



*Only The Best For Your Child!*

# PARENT HANDBOOK

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# WELCOME TO LADYBIRD ACADEMY

Welcome To Ladybird Academy of Avalon Park,

On behalf of the staff, children and parents of Ladybird Academy, we would like to welcome you and look forward to working with you and your child, sharing in his or her growth and development. Our policy is very clear to all associated with our school, we strive for nothing but the very best!

The early years in your child's life are extremely important with many changes taking place in a very short space of time. Your child will learn to communicate and make great physical strides while at the same time become intellectually aware and more inquisitive of their natural surroundings. At Ladybird Academy we have all the necessary ingredients in the form of teachers, educational curriculum and consistent high quality care to make a difference in your child's development. You will find that when your child attends elementary school, he or she will be fully prepared and more than ready for the challenge.

As a parent you will have a greater opportunity for participation in many school events and activities where you will be encouraged to develop relationships with the Director, Owners and indeed other parents. The Director and Owners operate an open door policy where we encourage ongoing communication, always feel free to approach us with any questions or concerns or ideas, we are always ready to listen.

The parent handbook has been developed as a guideline of the expectations we have for all new and existing parents. Please read through all the policies and procedures contained inside carefully; if you are unsure about anything then please ask for clarification. An understanding of our policies and procedures will help to eliminate potential problems for teachers and parents and ease the transition of children from home to school during their early years.

Thank you for choosing Ladybird Academy.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

To become a preschool of quality and prestige requires determination and effort by everyone associated with the school. Attention to detail, educational curriculum, warmth and understanding, together with qualified professional teachers and most importantly the support of parents all help to achieve *outstanding recognition*.

We believe that in our schools we have achieved such recognition, and we continue to make every effort to provide parents with something new and not seen in any preschool before. Our aim is to continually improve on the quality of school buildings and service to parents, children and the community.

## **PROCEDURES & SCHOOL RULES**

### CHILD RECORDS

Records are required by law for all children attending preschool. Please bring your child's records before or on the first day of attending. The file is confidential, accessible only by teachers and staff with authorization. These include medical records and emergency contacts that must be up to date. Please advise the Director should any information change, for example phone numbers or immunizations.

### ATTENDANCE

Class starts promptly at 9.00am so parents should notify the school as soon as they can whenever a child will not be attending.

Teachers attempt to wait until all children have arrived in class before starting activities so advance notification is appreciated. Should children be sick, please notify the Director of the sickness and cause, since this helps staff be aware of any illness that may occur at school.

### OPENING HOURS

Ladybird Academies open from 6:30am until 6:30pm, Monday through Friday. School closes for Thanksgiving weekend, Memorial Day, Labor Day, Independence Day, Christmas Day and New Years Day. We also close half days on Christmas Eve and New Years Eve.

### PARENT ACCESS

Parents of children in the school are welcome and permitted free access at any time during opening hours without prior notice.

Where Family Court or other legal entities have established visitation or custodial rights, a copy of the order must be provided to the school. The orders of any courts will be strictly adhered to unless the custodial parent requests a more liberal variation of the court order in writing.

In cases of parental separation or divorce both parents must be in agreement and sign a consent form when adding an additional person for child pick up.

### VACATIONS

Parents should notify the Director and teacher whenever taking vacations. One free vacation week is available after one full year enrollment in school. This must be requested by parents and cannot be carried over to the following year (maximum 1 week per calendar year). In the event the vacation is for longer periods then tuition must be paid as normal to reserve a child's place.

## ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

There is a fingerprint scanner and touch screen located on the reception desk. Upon arrival each morning you should scan your fingerprint to log your children in. Front desk personnel will be present to monitor those checking in and out. After successfully signing in your children, you may then enter the door code to enter the school. Children should be escorted to their respective classroom and passed over to the teacher in attendance. At the end of the day when collecting your child, use your fingerprint again to log out on the same computer screen on the reception front desk.

We ask that parental involvement with the teacher beyond greeting be kept to a minimum during morning drop off; this will ease any separation difficulty and help your child adjust quickly to the morning routine. Should you have any questions or information to give that was not able to be communicated to the teacher right away, please leave a note in the "Notes to my Teacher" box. We can also make alternate arrangements for discussions of any concerns or questions you may have. All classes start by 9:00am.

## VPK-ONLY

Ladybird Academy is pleased to offer a Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program designed to prepare your child for Kindergarten and build the foundation for their educational success. Our VPK program gives each child an opportunity to perform better in school and throughout life with a quality curriculum that includes high literacy standards and qualified instructors. Ladybird Academy's VPK program consists of 540 hours of instructional time during the school year, and follows the Orange County school year calendar. In order to remain in the program, students must adhere to the requirements detailed in the *Rights and Responsibilities for Child Eligibility and Enrollment* that you have been provided with at the beginning of the school year.

While at Ladybird Academy, all students are subject to the general school policies, including dress code requirements for full school uniforms and closed toe shoes.

Classes start and end promptly at the designated times. Please arrive no earlier than 15 minutes before class and pick up no later than 15 minutes after class. Standard late fees apply if dropped off before or picked up after allotted time. As a courtesy to our VPK families, a car pool line is provided for drop off beginning 15 minutes before class starts, and for 15 minutes after class ends.

## RELEASE OF CHILDREN

The safety of children is of paramount importance. Ladybird Academy maintains a strict policy regarding the individuals to whom we will release a child. The enrollment forms require a parent to specify at least two adults to whom their child may be released to, on a regular and emergency basis. Pass-codes for the computer and entry to the school will be given to each person eligible to collect a child. You may be asked by the teachers to provide identification if you are not known by that teacher.

Advance written notice or telephone confirmation with proof of ID is required for anyone other than specified persons. The Director must be notified with the name, address, phone number and brief description of the person collecting the child. The person upon arrival at the school will be required to show positive identification before the child will be released. Should any unauthorized person become uncooperative with the schools policies regarding the release of a child, then the local police will be contacted.

Ladybird Academy employees are not permitted to release a child to any individual whom arrives at the school and appears intoxicated and/or impaired. The police will be called if anyone thought to be intoxicated or impaired tries to take a child from the school.

Individuals under the age of eighteen will not be permitted to pick up a child from the school.

## POSSESSIONS FROM HOME

No toys are allowed from home. It is very difficult for children to share their favorite possessions and all toys or equipment in the school must be shared. Many toys can break easily into many small parts, these types are inappropriate for our preschool setting. Sometimes there will be occasions for “show and tell” when there are specific days at the request of the teacher allowing children to bring items to school, however, no items or toys pertaining to violence or having to do with any religious belief are allowed. Items only appropriate for a preschool audience will be allowed.

Other possessions, such as jackets or spare change of clothes, must be marked with the child’s name to better track the item. Ladybird Academy is not liable for the loss or damage of any personal items brought onto the school premises.

## REST TIME

Children in certain classrooms will have a rest time during the day. This is a quiet period and some children will sleep at this time. The lights are dimmed and quiet music played. Those children that do not sleep will be given the opportunity to select quiet activities such as books or puzzles while their classmates rest. We will make every effort to meet each child’s individual rest needs; however each child’s rest needs may vary due to activity and sleep patterns the night before.

You may bring in a small blanket or comfort item that fits in your child’s cubbie or flat on their cot. Due to space constraints, please do not send in bulky items such as pillow pets or plush blankets.

## ITEMS TO BRING

### **INFANTS & ROLLY POLLIES**

Diapers, milk/formula/baby food & change of clothes

### **GRASSHOPPERS**

Diapers & change of clothes

### **BUMBLEBEES and BUTTERFLIES**

Diapers or pull ups & change of clothes

### **LADYBUGS, CATERPILLARS, and pre-K**

Change of clothes

## TV & VIDEO

It is the belief of Ladybird Academy that by placing their children in our school, we have an obligation to provide the high quality education and care that parents expect. Television is not used as an educational tool; we focus on teacher instructed care. TV’s are located in Explorer’s Club classroom and are primarily for the use of elementary aged children. As a special treat preschool children may be allowed to watch age appropriate DVDs at holiday times.

## MEALS & SNACKS

At Ladybird Academy nutritious meals are provided during the day, including breakfast for those children arriving before 8:45am. In addition to breakfast, meals include a mid morning snack, lunch, and a mid afternoon snack. The meals include a variety of foods and full menus can be found each week on the school notice board. The school provides a menu that rotates on a 4 weekly basis, however menus may be changed from time to time to accommodate the seasons and for children with special dietary requirements.

**NO food or snacks from home are allowed into school.** Many of the children in the school have allergies to certain food types that we identify and monitor closely. By bringing in food you will compromise the safety and well being of other children. This is extremely important and something we cannot allow without prior permission from the Director.

On special occasions outside foods may be brought in for a celebration. We ask that the front desk is notified beforehand and that all food items be store bought so that the ingredients are available for review as necessary.

## BREAKFAST

School cafeteria promptly closes at 9:00am. If you want your child to receive breakfast then please be in school by 8:45am. Always take your child directly to the classroom for morning drop off; they will be collected at the right time for breakfast. All children in school by 8:45am will receive breakfast. **Please remember the cafeteria is for staff and children only and closes at 9:00am to facilitate classroom schedules and curriculums.**

## TOILET TRAINING

Toilet training is a skill children acquire at around 2 years of age. We will do everything we can to assist children in this area, but it is important that parents give encouragement and persevere at home. Children will not be allowed to move into the older 3 year classroom until toilet trained.

## EMERGENCY CLOSING

At times, emergencies such as severe weather or power failure can disrupt the school. In extreme cases this may require closing the school. Parents should assume however that the school is always open unless specifically told otherwise by the Director or Owner. Ladybird Academy does not follow the procedure of public schools. Should there be no telephone communication then a sign will be posted on the front doors of the school with instructions for parents.

Ladybird Academy will take every step to ensure a safe environment for children's parents and employees in emergency situations. Emergency plans have been developed and are posted in each classroom for parent review. Should the building require immediate evacuation, staff ratios will be maintained and the children will be moved to their designated places in the outside play areas. Each staff will have their class records and emergency contact information for all children. Parents will be contacted by telephone immediately after role call.

## FIELD TRIPS

Currently Ladybird Academy does not allow children 4 years old and under to travel off school premises for the purpose of field trips. For safety reasons and to comply with the majority of parents' wishes, most field trips are limited to outside organizations traveling to us. Special events are organized monthly at no extra charge to parents.

## SMOKING POLICY

Ladybird Academy is a smoke free school. For the benefit of other parents, teachers and children, please keep our air clean by complying with this policy in school buildings and grounds.

## DISCIPLINE POLICY

The teachers at Ladybird Academy utilize age appropriate behavior guidelines encouraging self control, self direction, responsibility and cooperation. Positive discipline instructs children as to what they should do, for example. "We walk inside the building" vs. "No running". At no time will a child be subject to physical punishment, humiliated, frightened or verbally abused by any member of staff. Any violation of the schools disciplinary policy should be brought to the attention of the Director or Owner immediately.

Occasionally a child enrolled in school may display behavior that is not appropriate for his or her age, including biting, spitting, hitting and bad language. Ladybird Academy does not operate a dis-enrolled policy for this behavior;

instead great effort is made to resolve the problem. A teacher will work with the child within the classroom environment and if necessary document the disruptive behavior. Consultation with the Director and a plan of remedial action will be devised to resolve the behavior problem.

## UNIFORM & DRESS CODE

Children attending classrooms for older 3 year olds and up must wear the correct uniform purchased through the school.

**BOYS:** Red polo shirt with Ladybird logo, navy blue pants or shorts, red sweatshirt for winter.

**GIRLS:** Red polo shirt with Ladybird logo, navy blue jumper with logo with collared white or red shirt underneath, navy blue shorts, skirts or pants, red sweatshirt for winter.

Closed shoes or sneakers are required of everyone. For safety reasons **NO** open toe shoes or sandals are allowed.

## PARKING

When parking cars parents are asked to use the existing spaces at the front of the school. When utilizing the portico during inclement weather, please do not block the glass doors. For safety reasons and to allow easy entry and exit for all parents and children this area needs to remain unobstructed. Please remember if you have other children with you who do not attend the school, it is against the law in Florida to leave them alone inside the vehicle.

## TUITION AND FEES

## REGISTRATION FEES

The registration fee for a place in school is a one time non refundable fee. A place in school cannot be reserved until registration is paid in full in advance of enrollment. Enrollment is open to any child between the age of 6 weeks to 5 years without discrimination to sex, race, color, religion or political belief.

There is a curriculum/supply fee assessed at initial enrollment and annually thereafter at the beginning of each school year.

## TUITION PAYMENT

Tuition is due on the first day that a child attends school. Checks and debit cards are accepted. No cash is accepted at any time. Returned checks will carry a \$30 charge. If more than two checks are returned, then a debit card payment will be required for all future payments. A late fee of \$15.00 will be applicable for late payments after Tuesday, increasing by \$5.00 each additional day up to \$30 for the week. Late pickups after 6:30pm will incur a late fee of \$1.00 per minute. Consistent lateness will be cause for dis-enrollment from school. Tuition rate is based on the child's age on Monday of the billing week. Full tuition is deemed payable and due for school closings, a child's illness, family vacations or closing due to emergency conditions. No credit or allowance is given in these circumstances regardless of whether tuition has been paid in advance or not.

## WITHDRAWAL

Two weeks notice is required for withdrawing a child for any reason. Parents should inform the Director of the intended withdrawal.

## ADDITIONAL DAYS

Due to class scheduling and teacher/child ratio requirements, switching of scheduled days is not allowed unless specific arrangement have been made with the Director. Additional days may be added at the discretion of the



Director; these may not always be available. Parents should notify the Director as far in advance as possible if more days are required.

## VIP REFERRAL PROGRAM

At Ladybird Academy we value our parents and their support. Through our V.I.P. Program we show our appreciation to our loyal parents who refer their friends and family. You will receive a \$50 credit on your account when your referred friend or family specifies the referral upon enrollment, and completes their first four weeks attendance.

## **MEDICATION AND SAFETY PROCEDURES**

### CHILD MEDICATION

Ladybird Academy will only administer medication if certain criteria are met. Staff members will not dispense prescription or non-prescription medications to a child without written authorization from the child's parent or physician. Medication forms are available from reception and must be completed by parents. Out of date medicine or instructions that conflict with information on medication labels will result in no medication given to the child. Siblings will not be able to share any medicine, this includes diaper creams.

### ACCIDENTS & INJURY

Should a child become injured at school the parent will be notified via an accident report form. The parent will be asked to sign this form indicating that he/she has been notified and a copy of the form will be kept in school records. If the injury is of a serious nature, a parent will receive a phone call from school at the time the incident occurs. In the event of an emergency, the child will be transported via ambulance to the nearest hospital accompanied by a member of staff. It is extremely important that emergency contact information is kept up to date.

### HEALTH POLICY/SICK CHILDREN

The health of our children and staff is very important at Ladybird Academy. By monitoring each child's health status, teachers are able to maintain a safe environment for the entire class. Children who are ill cannot participate fully in the activities of the classroom and should not attend. Our staff understands that it may be very difficult to make alternative arrangements for an ill child and regret such inconveniences. However, cooperation in keeping a child home when they are showing symptoms of illness is essential to maintain the health of an entire class of children.

Symptoms that will exclude from participation include but are not limited to: vomiting, diarrhea, coughing, sore throat, fever, discharge from eyes or nose, rashes and itching. Should a child become ill during the day a parent will be notified and the child given the opportunity to rest or play quietly in a separate area until an authorized person arrives. Children who are sent home will not be re-admitted until they are symptom free for 24 hours. We may request that a physician certify that the child is not a health risk and is able to participate. The law requires us to send any child home with a temperature of 101 degrees or more.

### SAFETY

There is immediate access to telephones in every classroom. Fire drills are a legal requirement and conducted once per month. The results of the drills are displayed above the fire alarm system in reception and are inspected each time we receive a visit from the authorities. Exit signs and emergency instructions for fire and severe weather are located in each room in the school, clearly indicating which routes to be taken by staff and children. First aid kits are located in every classroom and the reception.

## CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT

Childcare personnel are alert to the physical and behavioral indications of child abuse and neglect. It is a responsibility of every childcare personnel to report suspected physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse or neglect to the Florida hotline.

## **PARENT COMMUNICATION** DAILY REPORTS

Ladybird Academy provides many opportunities for parents to receive information on the progress of their children as well as details on other general activities occurring from time to time. "Note boxes" are available in all classrooms if you wish to leave a message or information for your child's teacher. Daily reports are written by the teachers during each day on every child in their respective classroom. This provides a parent with an overview of the activities in which the child participated as well as information on meals, sleep and toileting. The Ladybird Academy teachers will also provide comments on the child's progress. Parents should check their child's folders daily for these reports and any other messages.

## PARENT CONFERENCES

At least twice each year or more often by request, a formal parent / teacher conference time is scheduled. This is to summarize each child's progress in detail. A written development report summarizes the teacher's evaluation.

## PROBLEM RESOLUTION

Ladybird Academy is committed to providing the best preschool care possible. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion or question receives a timely response from management. Ladybird Academy strives to ensure a fair and honest treatment of all parents and employees. Managers, employees and parents are expected to treat each other with mutual respect. All are encouraged to offer positive and constructive criticism. If parents encounter a problem or disagree with established rules of conduct for children, policies or practices, they can express their concern through the problem resolution procedure. Problems should be brought to the attention of the Director or Owner, formally or informally, in a reasonable manner, or using the problem resolution procedure. If a situation occurs parents are asked to make use of the following steps;

- 1: Parent presents the problem to the Director after incident occurs. If the Director is unavailable then contact the Owner.
- 2: Director responds to the problem during discussion or after consulting with the appropriate classroom teacher. Director documents the discussion.
- 3: Parent presents the problem to the Owner if problem is unresolved to parent's satisfaction.
- 4: Owner reviews with Director. Owner informs parent of intended solution to the problem. Owner has full authority to make any adjustments deemed appropriate to resolve the problem.

Not every problem can be resolved to everyone's total satisfaction, but only through understanding and discussion of mutual problems can employees, management and parents develop confidence in each other. This confidence is important to the operation of an efficient and harmonious environment and extremely beneficial to all the children in the school.

## INFORMATION BOARDS

These are located at the entrance to each classroom. Information is provided about upcoming school and community events. Individual classroom boards may have lesson plans, class schedules and attendance information posted.

There is also a parent's notice board located in the reception area. Weekly menus, activities and other information are posted on this board.

## NEWSLETTERS

Monthly newsletters are published with interesting information and events relative to the school throughout the year. Parents are asked to read the newsletter each month. Newsletters are emailed to parents who provide an email address. If hardcopies are preferred, they can be requested from the front reception desk. Parents wishing to include any information of their child's achievements in other activities outside of school should contact the Director for inclusion in the newsletter.

## WEB CAMS

Web cams are located in all classrooms. If you have access to the internet you can watch your child in their classroom at the cost of \$5.00 per week per child. Information is available at the reception desk.

