

Academy for Autism



Mission

Our organization's mission is to provide a high quality education to children with Autism and Special Needs to ensure that they reach their highest potential.

Parent Handbook

Revised August 2020

Address

11 East Lancaster Road
Orlando, Florida 32809-3707

Important Numbers

Main Office 407 852 9922

Fax 407 852 9944

Emergency number only after hours 917 518 7942

E-mail & Website

academy4autism@hotmail.com

www.academyforautism.org

Office Hours

Monday – Thursday: 9:00am to 3:30pm

Friday: 9:00am to 2:30pm

School Hours

Monday – Thursday: 9:00am to 3:00pm

Friday: 9:00 to 2:00pm

Summer Hours

No School on Fridays in June

Monday – Thursday: 9:00am – 3:00pm

Parent contact

Up-to-date personal information, including telephone numbers and addresses, must be in the office at all times. It is important that the school has a way to contact parents in the event of an emergency; therefore cell and/or work and/or home numbers should be provided to the school office. The office should be notified of any changes immediately.

Drop off & pick up

It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to drop off and pick up their child. Please call the office if running late for drop off and pick up.

Student drop off time is 8:50am

Our staff is preparing for school before doors open. If you need early drop off before the 9:00am start of school, please contact the Director to make arrangements.

NO Communication during drop off and pick up times

If you have questions for the staff please write them down in your child's communication log (see section below) and the staff will respond via the communication log. If other communication is required, please make an appointment. **This is a safety issue** - if you are talking to a staff member then they are NOT with our students, and as we all know our students need constant supervision. If it is an urgent matter, you may speak to the Director and the issue can be addressed immediately. Alternatively, you may schedule an appointment with the Director. **Please remember that our students' SAFETY always comes first.**

Student pick up time is 3:00pm

If you are running late, please call the school so that arrangements can be made. Between 3:00–3:30pm the staff has work assignments that need to be completed before the end of their day. A \$10.00 fee for the first half hour late and a charge of \$1.00 for each additional minute fee will be imposed if late pick up becomes on-going problem. These fees will be used to offset the costs of additional staff time required.

Understanding based on mutual trust and respect between parents and school professionals is essential to success.

Willingness and insight to be able to recognize and admit errors that may have been made in programming is necessary so that together we can move on and try again.

A **supportive environment** is created when the parent and educators work in harmony for the benefit of the child.

We must **share information** between the school and home that is pertinent to your child's education and social development.

Commitment by all the parties will ensure that your child is receiving a program that is best for his or her specific needs.

Perseverance on the part of all parties through a process of continuous evaluation aimed at finding the most appropriate intervention for the child.

Educational Goals

- Student will demonstrate mastery of their individual educational plan (IEP) goals.
- Students will participate in community related activities/ field trips.
- Students will increase their proficiency in technology skills.
- Students will demonstrate an increase in their language and communication skills.
- Student will develop motor skills.
- Students will demonstrate a mastery of goals in the domains of social, emotional, curriculum and learning, independent functioning and communication.
- Students will show improvement in their reading and writing skills.
- Student will decrease their maladaptive behaviors and will develop new, more socially acceptable, alternatives.

Therapy Services

The Academy for Autism may provide therapy services to your child as stated in his/her plans of care. It is your responsibility to notify the Academy for Autism when your child will not be in attendance no later than 8:30am the morning of absence or earlier if possible.

Parents must understand that they will be held financially responsible if therapy sessions are not canceled promptly, as outlined above. **There will be a \$25.00 NO SHOW fee for missed therapy sessions. Parents must understand that they are expected to pay the NO SHOW fee prior to the child's next scheduled therapy session.** If this becomes an on-going problem, and after a review of the reasons for continued cancellations, at the discretion of the Director your child may be withdrawn from our therapy program.

Parents must notify the school and therapy clinic of any changes in health insurance coverage. New policies may not cover therapy for your child. It is the parent's responsibility to notify us of these changes as soon as possible so that we can adjust your child's therapy schedule if needed. If your child is also receiving therapy from a different therapy clinic, you must notify the Academy. - There are new policies in regards to authorizations when services are received from more than one provider.

Change of Primary Doctor

If your child's primary doctor changes:

- The school must be notified.
- New scripts for therapy must be submitted.
- Evaluations must be resubmitted to new doctor for authorization.
- Medicaid needs to be notified at least one month before the change.
- Medicaid changes must be requested before the 15th of the month.
- These changes must be made in a timely manner, or therapy services may no longer be authorized for your child.

How can I contribute?

- Help us become experts on your child! Share current literature, and give us other valuable input concerning your child.
- Volunteer to be a parent contact and/or resource person to keep our school up-to-date on new research and treatment modalities.
- Participate actively in your child's special education program.
- Provide suggestions to the Academy – help us fill any gaps you see. We welcome your input!
- Participate in all activities and training sessions scheduled by the Academy.
- Be an ACTIVE fundraiser.
- Seek out donations of items we can use in our fund raising efforts (hotel stays, dinner vouchers, gift certificates, etc.)
- Attend all required meetings held at the Academy.

Health

Medical forms

Our school is required to have the following forms on file for every child. Please get an updated form from your child's doctor every time he/she receives an new immunization.

- The HRS physical form every year
- The immunization form whenever your child receives a shot.

Additional information should also be provided including:

- Known allergies, including food allergies
- Dietary restrictions
- Feeding issues and preferences
- Medications – notify the school when medications are changed in any way
- The school should be notified immediately of any changes to the above

Medications

Medications that are to be administered during school hours will be done according to these procedures:

- All medication given to the school must be in the original prescription bottle or other packaging provided by the pharmacy
- All medication will be administered following the dosage directions on the pharmacy packaging
- Parents MUST fill out an authorization form which allows the Academy to administer medication
- Medications will be dispensed by trained school staff
- All medication will be locked in the medicine cabinet in the school office
- Notify the school if there are any concerns or questions
- Immediately notify the school of any change in your child's health status

Health (continued)

Communicable Diseases

Parents will be notified that they must pick their child up from school due to illness if the child displays any of the following symptoms or conditions, without exception:

- A temperature of 99.7 degrees or above
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Head lice (the child will be checked when sent back to school)
- Any other illnesses believed to pose a potential risk of infection to other children, or staff

Please do not send your child to school with any of the above conditions. If your child becomes ill while at school, he/she will be assessed by the school administration. You will be called and informed of the situation. If they child must be picked up, they will need to be picked up as soon as possible. If need be, your child will be placed in a quiet area until you or a designated adult arrives.

The school administration will also review all medical issues not covered in the above list. The decision as to whether or not the student will be allowed to stay at school, or if he/she must be picked up, will be determined at that time.

We ask all parents to kindly cooperate with this policy.

Visitors During School Hours

Parents are welcome to stop by and take a look at their child working in the classroom. Please stop by the office first. When visiting, please be courteous and mindful of the work of the classroom teachers, therapists, and of their activity schedules. If you would like to discuss what you have observed after your visit, please schedule a personal conference with the teacher. This way the classroom schedule is not disrupted.

Parents need to notify the school when they plan on picking up their child early. If you know that this will be happening several days in advance, please let us know so that schedules can be adjusted so that your child does not miss his/her regular therapy session. Remember there is the therapy fee of \$25 if the therapy session is not canceled by 9:00 am.

Early pick-up must be done at the front desk. The child must be signed out indicating the time, person picking up, and reason. If you are having someone else pick up your child early, please notify the school in writing. *Please keep your pick-up authorization list up to date.*

Transportation

The Academy for Autism will not provide transportation to and from school. It is the parent's responsibility to make transportation arrangements for their own child, which may include use of the bus service (below).

Bus Service

Bus service is being provided on limited routes. Parent must meet the bus at the set time. You will be notified of the exact time by the drivers. Osceola bus fee is \$27.50 per week for this service. The transportation fee must be paid on Fridays and no refunds will be provided if the student is absent. Each family will be required to sign a transportation agreement. Seating is limited and students must follow safety rules. If a student receives three warnings for rule violations, the student will no longer be allowed to ride the bus. This is both for their own safety, and for the safety of all students and staff riding the bus.

Photography Use

Please be aware that photographs of your child taken during school activities may be posted on the school's web page or Facebook page.

If you DO NOT wish to have your child photographed, please inform the director and DO NOT sign the release form.

Conferences

Parent/Teacher/Therapist conferences are scheduled appointments to discuss information about your child. Conferences will be scheduled in order to discuss the student's progress, and every student will receive a progress report. The report will be provided to the parents, and will show the progress their child has made over the course of the year. Adjustments in the educational program will also be discussed at this time, which are done in order to assure that we continue to provide the best programming possible. Other staff members involved in your child's education may also be present at the parent/teacher conference. We believe that parents are an integral part of the education team and we value their opinions. Parent/teacher conferences can also be scheduled upon request. You will receive a notice about signing up for a Parent/Teacher/Therapy conference. During conferences days, parents are also invited to view their child during a therapy session. This gives the parent and therapist time to discuss the strategies being used and it gives the therapist time to teach the parent how to use these strategies at home. Parent/Teacher/Therapy conferences are a way for parents, teachers, and therapist to come together to review your child's progress. It also allows for us to work together in designing the best program for your child. Working together and this sharing of information is what makes the Academy different.

Emergency Plans

Fire Drills

Emergency fire drills will take place on a **monthly basis**. Emergency procedures have been developed and will be followed. This is done in order to assure that our children are aware of what to do in the event of an emergency.

Parents will be contacted by a staff member if there has been a true fire emergency. Our evacuation site in case we cannot return to the building is as follows:

Iglesia de Dios
23 E. Lancaster Rd.
Orlando, Florida 32809

Or

Church of Christ
21 W. Lancaster Rd.
Orlando, Florida 32809

Natural Disasters

If a natural disaster threatens the Central Florida area, the Academy for Autism will follow the Orange County Public Schools or Osceola Public School decision on whether to open or close for the day. Parents will be notified if days are to be made up due to hurricanes or other severe weather conditions. If there are further questions, please contact the office.

Absences

Parents are responsible for the regular attendance of their children. We will contact you if we are concerned about excessive absences. If a child has four or more unexcused absences in a nine-week period the parent will receive written notification of the problem, and a conference with the director will be scheduled. If there are four or more absences during the next nine week period the child may be withdrawn from our program at the discretion of the Director.

Absences are acceptable for the following reasons:

- Illness
- Religious holidays
- Medical or dental attention
- Necessary family trips/Family emergencies

Please contact the office at 407.852.9922 prior to 9:00am to report the absence of your child. *If no one is available to answer the phone please leave a message.* Please call the office if you have any questions or concerns. Feel free to text director about absence or late arrival so that school / clinic staff can be notified.

Tardiness

It is very important to have your child arrive at school on time so that scheduled activities are not interrupted. In case of excessive tardiness, a conference will be held to assist parents and teachers in finding a solution. Please notify the school before 9 am if will be late so that therapy schedule can be adjusted.

Communication Logs

Daily communication logs will be sent home with each student. ***Please make it a routine to review the daily log and sign it every night. All school notices will be in the front cover of the log.*** This communication log will be helpful to both you and to your child's teacher. Any questions, changes or comments can be noted in the log. This log will also be helpful in understanding what takes place each day with your child concerning their routine and daily activities. Please be sure to send it each day. Also, please make note if your child had a hard time getting to sleep, woke up in the middle of the night, etc.

Please label all items that belong to your child. Children cannot in most cases tell us which item is theirs. Examples are backpacks, sweaters, lunchboxes, etc.

Backpacks

Please send a backpack to school each day with your child. The backpack should contain a full change of clothes, diapers and wet wipes (if needed) and the communication log. Label the backpack and lunch box.

Lunches and Snacks

Lunch

- Students need to bring in their own lunch ***on a daily basis***. We do not have the space to hold lunches for a week at a time.
- Students need to bring lunches that are easily heated in the microwave. Please send proper cooling in the lunch box. We do not have adequate storage space in our refrigerator and freezer for school lunches.
- Please send the utensils that your child will use for lunch ***on a daily basis***.
- Please send at least two drinks per day.
- **We have pizza every Friday thru May. There is a \$1.50 charge per pizza slice.**
- **In June and July pizza day is on Thursday.**
- **If school is closed on Friday, Thursday becomes the pizza day automatically.**

Snack Therapy

- Is held once a week and is provided by the Academy
- This is a time to introduce new foods to our students
- It is a cooking and tasting activity coordinated by the therapy department
- Parents must supply items for children on specific diets

Financial Responsibility

2022 – 2023 School year tuition is \$30,000. 100% of the awarded scholarship is to be paid to Academy for Autism. The difference between scholarships awarded will be due to the Academy. This can be paid in one lump sum in August 2022 or it can be spread out in 11 payments due by the 5th of every month.

I understand there is a convenience transaction fee of \$2.00 for credit card processing. I also understand that there will be Late Fee for none payment of monthly tuition of \$25 a month. Payments are due no later than the 5th of each month. Our Family Monthly Account needs to be satisfied if I will be requesting re-enrollment for the next school year. Outstanding Accounts will be sent to Collection Company as stated in your financial agreement with the Academy.

In addition, I understand that as a parent, I am expected to actively participate in year round fundraising activities. The amount of fundraising that I am personally responsible for will be set by the Fund Raising Committee for each event. I will be responsible for payment of the total amount due from all fundraisers, and any remaining monthly mandatory fees, therapy costs, etc. by June 30 of each school year. All outstanding balances are subject to a collection fee, as determined by our agreement with the collection agency. All funds raised over the set amount of each fundraiser will be split 50/50. 50% going to the school and 50% is applied to the Family Monthly Contribution account when stated on the fundraising activity. This applies to all fundraisers (family organized) that request support of the Academy for Autism. Use of the Academy for Autism's name for any fundraiser must be approved by the Board of Directors at least 1 month before the event is to take place.

