



Early Learning Music Academy



Policies and Procedures Handbook

Inclusion Policy

The Early Learning Music Academy welcomes children of all abilities to join our classrooms. Here at the ELMA, we strive to provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences that are fully accessible for all children. We believe that early childhood is an important time to teach our children that we are all different, and by doing so, we help them to develop proper social skills and to be open to learning about other individuals' challenges. The ELMA strongly believes that inclusion is about all of us.

It is the policy of the ELMA not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, the children, and the families we serve.

The ELMA knows that each family is different and has their own set of priorities for their child(ren). Families are encouraged to communicate these priorities with our staff and teachers so we can ensure that all children have the opportunity to succeed. Teachers and staff at the ELMA update parents daily and allow for regular communication and meetings to discuss each child's successes, challenges, disabilities and/or special needs.

All teachers and staff participate in annual continuing education and professional advancement courses. All teachers and staff receive an orientation on the ELMA's Inclusion Policies and attend training focused on effective inclusion and/or disability topics whenever possible.

At the ELMA, we welcome and collaborate with developmental and educational professionals that support children with disabilities or special needs such as therapists, inclusion specialists, other teachers, etc. These professionals are invited to provide their services in the context of the preschool classroom environment alongside teachers and staff of the ELMA in order to collaboratively develop strategies and plans that support every child. At the ELMA, we support and encourage our teachers' participation in Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.

The Early Learning Music Academy (ELMA) utilizes a music based curriculum. This approach to early childhood education is based on the idea that young children love sounds and music, especially when the music is a completely interactive experience with instruments and other students.

The Early Learning Music Academy is licensed with the South Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS). As per the laws of the State of South Carolina our facility has been inspected by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC-DHEC) and The South Carolina Fire Marshal's Office.

Our staff members have had background checks completed via a DSS search of the Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect. Staff members have also completed required health assessments by SC-DHEC. Teachers and staff are CPR, Blood Borne Pathogen, and First Aid certified. All teachers and staff participate in annual continuing education and professional advancement courses.

The Early Learning Music Academy maintains an open door policy during all hours of operation. We want parents and/or guardians (with photo ID, and code word) to feel free to drop in anytime and visit your child when your schedule permits, maybe even have lunch with them and stay to play a song or two with us.

The Early Learning Music Academy accepts children ages 3 through 5 years old. Children under the age of 3 that are potty trained will be considered for enrollment. If not fully potty trained, children must be in pull-ups, actively asking to use the restroom and wiping independently, and having no more than 2-3 accidents per week. A completed certificate of immunization from your child's pediatrician must be presented at the time of enrollment. Please provide the Director with an updated SC-DHEC certificate with an expiration date whenever your child is updated on immunizations. Immunizations must be kept current to attend ELMA. For more information on required immunizations please visit www.scdhec.gov

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The ELMA hours of operation are Monday through Friday 7:00am – 6:00pm.

ENROLLMENT

To enroll your child at the ELMA the attached Enrollment Packet must be completed. A Supply Fee of \$85 is due once the director has assigned a start date. This is a yearly, non-refundable charge that will be due at the time of registration and each year following for as long as your child is enrolled with us. If a child is withdrawn then re-enrolls at a later date, a new Supply Fee will be expected on the new start date. Each year by January 1st the Enrollment Packet must be updated and signed. Please keep the Director informed of any changes to contact information and/or employment status.

The ELMA will maintain a waiting list when full enrollment has been reached in the Child Care Center. Children are accepted into the Child Care Center on a first come first serve basis. The number of children in the Child Care Center is governed by South Carolina Child Care Licensing Law. Position on the waitlist is determined by the date of initial contact. In order to reserve a spot on the waiting list an application fee must be paid. When an opening occurs the Director will contact the parents and/or guardians or guardians of the first child on the waiting list by phone.

The ELMA cannot hold positions/spots for children that temporarily withdraw from the Center without a deposit equal to the time they will be withdrawn. Examples of temporary withdrawal: traveling for several weeks during Holidays, taking the summer off to visit family, etc. All applicable fees and tuition MUST be paid and kept current during the withdrawal time period.

Tuition and Closings

Tuition is due every Friday. Tuition not paid by the following Friday (7 days after) is considered late and subject to a \$15.00 late fee. If this payment schedule does not work for you, please speak with the Center Director to make a Payment Plan that fits your needs. Any returned payment is subject to a \$30.00 fee.

Tuition is expected for days your child may be absent due to illness, family emergencies, doctor visits, hospitalizations, vacations, or any other reason. Please note that tuition rates do not change in the event of a week including a holiday.

A 10% per month discount will be applied for families with multiple children attending the ELMA. Any child who is in our care for more than 10 hours in one day will be charged an additional \$20 fee for each day.

Two-week notice is required before withdrawing a child from our Center. Your Account must be paid in full before withdrawing—including your child's tuition for that two-week period.

The ELMA is closed for the following Holidays:

- New Year's Eve Day and New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the Friday after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve and Christmas Day

If any of the above holidays fall on a weekend, the closest Friday or Monday will be selected as the holiday.

It is important for the staff to have time to prepare lessons, gather information from a guest speaker, or attend a conference. To accomplish this we include two in-service days per year. The Center will be closed to children during these in-service days. Tuition is expected.

Expectations

The director at ELMA reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child at his/her discretion, or for the following possible reasons:

- Non-payment or excessive late payments of tuition and fees.
- Not observing the rules of the Center as outlined in the parent agreement.
- Failure to comply with Center policies concerning ill children.
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent or child.
- Failure to keep immunization records current.

Parents and/or guardians are expected to accompany their child into the Center. The teachers are glad to assist you and your child at your drop-off time. Teachers, however, will not assume direct responsibility for your child until you are ready to walk out of the building. It is important for the teacher to keep a watchful eye on all the children in his or her care.

You are welcome to stay for a short while and assist your child through the drop-off transition. Simply notify the classroom teacher when you are ready to leave.

Only adults are allowed to pick children up from ELMA, please do not send siblings under the age of 21 in to pick your child up. All individuals picking up children must know that child's pick-up code, which is on record with the Center. Only adults with valid ID that know the pick-up code and are listed on the Child Information Record, or on a written permission note from the parent received by the Center ahead of time, will be allowed to leave with a child. ELMA staff and teachers will request a picture I.D. and pick-up code from any individual picking up a child. If there is any concern, the staff of ELMA reserves the right to deny a person's request to pick up a child.

It is important for us to be able to track your child throughout the day. In order to do this you must sign your child in at the front office each day when you drop them off at the Center. You will then escort your child to the classroom where the teacher will then add your child to their attendance list. The attendance list is monitored throughout the day both by verbal confirmation from the children and via head-counts. When you pick

your child up from the Center following the above requirements at the front office your child will be marked as leaving for the day. The teachers will also mark them as picked-up on the attendance sheet when the child has been handed over to you or the authorized pick-up person. Parents and/or guardians are expected to assume full responsibility for their child once they enter the classroom.

Your child's classroom teacher may be available at pick-up time for short questions. For longer discussions or particular concerns please schedule an appointment. Proper communication between our parents and/or guardians and the teachers and staff of ELMA is extremely important. Teachers will be sending home information on a regular basis. You are welcome to call to arrange a meeting with your child's teacher, even just to become better acquainted! Concerns about any aspect of our program, or your child's care, may be expressed to the Center Director. Each child is provided with a red folder, please check these daily for notes, newsletters and other information.

Remember, your child has waited all day to see you and is excited when you walk in the door. At pick up please put away your cell phone and give your full attention to your child.

Our parking lot can be a very busy place, please help us maintain a safe environment for our children and parents and/or guardians. Please drive slowly in our parking lot and do not leave vehicles running. Do not leave unattended children in your vehicle. Please park in designated parking spots only, do not park in front of the school. Please hold your child's hand in the lot until you reach your vehicle.

Sickness and Medications

The ELMA does not offer sick child care, this means that you'll need to make other care arrangements if your child is sick. In an effort to reduce the spread of illness please keep your child home if he or she is not feeling well. If while in our care your child becomes ill, displays an unknown rash, or acts out-of-character your child's teacher will consult the director and you may be called to come take your child home. Any child that has a temperature of 100.1 or higher, is vomiting or has had 3 or more incidences of diarrhea while attending ELMA a parent or guardian will be called and the child must be picked up and cannot return to ELMA for 24 hours unless a note from a doctor is provided. Consideration will be taken if your child is allergic to certain food/drink products or on medication. When called, you (or an alternate emergency person) are expected to come within the hour. This is to protect the health of your child and his/her classmates. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

If your child is diagnosed with a communicable disease please contact the Director or the Center office so that we can inform the other children's families. Any child with a highly contagious disease such as TB, chicken pox, Hand Foot Mouth, measles, pinworm, conjunctivitis (pink eye), etc. cannot return or be admitted to the Center until medical certification of a complete cure is provided by a physician. Children with head lice cannot return to the Center until they are nit free.

Over the counter non-prescription medication (Tylenol, nose drops, etc.) as well as prescription medication in the original container will only be administered after a parent signs and dates a form titled "Medication Permission". Over the counter medications will only be administered with a doctor's permission. The parent must provide all medications in their original container. The medication must be properly labeled with the child's name. Please give the medication to your child's teacher or the office so that it can be placed in a locked cabinet. Do not leave medications in book bags or cubbies.

Every consideration will be taken to ensure the safety of your child while in our care. Should an injury occur, a Minor Incident Report would be completed by the closest adult and signed by the Center Director, Assistant Director or appropriate person. A copy of this report will be sent home. A parent or guardian will be notified regarding any injury that occurs while your child is in our care. In the event of a major medical emergency or accident, the Center teacher or director will call 911 first. The child will be transported to the hospital noted on the Child Information Record (or the closest hospital). The parent/guardian will be called immediately. A staff member will accompany the child to the hospital and remain with him or her until a parent or guardian arrives.

Outside Play

Because of the wide range of activities offered at the ELMA it is recommended that children be dressed in washable, comfortable clothing. Outdoor playtime and occasional bathroom accidents necessitate that an extra set of clothing be kept at the Center at all times. All extra clothing should be marked with the child's name and placed in a labeled plastic bag. Clothing should include underwear, socks, pants, and shirt. If wet or dirty clothes are sent home, please return a clean extra set of clothes the next morning.

Children must wear shoes at all times while at the Center. Shoes should have appropriate ties to keep them tight and secure at all times. No flip-flops, sandals, open-toed shoes or shoes that come off easily are allowed to be worn.

Children will be taken outdoors each day, weather permitting. Children should be dressed accordingly: light jacket, cap, and rain boots for damp days; appropriate winter clothing; an extra sweater or sweatshirt at school is recommended for sudden changes in temperature. We will not go outside in rain, thunder, lightning, extremely hot or cold conditions, or when advisories have been posted to remain indoors due to weather conditions such as high levels of pollution, extreme cold or heat, etc.

During times of inclement weather, the Center does not follow Greenville County Schools for delays, early dismissal or closings. A determination as to the safety of our staff and your children will be made by Center staff. In the event of a delay, early dismissal, or closing, parents and/or guardians and/or guardians will be notified via email and text.

Outdoor Policy:

Summer

- Below 90 degrees outside for our allotted amount of time.
- 90-96 degrees we limit our outside time to no more than 15 minutes
- Cold water is provided during these times.
- Over 96 degrees we will not take children outside

Winter

- Above 40 degrees outside for our allotted amount of time
- 32-40 degrees we limit our outside time to no more than 15 minutes.
- Under 32 degrees we will not take the children outside. Please be sure to dress your child according to the weather to ensure they may participate in all outside activities.

Birthdays

Birthday celebrations are welcome. Parents and/or guardians are welcome to send in a store bought treat in the unopened original packaging to share with their child's classmates on birthdays or special occasions. Inform your child's teacher in advance about what kind of treat you plan on bringing so that any allergies can be addressed. This is for the safety of all of the children. Feel free to ask your child's teacher for suggestions. Parents and/or guardians are always welcome at their child's birthday celebration to help make the day special.

If a birthday is to be celebrated away from school and the entire class is not invited, please mail the invitations. If the entire class is invited, you may distribute the invitations into the cubbies. Our Center will not distribute mailing lists or phone numbers.

Toys from home are not allowed unless the Center is having a show and tell day. During show and tell day the toy must remain in the child's cubby until it's time to show them. No toy weapons are allowed including toy guns, knives, swords, etc. Do not send your child to the Center with gum, candy or money.

Lunches and Snacks

The ELMA will provide water for lunch and two snacks with water or juice each day. Please notify your child's teacher or the Center Director about any food allergies and/or sensitivities. Parents and/or guardians should pack a well-balanced healthy lunch in an insulated lunch bag, labeled with your child's name. Please do not send foods that require refrigeration, please bring food in an insulated bag with an ice pack. Do not send foods that need to be warmed up, we will not use microwaves to heat any of the children's food. If sending items such as grapes, cherry tomatoes, etc. please be sure to cut them in half to reduce the risk of choking. This is a requirement.

Confidentiality and Child Safety

Photographs and/or videos of the children in our programs may be taken from time to time and may appear in social media, newspapers, magazines, brochures, publicity materials and/or educational training. Your permission for photographs and/or videos of your child, to be used without compensation, is part of this agreement, unless you have signed a separate opt-out form.

Each family has the right to confidentiality. The ELMA keeps certain information on file regarding children and families that may be considered personal in nature. We maintain this information in confidence and do not discuss or release it to persons outside of the ELMA unless written permission has been obtained from the parent(s). A parent does not have the right to know who injured their child (hitting, biting, etc.) but they do have the right to know how the ELMA handled the care and discipline of the children involved. In this event, you will receive either a Disciplinary Notice or an "Ouchie Outline" injury notice.

Parents and/or guardians have free and full access to his or her child without prior notice unless there is a court order limiting parental access. Your free access must not disrupt instructional activities or classroom routines, and you must present a photo ID and know the child's code word. We must think of all the children in the classroom and repetitive disruptions will require us to impose limitations on access on a case by case basis.

Until custody has been established by a court action, one parent may not limit the other from picking up a child in our care. The Center must be notified immediately of any changes in custody orders. Certified custody orders must be given to the Center Director.

Staff members are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. Per the laws of South Carolina: "Child abuse or neglect occurs when the parent, guardian, or other person responsible for the child's welfare: Inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon the child physical or mental injury or engages in acts or omissions which present a substantial risk of physical or mental injury to the child."

ELMA's Emergency Preparedness Plan is available from the Director or a copy may be picked up at the schools' main office.

We reserve the right to make policy changes whenever necessary. We are unable to predict or list in this handbook every contingency that may occur, however we will inform you of any changes that are necessitated before implementation or as soon as possible thereafter. You will be notified no less than thirty days in advance of any tuition or fee changes.

Early Learning Music Academy

Discipline Policy

At the Early Learning Music Academy the term *guidance* is used for several reasons. It is a positive term and implies working with the children to develop internal control of their behavior. Our goal is to encourage the children to become creative, independent, responsible, and socially mature human beings. This involves learning to make responsible choices and accepting the consequences of such choices. Guidance takes several forms within our Center:

- **Environment** -- A place designed for children.
- **Logical Rules** -- Such as keeping our hands to ourselves and taking care of the learning environment. These are discussed with the children as well as why such rules are needed.
- **Curriculum** -- Is developmentally appropriate, based on the children's interest and level of readiness.
- **Positive Behavior** -- We reinforce the behaviors we wish to see repeated.
- **Redirection** -- Often interesting a child in another activity can eliminate potential difficulty. We might ask a child to help us or send a child to a different area to play.
- **Positive Reminder** -- Telling the children what we want them to do rather than using "no" or "don't."
- **Thinking Time** -- Occasionally, as a last resort, a child needs to be removed from the situation for a brief break for Thinking Time in the Director's Office. This allows the child time to calm down and consider an alternate behavior.

Difficult Behavior

For steps regarding children who display *chronic* disruptive behavior, upsetting to the emotional or physical well-being of another child or an adult, See Appendix I for detailed policy to be signed and dated by parent or guardian.

NOTE: Corporal punishment will not be allowed. This is defined as the use of negative physical touching (spanking, slapping, pinching, etc.), exclusion from large motor or outdoor activities, or exclusion from any learning activity. In certain instances a child may be physically restrained in order to keep the child, other children, or staff safe from harm. No unusual punishment will be allowed such as humiliation, ridicule, threat, or coercion.

Appendix I: Discipline Policy

Early Learning Music Academy

Here at the Early Learning Music Academy, we want your children to learn and thrive in a safe, enriching environment where they can be free to express themselves and are given limitless opportunities to learn . We have put this discipline policy in place to make sure that all students are protected from any danger or excessive distraction that could harm them individually, their learning environment, or their learning opportunities.

- 1. Verbal Warning:** Students are issued a verbal warning for their behavior (or multiple depending on severity) with consequences clearly stated (such as sitting by themselves and taking a few minutes to think, having to lose privileges to certain toys or supplies for the day, etc.)
- 2. Verbal Warning with Parent Conversation:** In addition to students being issued a verbal warning for their behavior, the teacher will have a conversation with the parent at pick-up or drop-off. This will allow the parent and teacher to be on the same page and to talk about possible solutions or ways to deal with the behavior both at school and at home to remedy the situation.
- 3. Written Discipline Notice with Parent Conversation:** If the initial behavior continues, a Discipline Notice will be written and a conversation will be had with the parent at pick-up.
- 4. Parent-Teacher Conference:** After 3 Discipline Notices have been written (for the same behavior or in total), the parent will need to schedule a conference with the Head Teacher or the Assistant Teacher to speak about their child's behavior.
- 5. Parent-Director Conference:** After 5 Discipline Notices are written for the same behavior (depending on severity), the parent will need to schedule a conference with the Director to make a plan that will best suit their child's needs in and out of the classroom. Parents and teachers need to work together and communicate in order for the child not to receive contradicting redirection in response to the same behavior within the home and the classroom.
- 6. Send Home/1-2 Day Suspension:** After 7 Discipline Notices are written for the same behavior, the child will either be sent home or given a 1-2 day suspension, all dependent on the severity of the behavior. Outside intervention may be recommended at this time at no cost to the family.

7. **3-4 Day Suspension:** After 8 Discipline Notices are written for the same behavior, the child will be given a 2-4 day suspension (depending on the severity of the behavior). When the child returns, parents are given a “last time” warning.
8. **Expulsion:** After 9 Discipline Notices are written for the same behavior or 12 Discipline Notices in total, the parents must schedule a conference with the Director, the child will be expelled, and returning probationary period will be discussed on a case-by-case basis.

By signing here, you agree to the terms outlined above.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Early Learning Music Academy

POLICY CONTRACT

Please carefully read, sign, and return the following form to the Center director.

I have been provided an Early Learning Music Academy Handbook and agree to abide by all the policies and procedures therein. I agree to pay the following tuition, any late fees, or change in schedule fee amounts, and understand that these may change depending on schedule and rate adjustments during the course of enrollment. A two week notice must be given for dis-enrollment. This contract can be terminated by ELMA at any time if policies and procedures are disregarded by parents and/or guardians/guardians.

1st Child's Name _____ Weekly Tuition _____
2nd Child's Name _____ Weekly Tuition _____
3rd Child's Name _____ Weekly Tuition _____

Weekly Tuition is due by Thursday. A \$15 late fee will be assessed to the account if not paid in full by the end of the week

Registration/Supply Fee \$ _____ is due upon enrollment.

Approved Start Date _____

____ I have read and agree to the policies and procedures as presented in the Early Learning Music Academy Handbook

____ I give my permission for ELMA to use photographs/videos of my child for advertising, training and education purposes, and to be put on social media (names will not be used).

Both parents and/or guardians must sign OR parent/guardian with sole custody of the child:

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____
Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____
Date: _____

***The ELMA limits daily enrollment to 10 hours a day maximum. Fees will be applied for over 10 hours. The center closes at 6:00 pm. There will be a fee of \$5 for every 5 minutes that your child is at the center past 6:00 pm.**