



Parent **Handbook**
2022-2023



Viva Christian Academy Administration

1. Mission and Vision

1.1 Our Mission

At Viva Christian Academy, our mission is to create a nurturing, safe and inclusive environment where every child can grow in their Christ-Centered faith, while learning through play. Our program facilitates children's spiritual, intellectual, physical, emotional and social growth with the guidance of our skilled and creative teachers. We foster a sense of community by encouraging interaction among parents, students and preschool staff.

1.2 Our Vision

Our vision at Viva Christian Academy is to provide high quality early childhood education in a Christian environment that fosters a lifelong love of learning about God's world through the development of the whole child.

2. Curriculum: Excellence in Education

While maintaining the highest standards of the Competency-Based Curriculum, Viva Christian Academy provides the academic support and tools for every child to explore, investigate and build developmentally appropriate knowledge. Viva Christian Academy is proud to sustain an integrative program that emphasizes the social, emotional, physical and intellectual development of each child. We offer a strong, diverse program combined with an overall encouragement of healthy lifestyles, reinforced by our Meal Program. Our program also offers innovative extracurricular activities, directly connected with each class's interests. Viva Christian Academy is sensitive to each child's pace of learning.

2.1 Lesson Plans

Staff in each preschool classroom will post weekly lesson plans that provide you with information on the weekly activities and the skills to be developed through them. Staff in each academic classroom will present weekly objectives that align with school curriculum and standards.



2.2 Program Assessment

We continually assess all aspects of our programs in a variety of ways, including classroom observations and parent surveys. We encourage your active involvement in assisting us with this process, as the most important assessment tool at our disposal is the progress of your child and how he or she learns and masters new skills and abilities.

3. Faculty

At Viva Christian Academy, we believe that a solid educational foundation begins with teachers. That is why our teachers are highly trained, motivated and responsible professionals. The teachers are dedicated not only to children's needs but also to children's rights to receive a quality education for future academic and social success.

Our commitment to all of our faculty begins with professional development and training. We provide the teachers with scheduled meetings and conferences that support continued advancement throughout their careers. With ongoing observations, reflections and goal setting for ultimate success.

4. Non-Discrimination Policy

It is our policy to provide an environment that is free from unlawful discrimination of any type, including discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law. This policy governs all aspects of our school's operations.

5. Children with Special Needs

We act in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and other applicable federal, state and local laws pertaining to the provision of services to children with disabilities. Our goal is to meet the individual needs of the child within the structure of our program while maintaining a healthy and safe environment for all the children and staff. We will make reasonable accommodations to afford children with disabilities full and equal enjoyment of our programs and services in the most integrated setting appropriate to their needs. We will make no assumptions concerning any individual's abilities or disabilities. Viva Christian Academy will conduct an individual assessment to determine if we can meet each child's needs in our school setting.

6. Family Involvement and Communication



6.1 Collaborative Relationship Between Families and Staff

Families are the most significant influence in each child's life, we depend on you to help us learn about your child because you know your child better than anyone. Starting with your initial visit when we gather information from you. We seek your active involvement and input in the school's programs, particularly in ensuring your child's progress and also assisting us in determining program goals and improvements. Our goal is to collaborate with you to ensure your child has the best experience possible while in our care.

6.2 Communication

In an effort to keep you informed on what is going on in Viva Christian Academy we publish and distribute weekly notes, emails, Brightwheel reports and announcements.

6.3 Open Door Policy

You are a welcome visitor to our program. Doors are open to parents who want to walk their child to their classroom from 7am-9am and pick up at the classroom door from 4pm-6pm. Parents are allowed up to the classroom door to ensure the health and safety of the rest of the children in our care. We kindly ask you to please respect the schedule of the class and to check with your child's teacher as to the most appropriate time for volunteering. We strongly encourage parent participation and hope you become involved whenever possible.

If you would like to volunteer at Viva Christian Academy, you must complete the volunteer packet which includes background screening and fingerprinting.

6.4 Parent-Teacher Conferences

We encourage you to schedule meetings with your child's teacher via email whenever you have questions or concerns. In addition, we offer family-teacher conferences twice a year. This gives you the opportunity to discuss your child's interests, progress and any other questions you may have regarding our programs. We hope you will take advantage of these opportunities.

6.5 Resolution of Disputes

In the event that a dispute arises in any way related to our services, we encourage you to attempt to resolve such matters, in good faith and directly with management. Your Director can provide you with the contact information for additional management personnel who will be happy to work with you to resolve any issues you may have.



6.6 Gifts

While your generosity is kind, staff gifts over \$100 dollars are not permitted and may not be accepted by the staff member. Additionally, please abide by all pre-planned, school-wide gift donation systems put in place.

7. Enrollment and Tuition Guidelines

7.1 Enrolling your Child

When you enroll your child with us, you are required to complete the registration packet. These forms give us vital information about your child so we can provide the best possible care. It is imperative for your child's health and safety that all forms are accurately completed and submitted to management for review **before your child's first day**. There may be other state-specific forms that must be completed as well.

7.2 Emergency Contact

Within the Registration packet, you will be asked for telephone numbers where you can be immediately reached. **Please notify us as soon as any of these numbers change**. For your child's health and safety, we must be able to quickly reach you while your child is in our care. You will also be required to provide us with the names and telephone numbers of at least two other adults whom you authorize to care for or pick up your child from school. Please inform these emergency contacts that they are required to check-in at the office before going to your child's classroom, and they must bring valid, government-issued identification.

7.3 Student Placement

The Admissions Team determines the acceptance and placement of students to specific classrooms based on your child's age. Viva Christian Academy procedures for student placement are based upon our goals to:

- Promote student achievement and academic excellence.
- Promote the discovery and aspiration of a student's own special area of excellence.
- Provide students with opportunities to make a difference in the lives of others.

Specific parent requests for a student placement with a specific teacher are **not accepted** for new and returning students.



Entry Age Requirements:

Infants: 2 months old before September 1st of the current school year

Pre-K 1: 12 months old before September 1st of the current school year

Pre-K 2: 2 years old before September 1st of the current school year

Pre-K 3: 3 years old before September 1st of the current school year

Pre-K 4: 4 years old before September 1st of the current school year

7.4 Tuition

While completing the Registration Packet, you will be asked to sign an Enrollment Agreement that explains the terms and conditions of enrollment and our fees. In addition to tuition, we require a non-refundable annual registration fee and material fee. Tuition payments are due from the 1st to the 5th day of each month. **For the safety of our children and staff, cash is not accepted for tuition payments.**

7.5 Automatic Payment

Viva Christian Academy has automatic payment available. Automatic payment allows us to make an automatic deduction from your checking account every first day of the month to ensure that all tuition and fees are paid on time and no late fees are accrued.

7.6 General Fees

Late Fees

Late fees will be assessed if all tuition and other charges are not paid on/before the due date. After the 5th, there will be a \$50 charge. After the 15th, there will be a \$100 charge, NO EXCEPTIONS.

7.7 After School Program Fees

Activities outside of the general curriculum may require additional fees. **For the safety of our children and staff, cash is not accepted for the payment of program fees.** Please see the director for opportunities and fees.

7.8 Damage to School Property

Parents of students will be charged for all school property that is lost or damaged by a student.



7.9 Summer Camp

There is a summer camp option with a monthly activity fee. Our summer camp curriculum includes special activities each week. Calendars describing the plans for your child's classroom will be provided.

7.10 Multiple Child Discounts

When multiple children from the same family attend the school on a full-time basis, a 10% discount from the usual tuition fee may be granted once a second child begins attending and for each child who attends thereafter. The discount is then applied to the other child enrolled from the same family. In most cases, the discount will apply to the tuition of the oldest child. You are only entitled to one form of discount, which cannot be combined with other discounts offered by Viva Christian Academy or other sources.

8. Withdrawal and Termination

8.1 Withdrawing Your Child

If you decide to withdraw your child from our school, you are required to give us a month's written notice in advance. If notification is not provided, you will still be responsible for all tuition and fees for the month, whether or not your child is in attendance. After you have withdrawn your child, he or she will only be eligible for readmission based upon space availability. If an outstanding balance existed when your child was withdrawn, you must pay that balance before we can consider you for re-enrollment.

8.2 Expulsion/Withdrawal

In certain circumstances, it may be necessary to expel a child from the Academy or remove a child from the Preschool. This decision is based on the best interest of the child, other children in the class and the well-being of everyone at the school. Every effort will be made to correct a situation before a final decision is made (i.e. moving a child to another class, redirecting behaviors, providing choices, and separating children who are not getting along or other interventions).

Expulsion/withdrawal may be the result of the following:

- Abuse of other children, staff or property by a child or parent/guardian.



- Continued violation of policies by a child or parent/guardian.
- Disruptive or dangerous behavior by a child or parent/guardian.
- The school's inability to meet the child's needs or the parent's/guardian's expectations.
- Non-payment of tuition.
- Chronic lateness in picking up the child at the end of the program.

This is a partial list and we reserve the right to end the enrollment of a child at any time for any reason deemed appropriate. Whenever possible, prior notification will be provided to the parent.

9. Whom to Contact with Questions

Teachers:

- Practices within your child's classroom
- Concerns about day to day issues regarding your child
- Please call or email your child's teacher to designate the appropriate time to talk or meet. In order to obtain the best care for all students, parents/guardians are not permitted to draw a teacher's attention from their ultimate responsibility of the students.

Assistant Director:

- Notification of early arrival
- Notification of late pick-up
- Submission of documents requested by the school
- Tours of the school
- New enrollments
- Changes in current enrollment
- Enrollment in after school classes

Accounting Department:

- Billing issues

School Director/Assistant Director:

- Issues regarding program policies and class management matters
- Issues regarding child development or family concerns, teacher professional development and research
- Issues regarding collaborations with the community and family issues affecting the child's concerns

10. Policy on Private Education and Care

Parents/Guardians may not request and/or employ full or part-time staff, administration



staff, or maintenance staff from our school to independently perform child education and care services outside of their paid scheduled work time or during regular hours, either on the school premises or away from the school premises.

11. Operational Policies

11.1 Days of Operation and Closing Information

Please refer to the Viva Christian Academy School Calendar.

12. Emergency Procedures

When an emergency or natural disaster occurs, we will need to act quickly to prevent or manage injuries, property damage and more. If we find ourselves in an emergency situation such as an approaching wildfire, hurricane, or tornado, it is important that we know how to react and what actions need to be taken in order to ensure your safety and the safety of the children in our care.

To ensure the health and safety of the children, all of our staff members are qualified to respond to life-threatening emergencies and are trained in pediatric first aid and CPR. Our staff members can recognize and respond to many types of emergency medical situations. Keeping children informed and aware of emergency situations and procedures will help them remain calm during an actual emergency. Talking with children about various emergencies helps prepare them to be a part of the procedure, whether it is a shelter-in-place, evacuation, or lockdown. Ensuring that children understand what they are supposed to do and how they are supposed to behave will help to prevent panic and fear.

Rest assured that all staff members are trained to remain calm and will reassure the children by explaining what is happening. Staff members will comfort the children while redirecting their attention to a game or quiet activity.

In some emergency situations, it may be necessary for staff to take children to an alternate shelter until families arrive. An emergency supply of food, water, clothing, blankets, diapers, and flashlights is kept on hand should this situation arise.

Each disaster or emergency has its own specifically designed emergency plan and is posted in all classrooms. The three main types of emergency procedures are:

Evacuation

An evacuation procedure involves getting everyone out of the building to a safe location



somewhere outside the building until the threat is over or until help arrives.

In case of fire, staff members and children will get at least 50 feet away from the building. A headcount will be taken to make sure everyone is safely out of the building. After everyone has been evacuated, the fire or police department will be notified. If the children cannot return to the school, a suitable shelter will be made available where they can safely remain until their parents/guardians arrive.

Lockdown

In a lockdown, a safe place is created for everyone to wait inside until an external threat has passed. During a lockdown procedure, everyone is instructed to remain in the designated safe place identified in the Emergency Plan until advised that the threat has passed. This procedure is used during situations when someone outside of the childcare program poses a threat, such as a hostile or armed individual.

Shelter-in-Place:

The shelter-in-place procedure involves creating a safe and secure location for staff and children until the threat has passed. Overall, it includes creating a place where everyone will be safe until the threat is over or help arrives.

Shelter-in-place procedures must be implemented due to:

- Extreme weather: in the event of a tornado, staff will move children from all windows and doors and place them in a secure location.
- Chemical spills

Fire/Emergency Drills

We conduct fire and emergency evacuation drills regularly. Parents, staff, and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to achieve the success of fire and emergency/evacuation plans. During a fire/emergency drill, parents may not sign children in or out of the school but must wait until the drill is over and children have returned to the building. Parents can wait with their child's class in the designated safe zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

Unexpected School Closings:

If Viva Christian Academy closes for any reason, all parents or guardians will be notified immediately to pick up their child. In every instance, we will attempt to provide as much advance notice as possible.

In the event that the school needs to be closed for any circumstances, the Administration will attempt to accommodate the needs of the children's education, until the end of the month or current school year contract.



In case that the school must have its campus closed for more than two weeks, distance learning may take place.

Hurricanes and Tropical Storms:

Viva Christian Academy will follow Broward County Public Schools hurricanes and tropical storms emergency plan. Parents and staff should follow the news to keep themselves informed about the storms. They may also check our website for updates regarding these conditions. Should Viva Christian Academy be required to close due to a natural disaster such as a hurricane or tropical storm, parents/guardians will be notified immediately of the school's closing and asked to pick up their child. The update will also be posted on the Brightwheel App.

13. Dress Code

Students are required to wear the school uniform. Any child who fails to bring the uniform will not be allowed to enter the classroom and parents will be notified to bring the required uniform. The required uniforms can be purchased at the school with the Assistant Director.

13.1 Non-Uniform Guidelines

Cleanliness, personal appearance, and proper dress are important in setting the pattern of school and social conduct. Consequently, good and proper grooming should be conducted at all times.

Please abide by the following guidelines unless Viva Christian Academy states otherwise for a specific event or activity.

1. Hats and sunglasses are not permitted.
2. Closed-toe shoes are required. No laced shoes, Crocs, sandals, flip-flops, etc. are permitted.
3. No clothes with metal studs, ornaments, or other objects that could scratch other children or cause damage may be worn. Metal cleats or shoe taps are not permitted.
4. Students should not wear clothing that creates classroom/school disorder or distracts the attention of another student in class from learning. All Spirit Days will be non-uniform days. Dates and themes may be subject to change.

14. Personal Items to Leave at Home



Please do not bring any valuables that you and your child treasure, such as electronics, favorite books, jewelry, or toys from home. Please help your child understand why it is not wise to bring toys or other objects to school that they may not wish to share with the group. We cannot be responsible for lost or damaged items.

Additionally, parents should not provide or allow their child to use their personal electronics at school.

15. Lost and Found

If your child is missing anything such as book bags, articles of clothing, etc., please inquire at the school as soon as possible. However, it is much easier to return a lost item if it is labeled with the child's first and last name, so remember to **label everything**.

16. Nutrition and Meals

Viva Christian Academy is proud to sustain a well-balanced and fresh gourmet meal program, prepared daily especially for the children in our facilities.

Proper nutrition is essential to children's growth, development, and well-being. This is the reason why our menu is carefully designed to meet the children's daily nutritional needs. Please remember that due to severe allergies among our students, **we are a nut-free school** so bring appropriate choices during snack time. This is for the security of all children. Even if a child is known not to be allergic to peanuts, no food or drinks that may contain this ingredient may be administered to any child. NO EXCEPTIONS!

Preschool receives a daily nutritional snack. Students may additionally bring a snack to have after school.

Parents/Guardians should notify the school in writing about any allergy detected in the child and bring a doctor's note.

Students are also encouraged to bring water in a bottle to be used at their need.

In order to sustain efficient snack procedures, we have provided an idea of the different items that can be provided as snacks:

- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Nutritional bars
- Fruit/yogurt in bottles/tubes
- Cheese
- Please refrain from snacks that require utensils

17. Outdoor and Water Activities



Outdoor play is an essential part of your child's day. We will monitor the weather throughout the day to ensure the safety of the children.

Children who are well enough to attend school must be well enough to participate in all activities, including outdoor play. Please be sure your child has adequate outdoor clothing. (See Dress Code Section)

Water Activities:

Children may participate in "Splash Days" during the school year and summer months. The children will have the opportunity to run and splash in sprinklers, use water tables, and use water toys. If your child will be participating in water activities, you will be asked to send your child to school with sunscreen, swimsuit, water shoes, a towel, and any other necessary water items on these days. In addition, we require a signed authorization for the application of sunscreen or insect repellent.

18. Birthdays and Treat Bags

Children enjoy celebrating their birthdays at school under Viva Christian Academy rules and regulations. Parents need to arrange with the teacher at least 2 weeks in advance to schedule the best time to celebrate their child's birthday at school.

Birthday invitations for a private party with a specific guest list **cannot** be delivered by the teacher; we advise you to do this from home in order to keep feelings from getting hurt. We can only hand out invitations to **all** students in a classroom.

Occasionally, students bring in treat bags for their fellow classmates to celebrate birthdays, Harvest Day, Christmas, etc. When this occurs, we at Viva Christian Academy do not allow students to open these treat bags at school. They are sent home with the student so that the student's parents can inspect the bag for items that may not be allowed in their home.

19. Naps and Quiet Time

Nap times are important for infants, toddlers and preschool children. Infants sleep "on demand", according to their own schedule. For other age groups, our daily schedule incorporates a balance of active and quiet play, including a rest period. During this time, children are encouraged to rest but are not required to sleep. Children who do not sleep are allowed to participate in quiet activities after a period of rest, while still respecting the quiet time so others can nap.

20. Behavior Management



20.1 Children Discipline Policy

Viva Christian Academy follows the Conscious Discipline policy, which is an emotional intelligence program whereby children learn to express their emotions and resolve problems with words. Rather than punishing a child, teachers use conflict as an opportunity to teach children how to respond and interact with others.

Discipline is relationship-specific. When people feel loved and valued, cooperation flourishes. When we love and interact with our children, change takes place.

Children develop the motivation to change due to their own intrinsic beliefs about self and others. Children begin to create healthy solutions to their own dilemmas under the loving guidance of a parent or teacher.

In addition, children become more accountable for their own behaviors rather than shifting the blame to others.

It is emotional education: a way of teaching your child to handle his/her feelings and reminding him or her how to behave.

The ultimate goal of this is to help your child gain self-control. It is making life predictable for your child. They know what to expect and what is expected of them. Their teachers are clear, compassionate and consistent.

Conscious discipline is a research-based program proven to:

- Increase academic achievement
- Decrease problem behaviors
- Improve the quality of relationships
- Increase teaching time

Teacher's Immediate Response:

- See the situation through the student's eyes
- Have realistic expectations for the students
- Set the rules beforehand (rules make a child feel safe)
- The teacher, whenever possible, will plan ahead; avoid difficult settings or circumstances: limit stimulation and limit situations that are too difficult for young children.
- Offer closed-end choices: Children are often more cooperative when offered a choice because it gives them a sense of control. Try to involve them and make them part of the solution.
- There are some times when the teacher will have to deny the child's requests while still letting them know he/she understands that they feel sad.



If a student portrays severe behavior such as physically or emotionally harming others or a previous behavior continues to persist, teachers will fill out a behavior report, a consequence will be determined and the form needs to be signed by the student's guardian.

20.2 Florida Administrative Code

Florida Administrative Code prohibits children from being subjected to discipline which is severe, humiliating, frightening, or associated with food, rest, or toileting. Spanking or any other form of physical punishment is prohibited for all childcare personnel. Children may not be denied active play as a consequence of misbehavior.

20.3 Anti-Violence Philosophy

At Viva Christian Academy, we define violence as any verbal, physical, or emotional behavior that indicates intent to hurt another person or material.

When a child displays a behavior that interferes with the social life at Viva Christian Academy or that makes his/her peers uncomfortable, we will try to find the reasons for that behavior.

We will discuss his/her behavior with the child. If we observe that the child's behavior does not improve, we will schedule a parent conference to discuss it.

Sometimes, by redirecting the child to another activity, the behavior is improved. We will assist the child in selecting another activity/area in which to work.

We will support the child who is ready to begin expressing his feelings in words. It is important that social behavior is approached as a learning experience. Children will begin to understand that actions carry consequences and that they are able to develop a measure of self-control. It is very important for children to develop internal control and internal direction so that there is less dependence on adults and external factors. Slowly the child learns to be responsible for him/herself.

21. Safety and Security

All parents/guardians and visitors are advised that there are cameras in the classrooms. Parents have access to cameras on site but are limited to viewing their child's classroom for the privacy of all of the other children. The tape recordings will be used by administration only for educational purposes and to ensure the safety of the children, teachers, and staff at Viva Christian Academy.



21.1 Smoking Policy

Under no circumstances may any person smoke tobacco anywhere on Viva Christian Academy premises including the playground, parking lot, main entrance, or drop off and pick up area.

22. Drop-Off, Pick-Up, and Attendance Policies

22.1 Attendance

Attendance is vital for the success of all students. We encourage that all efforts are made to ensure the least amount of absences from school. However, we know that at times this is difficult due to unforeseen circumstances. We ask that you bring your child before circle time hours (9am) so the classroom remains uninterrupted.

22.2 Reporting Absences

If your child is going to be absent, you must notify the school office and teacher as soon as possible. If your child is ill, please notify us as to the nature of the illness.

22.3 Releasing Your Child

We will only release a child to his or her parents/guardians and the authorized persons listed in your child's registration packet. We require any release authorizations to be given to us in writing prior to releasing your child to any persons who are not listed on your emergency contact and release list. Government-issued photo identification must be shown for any person not positively known to us before we can release your child. We will not release a child to anyone (other than a parent) under the age of eighteen (18), including siblings.

22.4 Late pick-up policy

Late pick-up fees are the following:

- Late pick up fee will be \$25 and \$1.00 per minute after the agreed time.
- After Care: 6:00 p.m.; at 6:01 p.m. a \$ 25 fee will apply with an additional \$1 per minute.

23. Preschool

All items brought to school must be labeled with the child's first and last name, including uniforms.

23.1 Diapers

Families whose children wear diapers must provide disposable diapers and baby wipes to accommodate the child's needs. Any ointments or topical products to be used must be labeled with the child's first and last names. Please see the Assistant Director for the appropriate authorization forms.



23.2 Toilet Training

Learning to use a toilet is a gradual process that takes place over a period of time as a child's body matures. Successful toilet learning depends upon the physical, cognitive, and language development of the child. For example, for a child to be ready for toilet learning he or she must:

- Be aware of bowel and bladder fullness.
- Have the muscle development to control elimination.
- Have the language and locomotor skills to signal the need for caregivers.
- Have the gross and fine motor skills to get to the toilet on time, remove clothing, and then to actually use the toilet.

As you can see these are complex abilities that develop over an extended period of time.

A child shows his readiness to begin toilet learning when he recognizes his diaper needs to be changed. At this point, a child may be ready to learn and be able to control his bowels and bladder. Beginning the toilet learning process too early will cause frustration for the child. Toilet learning is recommended for children between the ages of 2 and 3 years old.

A child's cues and mannerisms initiate toilet learning. These may include verbal requests, gestures of pulling down pants, leading the caregiver to the bathroom, squirming in place, and pointing gestures.

We will be sensitive to these cues by asking the child to use the toilet, assisting the child on scheduled visits to the bathroom when they are most likely to need to use the toilet, giving frequent verbal reminders during the day, posting pictures of sequencing potty routines, and communicating with you to establish consistency between the school and home.

This growth period is a natural progression of independence. Toileting accidents, which will happen frequently before children master this complex task, are treated respectfully. You must bring at least three full changes of clothes, including underwear, pants, shirts, socks, and an extra pair of shoes. If the child has an accident, staff, using gloves, will assist in changing the child's clothes. For health and safety reasons, soiled clothing will not be washed or rinsed by the school. All soiled clothing will be placed in a sealed plastic bag and returned to you for pick-up at the end of the day.

Children will be assisted, as needed when using the bathroom. Children will flush the toilet and be assisted with washing their hands with soap and water.

23.3 Biting

If you are the parent of a preschooler, we know it is distressing to learn your child has been bitten or has bitten a friend. Experts in the field of child development agree that biting is within a range of expected behaviors among toddlers 13 months to 3 years of age.

Common reasons cited for biting are the need for autonomy and control, exploration, teething, attention-getting, frustration (frequently due to lack of language or unmet needs), anxiety mimicking, self-defense, and lack of experience interacting with children in a group.



At the first sign of biting, we evaluate the environment and activities at the time of the bite. If warranted, adjustments in the environment, routines, or transitions in the classroom may be made.

If a bite occurs, the teacher will first attend to the bitten child by comforting the child and gently cleaning the bitten area with soap and water. Staff will complete an incident report for the bitten child.

The child who has bitten will be removed from the immediate area and closely supervised for a period of time after the incident. We will complete an incident report for the child who has bitten and discuss the incident with the child's parents. It is important to remember that biting is developmentally appropriate behavior. For children who continue to bite, a more specific intervention will be initiated, including a conference with the family and the creation of a Behavioral Intervention Plan. Each case will be assessed on an individual basis.

Staff cannot discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident, nor can staff discuss the medical history of any child involved in a biting incident with the other parent.

24. Health and Medical Issues

24.1 Maintaining a Clean and Healthy Environment

Our commitment to a clean and healthy environment compels us to take precautionary steps to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Our schools are designed to be easily cleaned and maintained at high standards of sanitation. Toys in the toddler rooms are sanitized, as they are mouthed by children. Tabletops are regularly disinfected, including before and after meal and snack times.

We promote cleanliness and good hygiene with children on a regular basis. Frequent hand washing is practiced by staff and children and is always required before eating, after toileting, and after outdoor play.

24.2 Immunization Requirements

All children must be up-to-date on their immunizations before being admitted to our school. This applies to children from toddler through school-age. Acceptable documentation for records of immunizations must be validated by a physician or other health-care professional with a signature or rubber stamp, and include your child's name and birthdate, the number of doses and vaccine type, and the month, day, and year the child received each vaccination. Validated proof of immunizations should be submitted as your child receives new immunizations or booster shots. If any state licensing regulations exist that exceed these requirements, the state licensing regulations will be adhered to by the school. Failure to



abide by the immunization requirements may impact your child's enrollment.

You have the right to waive immunizations. To do so, a written statement (or state-required form, if applicable) must be provided to us indicating the religious, cultural, or medical reasons surrounding the waiver.

25. Sickness Policy

Viva Christian Academy operates under Florida State Child Care Licensing Regulations, which do not allow actively sick children to be in classrooms.

Please maintain all children properly dressed according to the weather. If it is cold, all kids must be dressed properly (following the dress code) for the weather before they go outside. During the activities that can dirty or get the uniforms wet, aprons will be put on the children.

25.1 Sick Children

Young children attending a school facility tend to experience a frequent level of illness (runny nose, cold and flu symptoms, upper respiratory tract infection, diarrhea, asthma, hepatitis A infections, etc.) that may not allow them to participate in the school's activities. State regulations now require that a child with these conditions be excluded from school. If there is a suspicion that a child is suffering from a communicable illness or the child develops symptoms related to an illness, he or she will be removed from the classroom, and the parent/guardian must be contacted and asked to remove the child from the school. Parents must be contacted and they will be required to pick up their child within one hour of being contacted. If parents cannot be reached, the person designated as the Emergency Contact will be notified and requested to pick up the child within one hour.

25.2 Temporary Exclusion Policy

Children who have exhibited any symptoms of infectious illnesses within the preceding 24-hour period are likely to be contagious and should remain at home. Viva Christian Academy will ask that a healthcare provider be consulted regarding the child's illness.

The child cannot return to school until he/she is no longer contagious and a doctor indicates this in writing. However, Viva Christian Academy reserves the right to determine whether a child should remain at the school when an illness is a consideration.

Also, please be advised that any child who has been absent from school due to an illness for 2 days or more, will not be allowed to return to school without a doctor's notice.

Children with acute non-infectious illnesses may only be brought to Viva Christian Academy if fever is not present and they are able to participate in activities.

In the event that a child shows any symptoms, which are due to chronic, non-infectious conditions, a letter from the doctor stating the expected symptoms, the cause of the symptoms and expected duration of the condition must be provided to Viva Christian Academy immediately. Failure to provide such documentation by parents may result in



turning away a child until such documentation is provided.

25.3 When Will We Send a Child Home?

Viva Christian Academy operates under Florida State Child Care Licensing Regulations, which do not allow actively sick children to be in classrooms. Therefore, children will be sent home in the following situations:

- The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities.
- The illness results in greater care for the child than our staff can provide.
- The illness is contagious to other children.
- When any of the common illnesses listed below are present.

25.4 Notification of Infectious Diseases and Injuries

Parents/Guardians must be notified if their child has been exposed to a communicable disease or condition such as Meningitis, Measles, Chickenpox, Tuberculosis, Pertussis, head lice, scabies, ringworm, diarrhea, hand, foot, and mouth or Hepatitis A. Early identification and treatment of infectious diseases is critical in minimizing the effects of the associated illness and its transmission. Parents/Guardians should consult their child's healthcare provider to discuss the implications of the exposure and determine the best form of treatment.

Also, parents/guardians are required by state laws and Viva Christian Academy policies to inform school staff within 24 hours (exclusive of weekend/holidays) when their child has been diagnosed as having any contagious disease so that other parents may be notified of the exposure. When a potentially contagious illness occurs, notes will be sent home to parents of children who may have been exposed.

Viva Christian Academy will notify the parents/guardians of exposed children on the same day or within 24 hours by:

- Posting information on the parent/guardian boards
- Giving written notice of the communicable disease

Parents are also responsible for informing the school in writing about any physical restrictions or injuries that restrict the child from participating in any given activity.

When a child is out due to an infectious disease, an injury, or a surgical procedure, it is important to remind parents to request a written notification from the pediatrician in charge of the illness or injury treatment/surgery that addresses the child's release to participate in the regular activities at Viva Christian Academy as well as any restriction and special indication.



No child will be allowed to return to school after being diagnosed with and absent from school due to an infectious disease or injury without this document.

We understand that it is difficult to find alternate childcare when children are ill, but we need your cooperation in order to keep everyone as healthy as possible.

26. Medication

Teachers need to be made completely aware of what medication a child is receiving, who prescribed the medication, and what side effects it could possibly have on the child. This policy is especially important if a child is taking medication over a long period of time or if medications are frequently prescribed.

Viva Christian Academy will not administer any medication to any child under any circumstance. Nor shall medication be given to students for self-administration. If a child needs to be administered any medication during school hours, parents/guardians may come in and administer the medication at appropriate times. Only the Director with a form signed by the parents can authorize exceptions to this rule.

No medication of any kind (prescription or nonprescription) can be stored in any classroom at any time. All prescription shots (usually prescribed to children with allergies) must be kept in the first aid kit at the front desk, along with the authorization form signed by the parents. The Director must be notified and approve of this procedure.

Illness	Symptoms	When Child Can Return Our Care
Cold/Flu Symptoms	Cough, stuffy, runny nose, sneezing, chest congestion, abnormal ear wax	With a Dr.'s notice that the condition is non contagious.
COVID-19	Fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea	After 10 days of self-quarantine, the child or staff member infected must be tested prior to returning to school. A negative test result and a doctor's note indicating clearance must be provided for safe return



Chickenpox	Unexplained rash	10 days after rash started and when all the blisters are dry and scabbed over
Diarrhea or blood in stools not explained by dietary change or medication	3 or more loose stools in a 24 hour period	24 hours free of loose stool
Fever	The temperature of 100 degrees F (37.4 C) or higher	24 hours without a fever and without medications, or healthcare provider note stating it is not contagious
Fever with rash and behavior change	Unexplained rash with fever and irritability, persistent crying, lethargy or other unusual behavior	24 hours without a fever and without medications, or healthcare provider note stating it is not contagious
Head Lice	Lice and nits on the scalp	24 hours after the treatment starts and no signs of lice are present
Hepatitis A	Yellow skin or eyes	One week after the illness or yellow color starts
Herpes Simplex	Cold sores or fever blisters	When the sores have disappeared and been treated with medication
Impetigo and ringworm	Unexplained rash	If a rash can be covered with bandage and treatment has started, then the child can return. If the rash cannot be covered, the child may return to school 48 hours after treatment starts.
Measles	Unexplained rash	6 days after the rash appears



Mouth sores with drooling	The inability of the child to control his/her saliva, and a mouth sore that bandage cannot cover	When sores are dry or crushed or a healthcare provider determines the child is noninfectious.
Mumps	Unexplained rash	9 days after the swelling/ rash appears
Pink Eye	Pink, red, itchy eyes, or discharge coming from the eyes	Once treatment has been finished and symptoms are gone
Pertussis (whooping cough)	Uncontrollable, violent coughing, sometimes with a deep "whooping" sound and hard time breathing	5 days after the child has started taking antibiotics
Rubella	Fever, rash, and swollen, tender lymph nodes, usually in the back of the neck behind the ears	11 days after the rash appears
Shingles	Unexplained rash that turns into blisters or sores	When sores have been crusted and the scabs fall off
Strep Throat	A sore throat accompanied by a fever	24 hours after the treatment has begun or if the child has been without a fever for 24 hrs.
Tuberculosis Cough	Chest pain, breathlessness, night sweats, and signs of pneumonia	Until healthcare provider or healthcare official states that the child is on appropriate therapy or medication and can attend school
Vomiting Illness	Vomiting 2 or more times within 24 hours	Episode free for 24 hours. without taking any medication or until healthcare provider allows



27. Student Accidents

After any injury or medical emergency occurs, you will receive a copy of an Incident Report describing how the incident happened and the action taken by a qualified staff person. You will be called if immediate attention may be needed.

28. Children with Allergies

Please notify us immediately when you learn that your child has allergies. If a child requires medication for a life-threatening allergic reaction (i.e. bee stings), the child's prescription may be kept at the school and administered when necessary. If your child suffers from allergies, please contact your Director who can provide you with additional information.

29. Pest Control

Our school will control pests to protect the health and safety of children and staff, maintain a productive learning environment, and maintain the integrity of the school and grounds. We use all suitable techniques to prevent pests. In the event that we must apply a pesticide, we will use only those products registered for such use in accordance with federal, state, and local laws. The use of any pesticides by unlicensed persons is prohibited; therefore, only individuals licensed by the State will use pesticide products and the use will be in strict accordance with the product's label.

30. Licensing and Legal Regulations

31.1 Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

Abuse and neglect, whether physical or emotional, can happen in all types of families, from all walks of life, and in varying degrees. When abuse occurs, both children and parents/guardians are the victims and need support, understanding, and help. Our staff has been trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. Furthermore, **the law requires us to report all suspected cases of abuse or neglect.** Parents may ask the Director for a confidential referral for outside intervention and suggested resources for prevention and assistance in dealing with this sensitive matter.

31.2 State Licensing Requirements

State licensing requirements and strict enforcement of standards are in the best interest of all children. Our school meets or exceeds applicable licensing regulations and standards. These standards relate to our facility, staff, health and safety procedures, nutrition, teacher/child ratios, and record keeping. Our school is subject to inspection by the state, county, and city health, fire, and licensing officials.



It is the right of the state licensing agency, as well as Child Protective Services, Social Services, or Children and Family Services to perform their duties as follows:

- Privately interview children and/or staff without prior notice or parental consent. Inspect, audit, and copy child and staff records without prior notice or parental consent.
- Observe the physical condition of the child, including conditions that could indicate abuse, neglect, or inappropriate placement and, if determined necessary, provide protective custody and/or have a licensed medical professional physically examine the child.

The school has carefully developed systems to ensure the comfort and protection of your child. As a parent/guardian, you can always expect our school to adhere to all county and state regulations governing safety, fire, nutrition, and child/staff ratios. Our inspection reports are either posted or available upon request from the Director. Our goal is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for all children with programs to suit each developmental level. We welcome your comments and suggestions that may help us achieve these goals.

31.3 Confidentiality of Information

Information pertaining to a child and his or her family is kept confidential at all times. Occasionally, records may be reviewed by regulatory agencies for information that may be pertinent to a child's well-being or requested by a legal subpoena. Student files are otherwise confidential and monitored only by the management. If your child is involved in an incident involving another child, our staff will not reveal the other child's identity.

32. Family Expectations

Just as we set guidelines for the appropriate behavior of children, we also must ensure that parents and other adults who come to our school know what our expectations are in terms of their interactions with our staff, other children, and parents.

32.1 Appropriate Language in School

Parents/Guardians and their guests must use appropriate language while on school property. Foul language of any type is not permitted on school grounds, which includes our parking lots and playgrounds.

If a problem or concern arises, the first step is to move the discussion into a private office area where you can express your concerns with the Director. We will do our best to address every problem or concern that arises. If another time must be scheduled to address the problem or concern, we can reschedule the meeting for a time at which you and the Director can discuss the problem or concern.



32.2 Physical and Verbal Punishment of Children on School Property

We do not allow parents/guardians or their guests to use any type of corporal punishment on any child, whether enrolled in our program or not, while on school property. This includes our parking lots, playgrounds, and bathrooms. Further, while verbal reprimands may be appropriate, it is not appropriate for a parent to verbally abuse their child while on our premises. Doing so can cause undue embarrassment and emotional distress to a child. Violations of this policy will result in immediate disenrollment from our program.

Parents/guardians and their guests are also prohibited from addressing or disciplining a child that is not their own. If you have a concern about the behavior of another child at our school, please bring your concern to a member of management who will address your concern and resolve the issue.

32.3 Threats and Threatening Behavior

We have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for our employees, the children we serve, and other adults. Therefore, we have a zero-tolerance policy regarding threats or threatening behavior in our school, whether the threat comes from a child or an adult, and regardless of who is the target of the threat. This includes, but is not limited to, threats to do physical harm to someone or threats to retaliate in any way. This type of behavior will result in immediate disenrollment from our program.

32.4 Firearms and Weapons Ban on School Property

At no time is any person permitted to possess firearms, ammunition, or other weapons on school property, or at events sponsored by the school. For persons authorized to carry concealed weapons, we respectfully request that any/all weapons be left in your vehicle during the period of time when you are in the school. Any violation of this policy may result in immediate disenrollment from our program, as well as criminal prosecution.

32.5 Custody and Visitation Issues

It is our policy not to interfere with the custody relationship of a child's parents. As such, we assume that both parents/guardians have equal rights to pick-up/drop-off, visit, or request documents about their child. If that is not the case, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to provide court documents and/or legally binding parental agreements to clarify the rights and responsibilities of the parents and/or guardians. We will follow the last dated court documents, without prejudice, to either parent/guardian. We ask that parents/guardians keep the school, our staff, and other children out of any legal entanglements or other custodial issues and resolve these issues in another forum.



32.6 Persons Appearing to be Impaired by Drugs or Alcohol

If a parent or other adult enters the school to pick up a child and appears to be intoxicated, either by the smell of alcohol or by his or her actions appearing to be impaired, we may refuse to release the child to them and call another contact on the emergency contact list to pick up the child. If the intoxicated individual becomes aggressive or unruly, the Director may notify the local authorities.



33. Viva Christian Academy PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

_____ I have read Viva Christian Academy's Parent Handbook and hereby certify that (Initial) I thoroughly understand the policies, practices, rules, and regulations described within that I need to abide by while at Viva Christian Academy.

_____ I will uphold and abide by the policies indicated in Viva Christian Academy (Initial) Parent Handbook.

_____ I understand that not following Viva Christian Academy's rules and regulations (Initial) could result in immediate withdrawal.

_____	_____	_____
Parent/Guardian Name	Parent/Guardian Signature	Date

_____	_____	_____
Parent/Guardian Name	Parent/Guardian Signature	Date

_____	_____	_____
Parent/Guardian Name	Parent/Guardian Signature	Date