



# Little Star

## SCHOOL

## Parent Handbook

2019

### **Little Star Winthrop**

509-996-2801

509 Highway 20, Winthrop, WA

### **Little Star Twisp**

509-997-1019

316 5th Avenue, Twisp, WA

*Little Star School is a non-profit organization that sparks children's curiosity, compassion and sense of community through joyful learning and discovery*

## Our Philosophy

### Mission Statement

*Little Star sparks children's curiosity, compassion and sense of community through joyful learning and discovery.*

Our school is dedicated to ensuring that children in the Methow Valley have the opportunity for a healthy and joyful early childhood education. We encourage each child to develop as a whole person and acquire a lifelong love of learning.

Dear Families,

Little Star Montessori School has been serving the children of the Methow Valley since 1982. Our school provides a rich learning environment that gives children the opportunity to develop self-esteem, healthy habits of communication, and their own unique creativity.

The Montessori Method considers the total human being - his/her physical, intellectual, social and spiritual needs. The mixed age grouping allows for rich social interaction; the older child finds a sense of accomplishment in helping a younger classmate, the little ones find role models and a sense of where they are headed by watching the older children. Social skills and confidence blossom.

The child's need to develop by exploring his or her environment is supported in the classroom by carefully designed materials and a teacher who guides the child's energy, interest and enthusiasm into self-enriching activities. Freedom within the prepared environment gives the children an opportunity to make their own decisions and discoveries and to grow at their own rate.

As our teacher-child ratio is small, we are able to give each child the individual attention s/he needs. Our curriculum includes practical life skills (such as grooming, housekeeping, and cooking), pre-reading/pre-math activities for Preschoolers and reading/math skills for Kinders, integrated with geography, history, science, music, creative movement, art, drama, and storytelling. Our environment stimulates the child's natural curiosity and enthusiasm for learning.

Little Star gives the child the opportunity to make choices for developing creative, independent thinking as well as skills in group cooperation.

We believe that:

- Every child is special, therefore listened to with respect



- Every child develops at his or her own pace and is accepted as a unique individual
- Every child is curious, therefore encouraged to explore, to think creatively and to enjoy learning.

Parent participation is an important aspect of our program as children experience a sense of community and a feeling of enhanced personal worth when their parents take part in school activities. As part of our Little Star family, we want you to be involved.

Our chief interest is the self-esteem, education and welfare of your child. We feel it is important that you be fully informed about your child's needs and activities with us. We strive to maintain an open communication with our parents, which leads to a relationship of mutual trust and cooperation.

This informational handbook is for your reference. It is a guide to our school policies. Please keep it on hand as you may wish to refer to it throughout the year.

## Infant Programs

### **Winthrop Program**

*Age Level:* 6 weeks – 16 months  
*Student to Teacher Ratio:* 1:3  
*School Year:* Year Round  
*Program Hours:* Monday - Thursday, 8:30am—12:30/3:30/5:15pm  
 Friday, 8:30am – 12:30/3:30pm  
*Location:* Galaxy Building, Gemini Room  
*Teachers:* Nicole O'Driscoll & Signe Shaw

### **Twisp Program**

*Age Level:* 6 weeks – 16 months  
*Student to Teacher Ratio:* 1:3  
*School Year:* Year Round  
*Program Hours:* Monday - Friday, 8:30am—12:30/3:30/5:15pm  
*Location:* Little Star South Collaborative, Birds Nest Room  
*Teachers:* Sarah Donovan, Haley Preciado

Little Star's Infant Program focuses on the most vital stage of your child's life: the beginning. The infant room is an authentically pleasing and peaceful environment. There is an area for the youngest babies to lay on the floor or a soft mat, where they can have access to mirrors at the floor levels, mobiles to observe, bat and grasp; balls and rolling toys to reach for by creeping; and rattles and objects to hold, shake, bang and mouth. There are a variety of options to meet sleeping needs and preferences. Movement is absolutely critical to brain development, with the same impact to growth and development as proper nutrition. We offer a soft climbing structure to work on gross motor development and a pull up bar and furniture placed around the room on which young children can pull themselves up. There is plenty of push and pull toys to take along when they do begin to walk on their own. The room is kept comfortable, warm and cozy, which allows infants and very young children to spend time in comfortable clothing that does not inhibit their freedom of movement. The infant classroom also contains several low shelves with fine-motor activities such as puzzles, rings on posts, object permanence activities, and various containers to open and close and fill and empty. We require a minimum two-day enrollment for this program.



## Toddler Programs

## Winthrop Program

Age Level:	16 months – 3 years
Student to Teacher Ratio:	1:5.5
School Year:	September – June
Program Hours:	Monday - Thursday, 8:30am—12:30/3:30/5:15pm Friday, 8:30am – 12:30/3:30pm
Location:	Galaxy Building, Luna & Comet Rooms Comet Room Teachers: Florence Sawyer, Alison Darwood, Kate Brien, & Vanessa Levine
Luna Room Teachers:	Rebecca Haase & Michelle Larsen

## Twisp Program

Age Level:	16 months – 3 years
Student to Teacher Ratio:	1:5.5
School Year:	Year Round
Program Hours:	Monday - Friday, 8:30am—12:30/3:30/5:15pm
Location:	Little Star South Collaborative, Tree House Room
Teachers:	Elise Knight, Ananda Bajema, Khristina Oestreich & Carolyn Bickford

The first three years of life is a time of intense development. The brain is forming connections, personality is developing, and mobility is increasing rapidly. Our Toddler program encourages individuality, meets each child where they are at, and aims to inspire creativity and a love of learning. We encourage independence, self-discipline, and self-help skills in an environment rich in motivation, activities and opportunities. Movement, music, imaginative play, manipulation, languages, exploration, and socialization are offered to spark the individual child's interest and ability. Daily activities include a morning snack, which is provided by the parents on a rotating basis, songs and rhymes, art and music, outdoor play, lunch, nap time, and unstructured classroom time for the children to explore at their own pace.

Sleep is an essential need for most young toddlers and we work with each child and family to learn to how play a supportive role and have successful nap times at school. The Toddler classroom typically has 'nap time' after lunch, around 12:45-1:00pm. Little Star offers nap mats or families can choose to provide a pack n play. The room is darkened and soft music and/or sound machines used.

As Toddlers need consistency and a sense of belonging to truly thrive, **we require a minimum two-day enrollment for this program.** We have found that those Toddlers attending only one day per week have a more difficult time making the adjustment from parents to teachers and friends.

## Early Childhood Programs (Winthrop Only)

Age Level:	3 - 6 years
Student to Teacher Ratio:	1:8
Program Hours:	Monday - Thursday, 8:30am—1:00/3:30/5:15pm Friday, 8:30am – 1:00/3:30pm
Location:	Earth Building
Sky Room:	Emily Plott, Celeste Roberts, Nick Hershenow, & Vanessa Levine
Rainbow Room:	Michelle Shaffer, Anna Patterson, Jenny Knox
Forest Room (downstairs):	Kim Claussen, Zanna Gable, Madi Jennings

The Montessori method nurtures the whole personality of the child, which includes the power of deliberation, initiative, and independent choice. The child is encouraged to participate as a member of a real social community: our school. The child learns fundamental social skills which form the basis of good citizenship. Consistency is necessary to encourage the child to see himself as part of the greater social and cooperative community of our school, as well as to maximize the child's understanding of and ability to benefit from the Montessori curriculum and materials. Therefore, Little Star requires the following minimum days for registration:

### **EC Students (3–5) 3 day minimum; Kinder Students (5–6) 4 day minimum**

Through the use of Montessori materials, children learn and grow at their own rate and according to their own interests. The children develop independence and responsibility as they acquire valuable social, perceptual, intellectual, and physical skills. Our multi-age classroom environment provides a challenging and stimulating experience and fosters great joy in learning as the children make their own choices and discoveries. The multi-age classroom environment offers the younger children the opportunity to be curious, observing the older children and seeing what lies ahead for them with lessons and materials and it offers confidence to the older children, a familiar learning environment, strong relationships with teachers and the opportunity to be a leader. Children learn better from imitating and being guided by their peers than from an adult, and we learn so much more from teaching and guiding others. This peer interaction clearly benefits the learner, but it also benefits the ‘coaching’ peer in that they must organize their thoughts in order to teach another.

Children are introduced to phonetic reading and beginning math skills integrated with art, drama, science, geography, puppetry, storytelling, and more! Enrichment opportunities such as creative movement & dance, Spanish, & Yoga happen regularly. Field trip opportunities for the class, as well as specific learning adventures for the Kinders, are also offered throughout the year.

For the elders & Kinders in the EC classroom, teachers prepare the child to move into elementary level education with the strong social academic skills necessary for successful learning. Our flexible structure allows the child to work with materials from Preschool through Elementary according to his/her interests and



capabilities. Our environment offers challenging and stimulating materials to aid and direct academic, artistic and social growth. Our classroom is prepared to strengthen the child's ability to evaluate, which enables him/her to make constructive decisions. Decision making is considered the highest function of the human mind. Building self-esteem and learning how to cooperate in a group environment are key goals.

## Policies & Procedures

### Administration

The Little Star administration team is comprised of an Executive Director, Associate Director, Program Directors, and Office Manager.

**Executive Director, Dani Reynaud** - Galaxy building, 996-2801, [dani@littlestarschool.org](mailto:dani@littlestarschool.org)

Please contact the Executive Director if you have questions or concerns for your child, about school policies and curriculum, in regards to fundraising, planned giving, and donations, and employment.

**Associate Director, Brad Halm** - Earth building, 996-2801, [brad@littlestarschool.org](mailto:brad@littlestarschool.org)

Please contact the Associate Director if you have questions regarding financial aid applications, the DSHS child care subsidy program, and grounds and building maintenance.

**Program Director, North, Geva McAdow** - Galaxy building, 996-2801, [geva@littlestarschool.org](mailto:geva@littlestarschool.org)

**Program Director, South, Laurel Carlton** - Little Star South, 997-1019, [laurel@littlestarschool.org](mailto:laurel@littlestarschool.org)

Please contact your Program Director for enrollment questions or changes, programmatic questions or concerns, for information on snack calendar, monthly event calendar, school events, and parent participation/volunteer hours and opportunities.

**Office Manager, Erin Clark** - Galaxy building, 996-2801, [erin@littlestarschool.org](mailto:erin@littlestarschool.org)

Please contact the Office Manager for any questions regarding billing, accounts receivable and payable, and tracking of extra hours and make-up days.

### Allergies

Please inform your Program Director and teachers of any allergies your child may have. We are especially concerned about food allergies, since snack is brought to school on a rotating basis by parents.

### Arrivals and Departures

All morning programs begin at 8:30am. Little Star offers early drop-off from 7:45am for an additional fee. Space is limited and registration is required. All students must be accompanied by an adult and signed in and out on the attendance sheet with full parent name and signature. To help create an optimal learning environment for the children, we ask that parents enter the classroom quietly, settle their child in and depart. Visiting with other parents is encouraged outside the classroom.





Students riding the public school bus must have a bus note provided by the parent to Methow Valley Elementary to be allowed drop off/pick up at Little Star. The student will be checked in or out by a Little Star staff member.

The Little Star Infant and Toddler programs begin at 8:30am and end at either 12:30pm/3:30pm/5:15pm. It is important that you are prompt for pick up, as the little ones get very tired and the teachers cannot start nap time, begin the continued day prep, or leave until children are picked up.

The Little Star Early Childhood students begin their class time at 8:30am and end at 1:00/3:30/5:15pm. It is important that you are prompt for pick up.

Occasional pick up time extensions from your normal schedule are permitted but must be done by prior arrangement with the office, as space is limited. Our EC classrooms combine into one group and classroom from 3:30pm-5:15pm and teaching staff also combines.

If someone else is picking up your child after school, it is necessary that you notify the office in writing, unless you have provided prior permission on the student information sheet completed for your child. If you have provided permission on the information sheet, we ask that you still notify us in person or by phone in advance of a new person picking up. We cannot release your child to anyone other than you unless we are notified by you in writing. Please do not ask a grandparent, neighbor, friend or anyone else to notify us of a pick-up change; we will not allow any changes unless they are authorized by you.

If your child has a special blanket, stuffed animal or other comfort item which is difficult to part with or can help with transitions, s/he can bring it and leave it in their cubby.

Please be sure to sign your child in and out at the start and end of the school day. Please use your legal name when signing your child out. This is a state requirement and is for your child's protection.

## **Birthdays**

We celebrate all birthdays with a special "circle of life." We tell the "story" of the child's life. We encourage you to bring in photos of your child to include in our "story." You're welcome to send a birthday treat to share. Our "low sugar" policy is relaxed for birthdays and other special occasions.

## **Biting**

Little Star must ensure that every child is safe while in our care. Our program provides an environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others, and non-aggressive problem solving between the children.

Biting is a natural stage of development for young children who are teething and are still developing their language skills. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between thirteen and twenty-four months of age. Although biting is not an uncommon issue at pre-schools, the safety of the children at the

school is our primary concern and thus repeated biting cannot be tolerated. The school's biting policy addresses the actions teachers and staff will take when biting incidents occur.

For safety and health concerns, we take biting seriously. When it happens, it's very scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. It is also not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers, and there are no quick and easy solutions to it. Children bite for a variety of reasons: simple sensory exploration, panic, crowding, seeking to be noticed, or intense desire for a toy. Repeated biting becomes a pattern of learned behavior that is often hard to extinguish because it does achieve results: the desired toy, excitement, attention. Knowing that the effect of their biting will hurt another person is not yet a part of a child of this age's mindset, so the "cause effect" relationship is not internalized. Our teachers plan activities and supervise carefully in order for biting not to happen. There are times, however, when a staff person cannot be within immediate reach to prevent a bite.

The following steps will be taken if a biting incident occurs at our school:

- The biter is immediately approached with a firm "Stop. Owe. Teeth are only for biting food, we don't bite our friends."
- The bitten child is consoled and the bitten area washed with soap and water. If necessary, ice is applied to reduce any swelling or bruising.
- The biter is talked to on a level that he/she can understand.
- The teachers stay calm. The teachers will involve office and/or other support staff in managing the situation if necessary.
- Parents will be contacted on the day of the incident or informed at pick up.
- If the bite breaks skin or draws blood, parents of all children involved are contacted by phone.
- Confidentiality of all children involved will be maintained.
- We look intensively at the context of each biting incident for pattern, in an effort to prevent further biting behavior.
- We work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner.
- We work to adapt the environment and engage with parents to reduce stress to the children involved.

If a child bites three times within one month, the teachers will schedule a conference with the biter's parents to share information and develop a specific plan of action to support their child at school. We strongly encourage parents with biting children to adopt the plan of action at home to ensure consistency.

## **Calendar**

Little Star School will generally follow the Methow Valley School District calendar. You will receive a calendar at the beginning of the year which will give more detailed information about our schedule. You will also receive monthly calendars detailing school events, field trips, bike days, celebrations, snack roster, etc. All of these can also be found on our website.

## **Changing Program Mid-Year**

Little Star's philosophy is to follow the natural development of your child. This is a critical time for children to be free-spirited, so it is important not to rush them through our programs. It is especially important that we seriously consider the impact it may have on children if we pull them away from the connections they have developed in their classrooms. However, in some instances, it may be apparent to you or our teachers that your child is ready to transition into the next program; e.g. transition from toddler to EC program. If you feel this is the case, please communicate your concerns with your Program Director and/or Little Star's Executive Director. We will share your concerns with the appropriate teachers, and encourage you to spend some time in each classroom with your child. If it is deemed appropriate that your child should transition, complete a Change of Program form and turn it into the Office. Thereafter, we will schedule a meeting involving the parent(s), teachers from both classrooms, and the Executive Director. Together, we will discuss the situation to determine the best outcome for your child.

## **Child Abuse**

The school has set procedures to ensure that public laws regarding child abuse are followed.

## **Conferences**

Parent Teacher conferences are set up twice per year, in the Fall and Spring. These conferences are intended to give the teachers the opportunity to share your child's academic and social progress. Please do not discuss your child's progress with the staff during **school hours** or without an appointment. This does not facilitate good communication concerning your child. If you have specific concerns or there has been a change or crisis in your family, we encourage you to set up a conference appointment as soon as possible. Good communication between our staff and parents is essential to our program.

## **Cubbies for Children**

Each child will be provided with a cubby in his/her classroom. Infants and Toddlers have two sets of cubbies; one for jackets, shoes, extra clothing and lunches, and the other in the bathroom area for diapers. Early Childhood students all have one set of cubbies located in their classrooms. Please remember to regularly check and empty the cubbies.

## **Cubbies for Parents**

Each family has a Parent Cubby in the main entry area of each of our buildings. Tuition invoices will be placed in the cubbies at the beginning of each month. Please check your cubby regularly as important school notices, newsletters, and more will be provided via the cubbies.

## **Dress**

Dress your child in comfortable play clothes and shoes. Please leave at least one change of clothes in your

child's cubby in case of accidents, lunch spills, mud puddles etc. As the weather gets colder, children will need warm coats and snow pants/snowsuits, boots with traction, and mittens/gloves. We cannot let your children play outside without appropriate winter clothing. **Please label all items clearly with your child's name.** Lost items will be placed outside the front door.

## Emergency Procedures

All emergency plans, procedures, and testing can be found in the Little Star Emergency Procedures Manual. A copy is located in both offices and can be shared electronically.

The care and safety of your child in all situations is of highest importance at Little Star. We have a comprehensive and detailed Emergency Procedures Manual located in both offices. If you'd like an electronic copy of the Manual, please contact the Office Manager. The manual outlines the roles and responsibilities of Little Star staff in the event of various disasters or other problem affecting the care or safety of children. Efforts will be made to maintain childcare activities, to the greatest extent possible, in order to ensure that the needs and safety of the children will be met. If evacuation is necessary, meeting locations are as follows:

- Earth Building (EC) evacuates to Galaxy Building (Infant and Toddler)
- Galaxy Building (Infant and Toddler) evacuates to Earth Building (EC)
  - *If Both the Earth and Galaxy buildings need to be evacuated, children will be walked to the parking lot at Jamie's Place.*
- LSSC evacuates to the parking lot across 5th Avenue

In the event of a Fire Alarm/Emergency, prolonged power outage, weather emergency or earthquake, bomb threat, building evacuation for any reason, or intruder alert/emergency lockdown, parents will be alerted as soon as possible via phone call or email. If appropriate, information will also be posted on Little Star's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/littlestarmontessorischool/>)

Fire drills and smoke detector tests are performed monthly, and fire extinguishers are serviced annually.

## Extended Absences/Vacations

Absences due to family vacation or illness may sometimes occur. Because our tuition is based on an annual rate, you will continue to be responsible for tuition installments during the absence and we will guarantee your child's scheduled days upon return. In cases of extended illness (more than 2 weeks) please contact the Little Star office for other arrangements.

## Field Trips

We often take field trips to local places. We alternate field trip days to ensure all children have equal opportunity to attend. Field trip dates and destinations will generally be included in our monthly calendars,

and/or posted at the school and on our website, unless they are spontaneous adventures. Occasionally, the school needs transportation assistance on these outings. We depend on our parents to help us with transportation for our field trips. We require that drivers be licensed, insured for liability and have workable seat belts in their vehicles. When a field trip is planned, the maximum adult to child ratio will be 1:8. First aid kits, including each child's emergency information, will accompany each teacher.

## Financial Aid

We are committed to making our early childhood education programs accessible to all families. Little Star maintains a financial aid fund to assist families with tuition costs if needed. Please contact the school office for information and an application. All information is confidential.

## Fundraising

Little Star Montessori School is a non-profit 501-C-3 organization. Fundraising is critical to keeping Little Star's programming accessible to all families. To keep tuition affordable, Little Star's tuition rates cover only about 80% of our actual operating costs; the remainder is covered by fundraising efforts. In addition, our Financial Aid program is funded solely by donations from generous members of our community.

If you are able to make a contribution to enrich our programs or help families in need attend Little Star, we encourage you to do so by visiting <https://www.littlestarschool.org/giving> or contacting the Executive Director. In addition, we have many parent-led fundraising events throughout the year- if you are interested in participating in these please contact the main office for more information.

## Governance

Little Star Montessori School is a non-profit organization governed by a Board of Directors which is comprised of community representatives and parents. Parents and other community members who are interested in serving on the Board should contact the Board President. Little Star's Board of Directors meets monthly to discuss the overall well-being of the school. The board helps organize event fundraisers, building maintenance, scholarship, and finances. Little Star will post notice of openings on the parent information board as they occur, or you may contact the office if you are interested.

## Illness

If your child is ill, please keep him/her at home and call us to let us know. If your child becomes ill at school, we will notify you immediately and let your child rest until you arrive. **Our school sick policy requires that you keep your child home if he/she has vomited, has diarrhea or has a fever. Children are allowed to return to school 24 hours after the last fever, vomit, or diarrhea.** In case of an emergency, you will be notified. Please make sure you leave us with numbers where you can be reached during the day. If there are any changes in your phone numbers or contact information, please fill out a change of address form available at the office.

## Immunizations

For attendance at Little Star School, Washington State Law requires that all children **MUST** be immunized appropriately for their age. Please provide the school with a completed Certificate of Immunization or a Certificate of Exemption (signed by a physician). Please update your child's immunization form as needed (annually). Forms are available in the office.

## Late Fees

A late fee of \$10.00 will be charged for parents picking up 10 minutes late and an additional \$10.00 for every 10 minutes thereafter. If you anticipate a late pick up, please call the Little Star office.

## Lunch

Provide your child with a hearty, nutritious lunch in a lunch box. Each lunch meal the child eats at school should contain:

1. A protein (such as beef, fish, poultry, legumes, tofu, or beans) or dairy product (such as milk, cottage cheese, yogurt, cheese);
2. A grain product (such as bread, cereal, bagel, or rice cake);
3. Fruits or vegetables (two fruits or two vegetables or one fruit and one vegetable to equal the total portion size required). When juice is served in place of a fruit or vegetable it must be one hundred percent fruit or vegetable juice. **Please write** your child's name on the lunch box and other containers. We request that you remember our **no sugar/candy or junk food** policy in preparing lunch.

Lunches can be kept in the refrigerator if needed and meals can be warmed in each classrooms' microwave.

## Make-Up Days

Each child is given three (3) make-up days per school year. Families enrolled on Mondays and Fridays receive additional make-up days for the national holidays that fall on those respective days throughout the year. When using a make-up day, we ask that you call in advance or review the sign-in sheet in the classroom to make sure that there is space available. Please be sure you write **"make-up"** on the sign in sheet so that you are not billed. **If you know your child will be absent, please let us know ahead of time so that we can allow for others to utilize their make-up days.**

## Medication

When a student is in need of any medication at school, a written note (signed and dated) from the student's parent/guardian is required with the following information:

- Student's name

- Name of medication
- Prescription number
- Dosage of medication, and
- Time(s) to be taken

The medication must be delivered directly to your child's teacher by the parent/guardian in the original container with the student's name and dosage. Medication may be administered by your child's teacher.

## **Parent Orientation**

At the beginning of the school year we schedule a Parent Orientation in each classroom. This is a great opportunity to meet teachers and parents and ask questions about the school and school policies. New families are strongly encouraged to attend this evening.

## **Parent Participation**

Little Star requires 20 hours of parent participation per family per year, September through June, thereby giving all parents the opportunity to help maintain and improve our school. Though we prefer to have parents integrated with the Little Star community and helping us to meet our goals, parents may opt to pay a one-time fee of \$500 in lieu of completing parent participation hours.

Additional participation hours are much appreciated but are not carried over to the next school year.

Parent participation opportunities are communicated in the Star Notes email sent weekly and also put up on the bulletin board in the office. If you have questions about how you can become involved, feel free to check in with the office; there is never a shortage of tasks to complete.

## **Parking**

Earth building (Early Childhood): Primary parking is available in the south end parking lot. Parking is available in two rows, with one row in the gravel and a second row on the pavement. Vehicles should not block the walkway or entry gates. Limited temporary parking is available on the west side of the building in the gravel alongside the fence.

Galaxy building (Infant and Toddler): Temporary parking is available near the main entrance to the building on the southwest side) in the gravel berm along the fence.

Little Star South: Angle parking is available in the front of the building along 5th avenue. Additional parking is behind the building with a separate entrance to the infant classroom (parking in the back not available in the winter months).

## **Pets**

Please obtain permission from the Little Star Office before you bring your pet to school. If your child would

like to share a pet with his/her classroom, it is important to obtain permission from the other children in case of allergies or fears. Pets cannot be left unattended or unleashed at Little Star. Each classroom at Little Star has at least one pet, typically fish, frogs and/or newts. As part of our curriculum we teach children how to care for and treat pets.

## **Photos**

Teachers will take photographs of the children to document activities, creations, and special moments. These photographs are used in parent/teacher conferences, classroom emails to our parent community and in the child's end of year portfolio. On occasion, we will post some photographs taken in the classroom on Facebook. We will not 'tag' individuals, but you are welcome to 'tag' the photo yourself if you desire. If you would prefer to not have your child photographed, please indicate this when signing the release forms on the Student Information Sheet.

## **Playground Safety**

Playground rules stress safety, are reviewed on an ongoing basis with the children, and are enforced by the supervising teachers. If your child is on the playground when you pick him/her up, please help us enforce our rules. Playground Rules include the following:

### **1. Respect for Others**

- a. Play safely. Avoid pushing, tackling games, wrestling, kicking, fighting, blocking others' activities, and throwing snow, ice, sand, wood chips, stones, equipment, etc.
- b. Be aware. Don't interrupt others' games; look before you leap; watch out for children who are smaller or younger than you are; watch where you are going; wait for others to finish their turn at something before you take yours. Include other people in your games and other people's ideas during a game.
- c. Follow the rules. If you have a problem or a complaint that you cannot resolve for yourself or with the help of an arbiter, seek out an adult on duty for guidance. Listen to and follow the adult's recommendations.

### **2. Respect for Property**

- a. Use all playground materials, tools and equipment as they are intended.
- b. Stay within the fenced play yard at all times unless you have a specific instruction from the adult on duty to leave. Bouncing off of and climbing on the fence is prohibited
- c. Unless you are gardening, avoid digging in, pulling on, picking at, breaking off or hanging from the vegetation.

### **3. Respect for Self**

- a. Wear weather-appropriate clothing at all time.
- b. Play safely and fairly, and make play time fun.
- c. Talk to your teacher about resolving ongoing problems that you see.



## Refunds

No refunds will be given on registration or tuition fees. In the case of a withdrawal from Little Star, a 30-day written notice must be given. Full charges will continue until 30 days after notice is given. As always, if there are extenuating circumstances, please discuss the matter with the Little Star office.

## Schedule Changes

**When you register your child, please choose your days carefully!** We realize that some changes may be necessary throughout the year, so we will work with you as much as possible. A \$10.00 schedule change fee will be administered following a one-time per school year schedule change allowance. All schedule changes must be handled through the office, communicated to either the Office Manager or Program Director. To do so, fill out a **Change of Schedule Form**, available in the school entryway.

## Screen & Media Use

Screen Time and Media is only used on rare occasions at Little Star. We have one television; used only when viewing educational videos that relate to a topic, theme or area of interest being focused on in the classroom. A teacher is always present with the children during viewing time. Each classroom has an iPad (for teacher use only) for emailing parents, taking photos, lesson planning, etc. On occasion, the teacher may use the iPad to show a photo or picture relating to a topic or theme.

## Sharing

We have sharing time during our circle (gathering) every day in our Early Childhood classrooms. The children are encouraged to share items from nature, a favorite book or a piece of artwork. The children are particularly fond of this activity and each would love to share every day. In order to be fair and accomplish other tasks in the day, each child's sharing day coincides with their snack day. **Please leave personal toys at home as they often get lost, broken and inevitably cause problems.**

## Snack

Each day our parents provide snack on a rotating basis for the program in which your child is enrolled. You will be given a monthly snack calendar to remind you of your upcoming snack, which is also available on our website. Please bring the snack to school fully prepared and ready to eat. We have a LOW SUGAR policy for snack and lunch. State law mandates that each snack at our school must include at least two of the following four components:

- A milk product (such as milk, cottage cheese, yogurt, cheese);
- A protein (such as meat, legumes, beans, egg);
- A grain product (such as cereal, bagel, rice cake or bread); and
- A Fruit or vegetable

When parents forget their snack day, Little Star must front the cost of snack for the entire classroom that day. If you forget your snack day you have the option of bringing food to help stock our cupboards & refrigerator (i.e. a bag of apples, block of cheese and box of crackers), or a \$15 per child fee will automatically be added to your next bill. Our “low sugar” policy is relaxed for birthdays and other special occasions.

## **Smoke and Outdoor Activity**

Little Star uses air purifiers with HEPA particulate and activated carbon filters to ensure clean indoor air during smoke episodes. Any parent who would like their child to be kept inside during smoke episodes may certainly do so by requesting this with the Office. Our smoke policy is drafted with consideration from the Washington Department of Health publication “Air Pollution and School Activities Public Health Recommendations for Schools on Fine Particle Air Pollution” and “Improving ventilation and Indoor Air Quality during Wildfire Smoke Events.” Further input was solicited from experts at the Washington Department of Ecology and Health to develop a policy that supported Little Star’s goals for a safe and successful learning environment for our children.

### **Outdoor air quality**

When air quality reaches the WAQA “unhealthy” threshold, children will be kept inside. When air quality is in the “Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups” range, outdoor time and activity levels may be limited. Little Star will accommodate any parent who has health concerns and specific directive about their child’s need to remain indoors if they are concerned about air quality. The procedure for determination of WAQA values is outlined in Appendix 1.

### **Indoor air quality**

Little Star is committed to maximizing the quality of indoor air for our students. We follow the recommendations of the Washington State DOH “Improving Ventilation and Indoor Air Quality during Wildfire Smoke Events.”

## **Social Media**

Social media can serve as a bridge between the school and the broader Little Star community. Little Star provides information about school events, fundraising opportunities, as well as other items of interest to the community via an active Facebook page. On occasion, we will post some photographs taken in the classroom on Facebook. We will not 'tag' individuals but are happy for you to 'tag' yourself if you desire. If you would prefer to not have your child photographed, please indicate this when signing the release forms on the Student Information Sheet. We encourage you to ‘Like’ us on Facebook and to share our information with your community of family and friends.

## **Suggestion Box**

A wooden suggestion box is placed in the front entrance of each of our school’s buildings. We welcome you to



share any concerns, ideas, or comments you might have verbally or in writing. New and fresh ideas from parents are what make this school so great! This box can also be used to pay your tuition.

## **Sunscreen**

In Spring and Summer, bring your child to school with sunscreen already applied. Washington State Law will not allow us to apply sunscreen without a signed medical release form.

## **Tuition – Billing & Payments**

Tuition is based on an annual rate. For your convenience, the annual tuition is divided into ten equal installments. The initial non-refundable payment is due on July 15; this is a 10% down payment to secure your child's space at Little Star, and will be applied to your annual tuition. The remaining nine payments will be due on the 15th of each month from September to May. Payments are past due after the 15th of the month, and will be charged a \$10.00 late fee. Each family will be given an invoice in their parent cubby before the 5th of each month.

Payments can be made via cash or check to the main office in the Galaxy Building, by mail, or by automatic payments with the following options:

- **Automatic Credit Card Transaction:** Your credit card will be charged automatically on or around the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. A surcharge of 3.2% will be applied to credit card payments to help offset credit card processing fees. A signed authorization form is required and the agreement will remain in effect for tuition payments from September-August and must be renewed each school year.
- **Automatic Bank Account Transaction (ACH):** a debit from your bank account will occur automatically on or around the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. A signed authorization form is required and the agreement will remain in effect for tuition payments from September-August and must be renewed each school year.

Additionally, Early Childhood parents can drop check payments into the tuition drop box in the Earth building. Little Star South parents can drop off check payments with the Programs Director, which will be delivered to the main office in the Galaxy building at regular intervals.

We understand that occasionally unforeseen circumstances arise. If your family is experiencing hardship, or if your family has seasonal income, please do not assume that we already know your situation. Don't hesitate to call the office so that a payment plan can be arranged. Little Star operates on a very tight budget and cannot allow students to remain in attendance with past due tuition accounts. If tuition becomes more than 60 days overdue, you will receive notice of the overdue tuition and be asked to establish a payment plan for the overdue balance. If an account becomes more than 90 days overdue for any amount greater than one month of tuition, the family will be contacted and must submit a letter detailing the reason the account has become overdue and must make payment according to the established payment plan or the student may be disenrolled.

## **Visitors**

If your child has a guest or relative visiting, we welcome him/her to join our classroom with **advance notice** and teacher approval. Visitors must be checked in by the office and provided with a 'Visitor' sticker.

## **Weapons**

Little Star has a no weapon policy. A weapon is defined as any dangerous instrument. We ask that children not bring real or play weapons to Little Star School. Acting out or playing games involving shooting, causing bodily harm or other forms of violence is strongly discouraged.

## **Withdrawal**

You may withdraw your child from Little Star School with 30 days written notice to the Little Star office. Full tuition charges will continue until 30 days after notice is given.