longer than a month, regular Tuition on TADS will be suspended and a holding fee charge will be enacted that will guarantee your child's spot upon re-opening of our center. *If you choose to withdraw during an extended closure without paying the holding fee, and then decide to return to Aleph, your child will be considered as a new student and all applicable fees apply.*

### **Yearly Tuition Increase**

Increases in tuition will be limited to cost factors we incur to assure a quality program. There will be a yearly tuition increase that reflects this. Parents will be notified in the spring of tuition increases.

### **The Right Start Grant and Jewish Community Scholarship**

In partnership with Jewish Nevada, we are pleased to offer the Right Start grant for Jewish children and their siblings starting preschool for the first time. Grant information can be found at [jewishnevada.com](http://jewishnevada.com) Aleph also has a limited number of Jewish community scholarships available for families in need. Please inquire about the application process.

### **Change of Program Fee**

In the event of a voluntary change of your child's days of attendance, and pending space availability, a fee of \$150 will occur to help cover the cost of lost tuition. This will automatically be added to your TADS account for the month the change goes into effect. Changes can be made prior to the effective month. 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 August, September, April, May or June. There will be no exceptions.

### **Drop In Policy**

If you need an additional day of care or additional extended care, please contact our office at least 48 hours in advance to see if space is available. Due to ratio and staffing requirements, we cannot always provide your child with additional care.

### **Discounts**

For families with siblings in our school, a 5% discount is given on the second child's tuition, for whichever child is older. If there are grants or scholarships available, parents will be notified of the specific timeline and parameters to determine eligibility. Families that need additional financial assistance are welcome to discuss their needs with us. We cannot combine discounts.

### **Hours of Operation**

Aleph Academy is open Monday through Friday. Our full school day is from 9:00 am to 3:30 p.m. with extended care offered for an additional fee from M-F 8:00-9:00 a.m. and M-Th from 3:30-5:30 pm. Aleph closes for all children at 4:00pm on Fridays. Half day dismissal for Rishonim, Ketantanim, Gan and Gimmel is at 12:00 p.m. and for Teva and Gesher is 12:30p.m.

### **Extended Care**

Aleph offers both early morning and afternoon extended care options. These can be added to your regular schedule as an additional fee. There is a discounted fee when extended care is utilized for the

entire school year. For families that do not need extended care on a regular basis, the drop in fees apply.

## **Security**

For the safety and security of our children, Aleph Academy is a locked facility. The front door and preschool door are locked at all times. Families will receive 2 Brivo passes and can request an additional pass for a caretaker who consistently drops off or picks up your child from our school, as enumerated on your Emergency Consent Form. Additional Brivo passes are available for a \$10 fee. Access is only given to the individuals who are authorized by the parent to pick up on TADS or on your Emergency Consent Form. Anyone else can ring the doorbell and an administrator will buzz them in.

## **Arrival and Drop Off**

*Aleph Academy's school day is from 9:00a.m.-3:30p.m.*

We strongly encourage children to arrive by 9:00 a.m. for the morning activities. Please try to be punctual as children perform their best when they begin the morning on time with the rest of the children The latest children can arrive each day is at 10:00a.m. If your child needs to come to school later than that time, please keep them home for the day. If you are early for drop off, please remain outside with your child(ren) until their scheduled time. Parents leaving prematurely will be given one e-mail reminder and then will be charged for morning care. Contactless drop off will be instituted if the need for social distancing arises. In that case, drop off is by the front door from 8:55-9:15am.

## **Dismissal and Pick Up**

School day pick up is from 3:25-3:35pm. Children will be released from Aleph Academy only to authorized persons whose names appear on their consent form. If a different adult will be picking up your child, we will need prior written notice from you and we will check ID upon arrival. Anyone who does not provide identification will be turned away. 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.

Ratios are best maintained when a child is picked up at their scheduled time. Ratios are an important part of a quality early childhood program. Please be prompt for both drop off and pick up. Aleph's entrance is adjacent to an active driveway and busy parking lot. It is the parent's responsibility to watch their child once they are released from Aleph staff and outside of our facilities. Please ensure your child's safety by not lingering at the entrance. Our stairs and ramp area are not an appropriate place for children to play. In the event that you are unavoidably delayed, please call and email Aleph Academy and let us know so that we may reassure your child that you are in fact coming. **If your child stays beyond 5 minutes of the time of their scheduled pick up, you will be charged a \$30 late fee.** This fee will automatically be charged to your TADS account.

For families that occasionally need to extend their child's scheduled time, please give us a 48-hour notice. We will try our best to accommodate you; a final decision is based on staffing and ratios. If approved, the drop-in fee for extended care will be applied to your TADS account.

## **Calendar, Holidays and Days off**

Please review the Aleph Academy Calendar as days off combine Jewish and secular holidays. 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, as it is already accounted for in the tuition cost.

## **Drop-In Fees**

### *Half Day*

9:00-Through Lunch \$95

Afternoon-3:30 \$75 (only available as an add on)

### *Full Day*

9:00-3:30 \$120

### *A.M. Extended Care*

8:00-9:00 \$20.00

### *P.M. Extended Care*

3:30-4:30 \$20.00

4:30-5:30 \$20.00

3:30-5:30 \$35.00

Late Pick Up Fee \$30.00

## **Early Friday Dismissal**

Every Friday will be an early dismissal. Pick up on Fridays is at 4:00 p.m. The facilities are closed promptly at 4:15p.m. Extended care tuition has been adjusted to reflect the early Friday dismissal. Fridays are wonderful days filled with the aroma of fresh baked challah bread and a celebration in honor of Shabbat.

## **Calendar, Holidays and Days off**

Please review the Aleph Academy Calendar as days off combine Jewish and secular holidays. 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, as it is already accounted for in the tuition cost.

**2024-25 Scholastic Year**      *180 School Days*

August 16

*Open House*



<b>August 19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b><i>First day of School</i></b>
September 2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>Labor Day– School Closed</i>
September 10 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Curriculum Night</i>
October 3 <sup>rd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Rosh Hashana- School Closed</i>
October 11 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Erev Yom Kippur-Half Day, Early dismissal 12pm</i>
October 17 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Sukkot-School Closed</i>
October 24 <sup>th</sup> -25 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Simchat Torah-School Closed</i>
November 28-29 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Thanksgiving– School Closed</i>
December 23 <sup>rd</sup> -January 1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Winter Break– School Closed</i>
January 20 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Martin Luther King Day– School Closed</i>
<b>January-February</b>	<b><i>Parent Teacher Conference Months</i></b>
February 17 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Presidents’ Day- School Closed</i>
February 18 <sup>th</sup> -21 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Parent Conferences- No Before or After Care</i>

March 14 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Purim– <b>Half Day</b> 12pm Dismissal</i>
April 10 <sup>th</sup> – April 21 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Passover/Spring Break– <b>School Closed</b></i>
May 26 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Memorial Day – <b>School Closed</b></i>
June 2 <sup>nd</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>Shavuot- <b>School Closed</b></i>
June 6 <sup>th</sup>	<i><b>Last Day of Scholastic Year- ½ day early dismissal 12:00pm</b></i>
<b>Camp Explore 2025</b>	<i>34 Camp Days</i>
June 16 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Camp Explore Begins</i>
July 4 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Independence Day- <b>School closed</b></i>
August 1 <sup>st</sup>	<i><b>Last Day of Camp Explore</b></i>

### **Ending of Partnership by Parents**

Advance 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– A Collaborative Decision**

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. In the event that an administrative withdrawal of a child is considered, Aleph will collaborate with parents, our behaviorist and other ECE professionals and consultants to make the best decision for your child. 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 child's ability to understand the situation

## **Grievances**

Misunderstandings do occur, and will be handled in a professional manner. There are times when difficulties or differences can arise in interactions between families and staff. We use different techniques to resolve the conflict.

1. All grievances should be presented to the Educational Director or Assistant Director. A meeting will be scheduled to discuss the issue as well as come up with solutions.
2. Failing to reach a settlement in a conference with the directors, 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.
3. After review of the statement, parents are able to present their issue to the Pyramid Model Leadership Team. The Leadership Team is composed of parents, staff and other professionals in the fields of behavior, psychology and mental health. The meeting with the Leadership Team is confidential. The team uses a progressive positive approach to reach a solution.

## VIII. General Information

### Aleph Academy

1175 W. Moana Lane

Reno, NV 89509

(775)825-8928 ext. 2 or ext.3

[www.alephacademy.com](http://www.alephacademy.com)

To contact the school administration, email us at

General Questions- [admin@alephacademy.com](mailto:admin@alephacademy.com)

Alisha Churchfield, Program Director- [alisha@alephacademy.com](mailto:alisha@alephacademy.com)

Bella Cryder, Assistant Director- [bella@alephacademy.com](mailto:bella@alephacademy.com)

Sarah Cunin, Founder and Organizational Director- [sarah@alephacademy.com](mailto:sarah@alephacademy.com)

Please contact Sarah for all admissions, registration and financial questions

To contact your child's teachers, you can email them at

[babyclass@alephacademy.com](mailto:babyclass@alephacademy.com)

[rishonimclass@alephacademy.com](mailto:rishonimclass@alephacademy.com)

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