

*Starlight  
Academy  
Parent Handbook*

*537 North Main St.*

*Oregon, WI 53575*

**608.291.2488**

Updated February 2025

## **Admission 251.04(2)(i)1**

### **Introduction**

#### **Welcome to Starlight Academy**

At Starlight Academy, we are a privately owned, state-licensed learning center dedicated to nurturing your child's development in a safe, loving, and enriching environment. As a family-oriented facility, we respect and honor the unique culture of every family we serve, understanding how important it is to have your child thrive in an atmosphere of care and support.

We believe that children learn best when they are exposed to a wide variety of activities designed to help them grow, gain confidence, and develop the skills necessary for success both in school and in life. Our goal is to foster a sense of belonging, where children feel encouraged and excited to explore the world around them.

We recognize the importance of partnership between home and school. In today's busy world, we understand the challenges families face, and we are committed to providing a consistent, nurturing space where your child can flourish. We encourage you to engage with your child at school whenever possible, as this helps build a stronger connection between home and classroom.

If you ever have any questions, concerns, or feedback, please don't hesitate to reach out. Our doors are always open, and we value the opportunity to work together for the well-being and success of your child.

We look forward to building a lasting partnership with your family!

Sincerely,  
The Starlight Academy Team

*Jessica Meisner*

Owner/Administrator

## **Customer Service Philosophy**

At Starlight Academy, the well-being and development of your child are always our top priority. We are committed to providing high-quality care and education, ensuring that our environment, communication, and support meet the highest standards. We believe that children thrive in an environment of cooperation and consistency, and we strive to build strong, lasting relationships with our families.

By working together, we create a supportive and nurturing space for your child to grow. Open communication is key, and we are always available to address any questions, concerns, or suggestions. We value your input and believe in thoughtful, meaningful discussions to ensure the best possible experience for your family.

Starlight Academy is committed to continuous improvement. We regularly review and update our curriculum and policies to stay in line with the latest developments in early childhood education and child development. Our goal is to offer age-appropriate, high-quality, and individualized learning experiences that support each child's unique growth and potential.

Sure! Here's an edited version of the text for clarity and flow, while keeping the message warm and inviting for parents of preschool-aged children:

## **Our Philosophy**

At Starlight Academy, our vision is to consistently provide exceptional services that not only meet, but exceed your expectations. Our mission is to offer the highest quality early childhood education and care to the children and families we serve. We are committed to continuous, long-term improvement to better meet the needs of our community in meaningful ways. The success of our academy is measured by the satisfaction of our families, and we prioritize maintaining open, honest communication between families, management, teachers, and staff.

We believe that Starlight Academy will be your child's second home—a place where they can feel safe, carefree, and loved. We strive to create an environment where children are treated with kindness and respect, fostering self-confidence and a sense of security. Children thrive when they have room to explore and grow, and as adults, it is our responsibility to provide them with the guidance and support they need to develop their independence.

At Starlight Academy, we encourage children to trust themselves and explore their potential. They will learn from each other, build relationships, and discover how to be the best versions of themselves. We believe in empowering children with the freedom to grow, while providing them with the tools and encouragement to succeed.

Our approach to discipline is rooted in positivity. We use positive discipline to help children understand the consequences of their actions and promote respect for themselves and others. We believe that effective classroom management is essential for a harmonious and productive learning environment. Our teachers are highly trained and dedicated to being positive role models, guiding your child with patience, care, and understanding.

"A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was,

the kind of house I lived in, or the clothes I wore.

But the world may be much different because I was important in the life of a child." -Unknown

"Play is the highest form of research."

-Albert Einstein

**"We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It's easy to say, 'It's not my child, not my community, not my problem.' Then there are those who see the need and respond.**

**I consider those people my heroes." -Fred Rogers**

"Be a fruit loop in a bowl full of Cheerios!"

**"In a world where you can be anything, be kind."**

## **Administrative Structure**

The administrative authority is delegated as follows:

- **Owner:** Jessica Meisner
- **Director:** Mindy Lalor
- **4K Teacher:** Jessie Boley
- **Lead Early Childhood Educator:**

## **DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

At Starlight Academy, we are dedicated to treating everyone with respect and dignity. We believe in the inherent worth of all individuals and are committed to creating an inclusive environment that welcomes families and children of all races, genders, beliefs, social backgrounds, sexual orientations, and abilities, in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

## **CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS**

At Starlight Academy, we respect the privacy of all children and families. Information about children currently enrolled or previously enrolled is strictly confidential. It will never be shared or discussed with anyone outside of the center without the explicit permission of the parent(s) or guardian(s).

## **CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING POLICY**

At Starlight Academy, the safety and well-being of each child is our top priority. All staff members are mandated reporters, which means they are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities.

If a child arrives at Starlight Academy with marks or behaviors that raise concern, these will be recorded in the Medical Logbook. Any staff member who notices suspicious marks on a child's body must immediately report it to the Program Director. The Director will then thoroughly investigate the situation. If necessary, the incident will be reported to Child Protective Services for further action.

Reporting suspected abuse is not an interference; it is a responsibility we take seriously. To ensure staff are prepared, all team members undergo 2 hours of child abuse and neglect training every two years.

## ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Starlight Academy is licensed to care for up to 33 children, ages 2 to 5 years. We are open Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm and operate year-round. Our 4K program, which is contracted with OSD, follows the school-year calendar. The last day of 4K is set by OSD, and all students graduating from 4K will finish their contract with Starlight Academy on that day.

The state licensing book and the Parent Handbook are available for parents in the parent information area. This area is regularly updated with important information, including field trips, parenting tips, required forms, and state licensing details. Parents are encouraged to review these materials as they arrive at the center.

Upon your first visit, we will provide a tour of Starlight Academy and answer any questions or concerns you may have. We value open communication, so please feel free to reach out at any time to ensure your child's transition is as smooth as possible. We also welcome and encourage parents to join their child(ren) in play whenever possible. After enrollment, you can inquire about visiting your child's classroom.

Please remember to dress your child appropriately each day, as we engage in various activities that may get their clothes dirty. We also ask that each child has a complete set of extra clothes at Starlight Academy.

Before your child's first day of attendance, parents must complete the following **state-required** forms:

- Form CFS-62: Child Care Enrollment
- Form CFS-2345: Health History and Emergency Care Plan
- Form CFS-60: Child Health Report (within 90 days of enrollment)
- Form DPH-4192: Daycare Immunization Record (within 30 days of enrollment)
- Parent/Provider Agreement (i.e., Starlight Academy's Contracted Hours)

Additionally, Starlight Academy has a small packet of center-specific forms that must be completed along with the state-required forms.

Thank you for choosing Starlight Academy—we look forward to partnering with you in your child's educational journey!

## PHOTO USAGE

At Starlight Academy, we love keeping you connected to your child's experiences! We may use photos in various ways, including social media, classroom albums, bulletin boards, and more. If you prefer not to have your child's photo used, you may opt out at any time.

## Parent-Provided Materials

Please ensure your child has the following items:

- A full change of clothes (appropriate for the season)
- A 50"x50" throw blanket and a "lovey" (small stuffed animal) for comfort
- Sunscreen and insect repellent (seasonal)
- Diapers (cloth or disposable, as needed)
- Baby wipes (as needed)
- Lotions and creams (as needed)
- A water bottle

**Please do not send toys from home.** We want to avoid any upset if toys get lost, broken, or stolen. If a toy is brought in, Starlight Academy will consider it a kind donation. Thank you! However, if your child would like to bring a comfort item such as a stuffed animal or blanket for nap time, they are welcome to do so.

## PARENT COMMUNICATION

We are committed to keeping parents informed and involved in their child's progress and activities. Updates and notices will be shared in the following ways:

- **Brightwheel** (our primary form of communication)
- Personal notes
- Monthly newsletters and calendars
- Daily activity postings in the classrooms
- Email correspondence
- Social media
- Telephone calls
- Face-to-face conversations

**Conferences:** Parent-teacher conferences are offered twice per year. During these conferences, we use the **ASQ-3 assessment** to discuss your child's development. This assessment is completed by parents/guardians, and you will receive emails with information about the conference schedule. However, if you would like to meet with your child's teacher at any time throughout the year, please feel free to reach out and schedule a conference.

Your child's **file**, **medical forms**, and **portfolio** are always available to you upon request.

We also provide materials and resources for families who speak other languages. These are evaluated on an individual basis, and we will provide licensing forms in other languages where available. If needed, we can also connect you with community resources.

### **Pet Policy and Procedure**

Starlight Academy does not allow dogs or cats to live or stay on the premises. However, if an animal visitor comes to the center, we will take all necessary precautions to ensure the safety of both the students and the visiting animal. If any issues arise, the animal will be asked to leave.

Reptiles that are allowed in the classroom will be kept in secure containers, and children will only be able to view them from a safe distance. Parents will be informed in advance of any pet visits to the center. This gives families the option to choose whether their child participates in any activities involving the visiting animals.

### **ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES**

#### **Hours of Operation**

Starlight Academy is open from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

#### **Key Fob Policy**

Upon enrollment, families will receive one key fob for access to the front door. Additional key fobs are available for rental at a cost of \$10 each. The replacement fee for a lost key fob is \$25. All keys must be returned on or before your child's last day at Starlight Academy. A \$25 fee will be charged for unreturned keys. If someone other than the parent(s)/guardian(s) is picking up your child, a child release form must be completed in advance.

#### **Rotating and/or Flexible Schedule Policy**

Starlight Academy is unable to accommodate rotating schedules. If you need to make adjustments to your child(ren)'s schedule, please notify the administration at least two weeks prior to the desired change.

#### **Absenteeism Procedure**

If your child(ren) will be absent, please notify us via a Brightwheel message or phone call before the scheduled arrival time. You may call the night before and leave a message, or send a Brightwheel message. If you are running late, please send a message or call to inform us. This allows the Director and staff to plan accordingly.

If we do not receive a message or phone call by 9:00 am, the staff will notify the Program Director, who will then call to inquire about your child(ren)'s absence. It is the parent's responsibility to communicate any absences in advance. By doing so, our teachers can remain focused on their students and avoid unnecessary disruptions. We kindly ask for your cooperation in this matter.

### **Early Departure Procedure**

If your child(ren) will be leaving early, please provide a written note to the Program Director or the child's teacher(s). The note/email must include:

- Child's name(s)
- Time of departure
- Who will pick up the child
- Time of arrival back to Starlight Academy (if applicable)
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) signature

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

### **HOLIDAYS & CLOSURES**

If your child(ren)'s scheduled day falls on a holiday or a non-emergency closure day at Starlight Academy, you will be responsible for payment for that day. Vacation days cannot be used for holidays, and tuition is still due on scheduled closure days.

- **Holiday Closures:**
  - If a holiday falls on a Saturday, Starlight Academy will close the Friday before.
  - If a holiday falls on a Sunday, Starlight Academy will close the Monday after.
- **Minimum Enrollment Closure:**

Starlight Academy will close for the day if fewer than 8 students are scheduled to attend. Tuition will still be owed in this case.
- **The Academy will be closed for the following holidays:**
  - Thanksgiving Day & the following Friday
  - 4th of July
  - The Friday before and the Monday after the first full weekend in August (Professional Development/In-service Days)
  - Winter Break (Aligned with OSD)
  - Memorial Day
  - Labor Day

## **Special Early Closures & Events:**

- **January:**
  - **No early closure listed**
- **February:**
  - 4K Open House (for incoming families) – First Thursday, 4:45–5:45 pm (Close Early at 4:30 pm)
- **March/April:**
  - Spring Break – Closed (Aligned with OSD)
- **May:**
  - Memorial Day – Closed
- **June:**
  - **No special events listed**
- **July:**
  - 4th of July – Closed
- **August:**
  - Professional Development – Closed (First Friday & Monday)
  - 4K Open House & Supply Drop Off/Meet & Greet – Last Tuesday, 4:30–6:00 pm (Close Early at 4:30 pm)
  - End of Summer Ice Cream Float Social – Friday before Labor Day, Close at 1:00 pm (All classrooms will have lunch at 11:00 am)
- **September:**
  - Labor Day – Closed
- **October:**
  - **No special events listed**
- **November:**
  - Thanksgiving – Closed (Thursday & Friday)
- **December:**
  - Winter Break – Closed (Aligned with OSD)

## **SEVERE WEATHER CLOSING**

In the event of a severe weather advisory, Starlight Academy will remain open as usual unless conditions warrant a closure. If a closure becomes necessary during normal business hours, all parents will be promptly notified via Brightwheel.

Starlight Academy will close for severe weather when the Oregon School District closes. If the Oregon School District is closed for reasons such as professional development, inservice, or any other non-weather-related event, Starlight Academy will continue to follow the Oregon School District's inclement weather policy.

The policy is as follows:

Snowstorms, sleet, fog, ice, and wind chill warnings can lead to cancellations, delays, or early release from school. The safety of our children is our main priority. Decisions regarding school delays and cancellations are always made in alignment with that priority. Check out our *Inside the OSD* podcast episodes [S1 E9](#) and [S3 E5](#), where Dr. Bergstrom talks with local meteorologists about the process for making weather closure decisions.

If school is delayed or closed for the day, the District will make every effort to make the decision by 5:30-6:00 AM (the normal timeframe for closures). We understand that many families prefer to make plans for school closures as far in advance as possible; however, weather patterns are not always predictable and weather-related impacts for schools are not often clear until early morning hours on the day of the potential closure. We thank you for your understanding on these days of potential weather-related closures.

Cold weather also has the potential to impact school closings, specifically with respect to extreme cold warnings.

- **Extreme Cold / Wind Chill Warning:** The National Weather Service will issue an Extreme Cold Warning when dangerously cold air temperatures or wind chill values are expected or occurring. The District may cancel or delay school, depending on the timeframe of the warning.
- **Cold Weather / Wind Chill Advisory:** A Cold Weather Advisory is issued when seasonably cold air temperatures or wind chill values, but not extremely cold values, are expected or occurring. School will be in session unless it comes along with a storm producing snow that would cause roads to be impassable.

This is an established standard for the majority of Dane County school districts. However, note that different districts may have unique circumstances that can lead to different school closure decisions. For example, districts in urban settings that have large populations of students who walk to school may close at warmer temperatures than school districts that have larger populations of students who ride a bus to school. Alternatively, more suburban districts that have a large population of students who ride the bus to school may be more likely to close during snowfall than urban districts. Ultimately, closure decisions are made on a case-by-case basis for each individual school district.

You can learn more about cold weather safety from the [National Weather Service](#).

We apologize for any inconvenience during the closures. Our priority is always the safety of our children.

## **Pandemic Emergency Closure**

At Starlight Academy, the safety and well-being of our students and families is our top priority. In the event that a Stay-At-Home order is issued, we will follow the guidelines provided by our state and county authorities. Starlight Academy will remain closed for the duration of the Stay-At-Home order to protect the health of our staff, students, and families.

### **Tuition During Emergency Closures:**

- For the first three weeks of the closure, tuition will be reduced to 50%.
- After the first three weeks, no tuition will be charged for the remaining closure period.

### **Reopening Process:**

Two weeks prior to the lifting of the Stay-At-Home order, families will receive an email survey to provide feedback on their preferred hours and days for reopening. Based on this input, we will assess the best approach to reopening and adjust accordingly.

### **Health and Safety Protocols Upon Reopening:**

- Classroom surfaces will be disinfected daily.
- Napping materials will be washed weekly.
- Daily visual health assessments will be conducted for both students and staff.
- The illness policy will be updated to include the following:
  - Students and staff must be 72 hours symptom-free of fever, vomiting, and/or diarrhea before returning.
  - Any individual showing symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle aches, headache, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea) must undergo a COVID-19 test.
  - We will follow the current reentry policy of the Oregon School District for school reopening after a positive COVID-19 test.

We are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation during these challenging times.

## **DISCHARGE OF ENROLLED CHILDREN**

### **Voluntary Withdrawal Policy**

Parents must provide a written two-week notice if they wish to withdraw their child(ren) from the program. Full payment for the two-week notice period is required at the time the notice is given.

### **Involuntary Withdrawal Policy**

A child may be discharged from the center for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- Failure to pay fees on time (grounds for immediate termination, without advance notice).
- Lack of parental cooperation.
- The program's inability to meet the child's needs. We will discuss potential solutions with parents before ending care (e.g., through a Behavior Report). Parents may be referred to other community resources.
- Repeated failure to pick up the child(ren) at the scheduled times.
- Failure to complete and return required forms.
- A reasonable attempt has been made by both staff and parents to address behavior issues without success.
- A child repeatedly endangers other children or staff.
- The child cannot adjust to the center within the 60-day probationary period from the enrollment date.
- Failure to comply with Starlight Academy's policies or uncooperative behavior.

### **Appropriate Behavior Guidelines and Policy**

During the first two weeks, your child(ren) will become familiar with the rules and expectations at Starlight Academy. Each child will be taught what is expected regarding behavior. Starlight Academy maintains a zero-tolerance policy for violence. Any child who inflicts severe harm on another child or staff member will be sent home for the day. A parent will be contacted to pick up the child. The child may return the next day unless otherwise specified by the administration.

Severe harm includes, but is not limited to, actions such as kicking, punching, throwing toys or furniture, or making extreme verbal threats of harm.

Our behavior expectations are simple:

**BE SAFE, BE RESPECTFUL, BE KIND, AND BE READY TO LEARN!**

No staff member will physically handle a child inappropriately. For example, children will not be forcibly removed from an area. Instead, children will be given choices such as, "I can take your hand and walk with me, or you can walk on your own."

If behaviors contrary to our policy continue (two or more instances), a meeting will be scheduled with the Program Director and parents. During this meeting, a behavior modification plan will be

created, incorporating all documentation leading up to the meeting. All parties will collaborate to determine the best approach to ensure the child's success. The meeting and plan will be documented and placed in the child's file.

Once the behavior modification plan is in place, the child will have two additional opportunities to demonstrate appropriate behavior. If the child does not comply, termination of care will be considered, with notice given by the Program Director.

These guidelines follow state recommendations, especially concerning appropriate restraints in childcare. Restraints are strictly prohibited at Starlight Academy. We adhere to all state guidelines and do not discriminate. Any decisions made are in the best interest of the children involved and are not subject to appeal. If outside agencies need to be involved, a written authorization must be signed by the parents or legal guardians.

## **SLA Zero Tolerance Violence Policy**

### **Purpose:**

To ensure a safe and nurturing environment for all children, staff, and families by strictly prohibiting any form of violence or aggressive behavior.

### **Policy Overview**

Our preschool is committed to creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all children. We have a **zero-tolerance policy** for any form of violence, including physical, verbal, or emotional aggression. This policy applies to all children, staff, and visitors within our preschool premises and during any preschool-related activities.

### **Definition of Violence**

Violence is defined as any action that intentionally harms, threatens, or intimidates another person. This includes, but is not limited to:

*Physical aggression* (hitting, kicking, pushing, biting, etc.)

*Verbal aggression* (yelling, name-calling, threats, etc.)

*Emotional harm* (bullying, exclusion, intimidation, etc.)

*Destruction of property* (intentional damage to school or personal property)

### **Consequences for Violent Behavior**

Violent behavior is not tolerated under any circumstances. The following steps will be taken in response to any violent act:

### **Immediate Intervention**

- Staff will immediately intervene in any situation involving violence to ensure the safety of all children.
- The child involved in violent behavior will be separated from the group for a cooling-off period.

## **Documentation**

- An incident report will be completed detailing the behavior, the individuals involved, and any actions taken by staff.
- Parents/guardians of the child involved will be notified promptly via Brightwheel. A phone call will be placed for immediate pick up of the child depending on the severity of the situation.

## **Disciplinary Action**

Depending on the severity and frequency of the behavior, the following actions may be taken:

*First Offense:* Verbal warning and discussion with parents/guardians about the incident and strategies to prevent future occurrences. Parent(s) will be called to pick up their student that day. The student may return the following day unless otherwise specified by the Administration.

*Second Offense:* Meeting with parents/guardians to develop a behavioral intervention plan. This may include monitoring, counseling, or other supportive measures.

*Third Offense:* Temporary suspension - The child may only return after a behavior review and the implementation of additional support measures.

*Severe or Repeated Violence:* In cases of extreme or continuous violence, the child may face permanent removal from the preschool program.

## **Support and Intervention**

We believe that all children deserve the opportunity to learn and grow in a safe environment. To support this, we will:

- Provide age-appropriate conflict resolution and emotional regulation lessons as part of our curriculum.
- Offer guidance and counseling for children displaying aggressive behavior.
- Work closely with families to address the root causes of violent behavior and develop strategies to improve behavior.

## **Parental Involvement**

Parents and guardians play a critical role in helping children learn positive behaviors. We encourage open communication and cooperation with families to resolve behavioral concerns. If your child is involved in a violent incident, your prompt involvement will be necessary to help address and prevent future issues.

## **Safety Assurance**

The safety of all children and staff is our top priority. If any child or staff member feels unsafe due to violent behavior, the preschool will take all necessary measures to protect those involved, including immediate removal of the child from the environment.

*Example of Starlight Academy's **Behavior Report**:*

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Inappropriate Behavior:

Expected Behavior:

Behavior Modification Plan:

Date of Review & Additional Comments/Notes:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

## **TUITION AND FEES 251.04(2)(h)1**

### **WISCONSIN SHARES**

If your family is funded by the State or County, we will maintain communication with the State of Wisconsin to ensure that payment aligns with the expected amount and does not result in an excessive overage. In the event of any disagreements with this arrangement, please contact the Administrator or Director immediately. If an agreement cannot be reached, termination of care may result.

### **Parent-Share Payments:**

Parent-share payments are due on the first day of your child(ren)'s scheduled attendance. It is the parent's responsibility to understand the amount of their parent-share payment.

### **Termination Notice:**

A two-week notice, along with full payment for the two-week notice period, must be provided when terminating care. Any verbal notice must be followed by a written notice. All outstanding fees must be paid before the termination of services.

## TUITION PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Starlight Academy accepts online payments for all fees.

- **Registration Fee:** A one-time, non-refundable registration fee of \$100 is required to receive enrollment paperwork and secure your child(ren)'s placement at Starlight Academy.
- **Annual Supply & Meal Fee:** A yearly fee for supplies and meals is due at the start of each new year.
- **Re-enrollment Fee:** If your family has previously withdrawn and wishes to re-enroll, a \$100 fee is required to receive new enrollment paperwork.
- **Tuition Payments:** Tuition is due on the FIRST day of attendance each week.
- **Late Payments:** Payments received more than three days late will incur a \$10 late fee for each day the payment is overdue.  
Example: If your child attends Wednesday-Friday, payment should be made on Wednesday. If payment is late, a \$10/day late fee will apply for each weekday the payment is overdue. If five weekdays pass without payment (or a payment plan is not arranged with the Administrator), your child will be withdrawn.
- **Holding Fee for Breaks:** If a break in care is needed, a holding fee of half the tuition amount for the time your child will be out is required.  
Example: For a summer break (June-August), the holding fee for the Moonbeam program would be \$2,700 (12 weeks x \$450/2).
- **Returned Check Fee:** If a check is returned for any reason, a \$20 processing fee will be charged to your account.

## EARLY/LATE FEES

Families are required to contract their own arrival and departure times through Starlight Academy's Contracted Hours form. Parents may choose up to 10 hours of care per day, and staffing patterns are designed to accommodate these hours. Please ensure that your child(ren) arrives and departs within your contracted times. We are currently unable to accommodate rotating weekly schedules, and a two-week notice is required for any changes to your contracted hours.

- **Early Arrival Fee:** If your child(ren) arrives before their scheduled time, a fee of \$1 per minute will be charged.  
Example: If your child arrives 5 minutes early, the fee will be \$5.

- **Late Pickup Fee:** If your child(ren) is picked up after your scheduled time, a fee of \$1 per minute (or fraction thereof) will be charged.  
Example: If your child is picked up 5 minutes late, the fee will be \$5.
- **Notification of Absences/Late Arrival:** Please notify us by 9:00 AM via phone or Brightwheel message if your child(ren) will be late or not attending for the day.  
If your child is attending 4K, please notify us by 7:50 AM, as attendance is taken promptly at 8:00 AM.

**Hardships:** If you are experiencing financial difficulties or hardships, please reach out to the Administrator to discuss potential payment arrangements. We are always open to working with families to create agreeable payment plans if necessary.

## **ADDITIONAL FEES**

Additional fees may arise throughout the year for activities such as field trips, special meals, outside visitors, etc. You will be notified in advance by your child's teacher when any additional fees are required.

## **SICK DAYS**

Starlight Academy does not provide sick leave for families unless a medical leave request is submitted and approved by the administration. If your child is absent due to illness, you are still responsible for payment for the missed days. In the event of an extended illness (lasting more than one week), you may request to use additional vacation days. Otherwise, full payment is required for any absence, regardless of the reason.

## **VACATION**

Vacation days are granted on a calendar year basis and are prorated based on your child's first day of attendance. After one year of full-time enrollment, you will be eligible for five vacation days. For part-time enrollment, your total vacation days will be equal to the number of days your child is scheduled to attend per week. A two-week notice is required to use vacation days; this can be submitted via email or a written note.

## **CHILD EDUCATION 251.04(2)(i)3**

### **STARLIGHT ACADEMY'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

At Starlight Academy, we believe that each child is a unique individual with their own thoughts, opinions, and feelings. Our teachers are dedicated to interacting with each child in a way that is responsive to their individual needs, helping them feel valued and understood. We recognize that every child develops at their own pace and in their own way, with different levels of ability, growth, and learning styles.

Our approach is to meet each child where they are, ensuring that they are continually challenged to grow in a way that supports their own development. This encourages a strong sense of individuality, independence, and a positive self-image. We establish clear boundaries and expectations in every classroom to support each child's success.

Children are naturally motivated to learn by their desire to make sense of the world around them, and we believe that learning should be an experience, not a force.

*“Education is the natural process carried out by the child and is not acquired by listening to words, but by experiences in the environment.” – Maria Montessori*

### **Drop-Off, Pick-Up, and Personal Responsibility**

As we continue our journey together in nurturing your children's development, we want to share our commitment to helping them become ready for elementary school and beyond. At Starlight Academy, we believe in instilling essential skills and habits that will support their growth.

One key idea we emphasize is personal responsibility for oneself and one's belongings. This principle is reflected in our drop-off and pick-up policies, which are designed to help children practice these important skills.

#### **Drop-Off Procedures:**

- Parents are asked to accompany their children to their cubbies to drop off their belongings before greeting the teacher.
- Ensuring children participate in this routine helps reinforce responsibility for their personal items.

#### **Pick-Up Procedures:**

- At pick-up time, parents should pick up their child first and then proceed to the cubby to retrieve belongings.
- If your child is on the playground when you arrive, please bring them inside to collect their things before leaving.
- This process encourages children to take ownership of their items and develop good habits.

### **Backpacks and Belongings:**

- Each child should have a backpack or canvas bag that can hold a standard-sized folder for important papers.
- If a child forgets their backpack, we gently remind them that it is their responsibility to remember their things, and they can always try again tomorrow.

### **Key Fob Attendance Tracking:**

- Parents must scan their key fob at both drop-off and pick-up times.
- Even if entering with another family, it is crucial that each fob is scanned as part of our attendance tracking system.

Thank you for your cooperation and support in reinforcing these important habits. Together, we can help your children thrive!

## **DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE**

### **DAP with Infants and Toddlers, Ages Birth–3**

The earliest years are all about relationships. Infants and toddlers crave and develop attachments to the special people in their lives. Depending on how parents, early childhood educators, and others treat them, babies also develop expectations about people and themselves.

Young infants (0 to 9 months) seek **security**.

Mobile infants (8 to 18 months) are eager to **explore**. Toddlers (16 to 36 months) are working on their **identity**; they want to know who they are and who is in charge.

In childcare programs, relationships with families are critical. Caring teachers and caregivers learn from family members' experiences, knowledge, culture, and childrearing beliefs.

Partnerships grow when teachers value the family as the primary source of information about the child and as the constant in the baby's life, and when families value the knowledge and personal characteristics of their child's teachers. Good communication is essential.

## Teaching Infants and Toddlers

Good teachers understand typical development from birth through age 3. Knowing how the youngest children learn and develop helps professionals closely attune to individual children and their families—in all their variety.

Here is what DAP looks like in an infant/toddler room:

*At mealtime, Lisa notices that Haylee is starting to grab the spoon. The baby isn't old enough to feed herself, but she sure is determined to try. Lisa gets Haylee her own spoon. Later in the day, she gives Haylee another spoon, and a bowl, to play with.*

Lisa selects materials for Haylee with her specific interests and developmental progress in mind. Countless small actions like this make up the best practice for infants and toddlers.

## DAP with Preschoolers, Ages 3-5

Preschool children learn best when they have positive and caring relationships with adults and other children; when they receive carefully planned, intentional guidance and assistance; and when they can safely encounter and explore many interesting things in their environment. Children enter preschool with different strengths. One child might love picture books and already know lots of letters but have trouble with social interaction. A classmate may find it easy to initiate play and share toys yet have almost no experience with books and reading.

Preschoolers thrive when they can experience new materials, roles, ideas, and activities especially in pretend play; take great interest in feelings and become better able to express their emotions and identify those of others; make important cognitive gains that invite them to represent their world in pretend play, symbols, objects, drawings, and words; and show astonishing gains in language skills.

## Teaching Preschoolers

Good preschool teachers maintain appropriate expectations, providing each child with the right mix of challenge, support, sensitivity, and stimulation. With their knowledge, skill, and training, teachers—in collaboration with families— can ensure that programs promote and enhance every child's learning.

Let's see what DAP in preschool looks like

*In the dramatic play center, two 4-year-old girls are pretending to read menus. Maria, noticing that neither girl has taken on the role of waiter, takes a notepad and pencil in hand and asks them, "May I take your order?" Over the next few days, more children join the restaurant play. Waiters set tables, take orders, give orders to the cook, and prepare checks for diners.*

Maria is an observant, inventive, and intentional teacher. Her intervention sparks fresh play, tempting children to take on different roles, enrich their social and language interactions, and use writing and math for new purposes.

### **Transitions at Starlight Academy**

At Starlight Academy, we understand that smooth transitions are key to creating a positive and well-managed classroom environment. To help children transition effectively, we use various activities such as “Clean Up” songs, group games like Simon Says and Follow the Leader, and movement activities (e.g., crawling like a kitty or leaping like a frog). These activities help keep children engaged and focused during transitions.

Each morning from 7:00 am to 7:45 am, and in the evening from 4:30 pm to 5:00 pm, children will be in mixed-age groups. This time allows for extra social interactions and sibling bonding. During these periods, children will engage in supervised free play, board games, coloring, puzzles, and reading.

We also recognize that certain times of the day, such as drop-off and pick-up, can be busy and overwhelming. To help children stay calm and centered during these higher-energy moments, we incorporate appropriate activities to help them transition peacefully.

### **FAMILY CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION**

At Starlight Academy, we celebrate cultural diversity and strive to honor each child’s unique background, home life, and traditions. Our program incorporates elements of different cultures through music, food, art, literature, and language, ensuring that every child feels seen and respected. We engage with each family’s culture through activities like our “All About Me” unit, Show and Tell days, family meal nights, and by maintaining open and welcoming lines of communication with families.

We value strong communication with our families. Email, written notes, and daily postings are our primary methods of communication. Teachers will often use email to stay in touch. If you prefer other forms of communication or have any concerns, please reach out directly to your child’s teacher, and we’ll be happy to accommodate your needs.

## Daily Schedule

*Please note: All schedules are subject to change based on classroom needs and activities.*

Time	Activity
7:00 AM - 8:00 AM	Arrival & Quiet Activities*
8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Breakfast & Bathroom Breaks
9:00 AM - 9:30 AM	Morning Meeting & Large Motor Activities*
9:30 AM - 10:30 AM	Outdoor Free Play*
10:30 AM - 11:15 AM	Art, Language, Science Projects
11:15 AM - 12:00 PM	Lunch
12:00 PM - 12:15 PM	Bathroom Breaks & Quiet Activities*
12:15 PM - 2:15 PM	Rest Time
2:15 PM - 2:30 PM	Bathroom Breaks & Quiet Activities*
2:30 PM - 3:00 PM	Snack
3:00 PM - 3:30 PM	Indoor Free Play*
3:30 PM - 4:00 PM	Outdoor Free Play* (weather permitting)
4:00 PM - 4:45 PM	Quiet Activities*

## Definitions of Activities:

- **Free Play:** Child-initiated play, where children independently direct their own activity. This is highly supervised for safety and engagement.
- **Quiet Activities:** Child-initiated activities using small manipulative materials such as play dough, building blocks, arts and crafts, etc. These activities are closely monitored.
- **Large Motor Activities:** Tasks that engage the larger muscles of the body (arms, legs, and core), such as running, jumping, and climbing.

## **CURRICULUM**

### **Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS)**

At Starlight Academy, our lesson planning is aligned with the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS). Established in 1994 by the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners (WECCP), WMELS promotes collaboration among diverse early childhood partners. This initiative is supported through a 'braided' funding effort from three state agencies:

- Department of Public Instruction (DPI)
- Department of Children and Families (DCF)
- Department of Health Services (DHS)

### **Play-Based Learning at Starlight Academy**

Starlight Academy is a play-based learning center that follows a creative curriculum. But what does “play-based” mean?

Children are born learners. They learn by engaging in play—observing, exploring, experimenting, talking, pretending, and having fun. From their very first moments, babies begin exploring their new world by using all their senses, moving their bodies, and interacting with others. As toddlers, they repeat actions to observe patterns, and mimic the words, songs, and rhymes of the adults around them. Older children engage in more complex pretend play, using props, language, and involving others in their imaginative games.

Play provides a vital foundation for:

- Language development
- Understanding the world around them
- Problem-solving
- Social interaction and cooperation
- Building skills that will help them succeed in school and life

### **Why is Play-Based Learning Important?**

Play encourages children to:

- Practice language and develop vocabulary as they interact with adults and peers.
- Have hands-on experiences that build a solid foundation for future academic success.
- Express their feelings, ideas, and needs while learning to listen, take turns, and empathize with others.
- Engage their imaginations and creativity, especially through pretend play, which helps them understand and process real-life experiences.

### **Focus Areas of Our Creative Curriculum**

Our creative curriculum supports the following developmental areas:

- Building self-esteem and a positive self-image
- Encouraging social interaction and dramatic (pretend) play
- Enhancing self-expression and communication skills

- Fostering creative expression
- Promoting large motor and small motor development
- Stimulating intellectual growth

Our curriculum is developed by our teachers on a month-to-month basis to meet the needs of the children in our care.

### **Religious Instruction**

Religious instruction is not part of the curriculum at Starlight Academy.

### **What is Early Childhood?**

Early childhood refers to the critical period of development before the age of eight, as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). During this time, children experience the most rapid phase of growth, particularly in their brain development. This stage is essential because it lays the foundation for their social skills, self-esteem, worldview, and moral values, as well as the development of cognitive abilities. The early years are a time of immense learning and growth, making them incredibly important for a child's future.

### **What is an Early Childhood Educator?**

An Early Childhood Educator at Starlight Academy is a trained professional who has met all the required certifications from the State of Wisconsin. These educators are responsible for planning and implementing a daily curriculum tailored to meet the physical, cognitive, and emotional needs of each child. They must be capable of providing effective supervision while building positive relationships with both children and their families. At Starlight Academy, we go beyond meeting the basic needs of our young learners. We are committed to continually enhancing and updating our curriculum to ensure it is engaging and aligned with the individual developmental needs and interests of each child. We believe that children thrive in an environment that nurtures their unique qualities and encourages exploration and growth.

## **TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS**

In accordance with the State of Wisconsin regulations, certification is required for the hiring of Child Care Teachers. For further details, please refer to page 14 of DCF 251 Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Centers. Additionally, all teaching and non-teaching staff are required to maintain current CPR and AED certifications.

## **4K TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS**

The following qualification codes are acceptable for teaching 4K:

- **EC, 70** Early Childhood, Birth-Age 8, Grades PK-6
- **EC-MC, 71** Early Childhood-Middle Childhood, Birth-Age 11, PK-6,
- **EC-A**, Early Childhood-Adolescence, Birth-Age 21, PK-12 Program Completion Before 08/31/2004:
- **22** PreKindergarten-Grade 12
- **42** PreKindergarten-Grade 8
- **47** PreKindergarten-Grade 9

### **With Subject Codes: 777** Regular Education

(used with position/level codes 70, 71 from 01/01/2005 to current) Program Completion Before 08/31/2004:

- **80** Prekindergarten
- **86** Prekindergarten-Grade 6
- **90** Pre Kindergarten-Kindergarten
- **101** Prekindergarten-Grade 1
- **103** Prekindergarten-Grade 3
- **105** Prekindergarten-Grade 5
- **107** Prekindergarten-Grade 7
- **83** Prekindergarten-Grade 3
- **88** Prekindergarten-Grade 8
- **100** Kindergarten
- **102** Kindergarten-Grade 2
- **104** Kindergarten-Grade 4
- **106 & 108** Kindergarten-Grade 8

## **SUPERVISION**

All staff members are supervised by the Administrator and/or Program Director to ensure a safe and supportive environment for all children.

## **PROBATIONARY PERIOD**

New staff members will undergo a 90-day probationary period from their official hire date. At the end of this period, an evaluation will be conducted. After the initial evaluation, staff will continue to be evaluated every 9 months.

## CONTINUED EDUCATION

At Starlight Academy, we value ongoing professional development for our staff. All staff members are required to complete 15–25 hours of continuing education each year. Staff working 20 hours or fewer per week will need to complete 15 hours, while those working 30 or more hours per week will need to complete 25 hours.

Staff meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month and may count toward continuing education hours, depending on the content.

We believe that "it takes a village to raise a child" and are committed to offering workshops and play seminars to help both staff and parents reach their fullest potential as caregivers and educators. We deeply appreciate the dedication and hard work of our staff in making this mission a reality.

For licensing purposes, all required information will be stored in each teacher's individual file. Any confidential information will be kept securely in the administration office.

## Lead Early Childhood Educator Job Responsibilities

The Lead Early Childhood Educator will:

- **Plan and Implement Curriculum:** Develop and carry out a daily curriculum aligned with Starlight Academy's philosophy, ensuring it meets the developmental needs of each child.
- **Provide Care and Safety:** Offer a nurturing, safe, and loving environment for all students, treating each child with equal care and attention.
- **Respect Each Child's Individuality:** Honor the dignity, uniqueness, and rights of every student, helping them navigate real-life situations and develop coping skills.
- **Promote Life Skills:** Guide students in learning essential skills, including dressing, personal hygiene, table manners, and respect for others.
- **Collaborate with Administration:** Work closely with the Program Director and Administrator to support students with special needs, ensuring appropriate interventions are in place.
- **Engage with Parents:** Partner with parents to track and ensure each child is meeting developmental milestones.
- **Monitor Student Health:** Observe students' health daily, reporting any concerns to administration. Administer first aid if necessary.
- **Assess and Observe Development:** Regularly observe and assess students' progress in emotional, physical, social, and intellectual development. Hold parent-teacher conferences twice yearly or as needed.
- **Maintain Student Records:** Keep accurate and up-to-date records on each child's development and progress.

- **Participate in Professional Development:** Attend staff meetings, training sessions, and professional development opportunities, completing a minimum of 25 hours of continuing education per year.
- **Ensure Classroom Environment:** Ensure that classroom materials and equipment are accessible, appropriate, and well-maintained.
- **Maintain Classroom Standards:** Perform necessary classroom maintenance and related duties in a calm and professional manner.
- **Student Pickup:** Ensure that students are released to the properly authorized adult at the end of each day.

## Job Responsibilities for 4K Teacher

The 4K Teacher will:

- **Plan and Implement Lessons:** Develop, schedule, and deliver daily lessons based on the Oregon School District Curriculum and Starlight Academy's educational philosophy.
- **Provide Care and Safety:** Offer love, care, and a safe environment for all students, treating each child equally.
- **Respect Individuality:** Honor the dignity, individuality, and basic rights of every student, helping them cope with and adapt to real-life situations while acquiring essential life skills.
- **Promote Daily Skills:** Guide students in developing personal skills such as dressing, hygiene, table manners, and respect for others.
- **Collaborate on Special Needs:** Work with the Program Director and Administration to support students with special needs.
- **Engage with Parents:** Partner with parents to monitor and support their child's development and ensure they are meeting appropriate milestones.
- **Monitor Health:** Observe students' health daily and report any concerns to administration. Provide basic first aid treatment as needed.
- **Assess Student Progress:** Regularly assess and observe students, keeping detailed progress records on their emotional, physical, social, and intellectual development. Conduct parent-teacher conferences twice a year and as needed.
- **Pursue Professional Development:** Attend staff meetings, training sessions, conferences, and workshops, meeting the annual requirement of 25 hours of continuing education.

- **Maintain Classroom Environment:** Ensure that classroom materials and equipment are appropriate, accessible, and in good condition.
- **Complete Assigned Duties:** Perform other related duties as needed, maintaining professionalism and calm.
- **Classroom Maintenance:** Take responsibility for general classroom maintenance duties as assigned.
- **Ensure Safe Student Release:** Confirm that students are released at the end of each day to the appropriate authorized adult.

### **What Do Our Teachers Do?**

Our Early Childhood Educators play a key role in supporting each child's development. Through stable care, gentle guidance, nurturing relationships, and meaningful conversations, they create an environment that fosters play-based learning.

Our teachers design engaging and relevant lessons tailored to each child's unique needs, ensuring all students have the opportunity to explore and learn in their own way.

Early childhood educators do more than teach facts; they help children develop important social, emotional, and physical skills.

While play might seem like just fun, it's actually a child's most important work. Through play, children build vital skills such as working as part of a team, making eye contact, forming friendships, balancing on a beam, and learning to express their emotions with new vocabulary.

### **OUTDOOR AND LARGE MOTOR POLICIES**

At Starlight Academy, outdoor play is an essential part of our daily schedule. Children will play outdoors each day, weather and air quality permitting. The amount of time spent outdoors and the type of physical activities offered will depend on the children's age group and weather conditions. Activities will include both structured play (led by the adult caregiver) and free play (self-directed by the children). All children will participate in at least 60 to 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each day.

To ensure all children are comfortable and able to play safely, they must be dressed appropriately for the weather. This includes wearing seasonal clothing and proper footwear. Childcare providers will remind parents and caregivers to ensure that children are dressed accordingly for outdoor play in the current weather conditions.

### **Suggested Clothing for Different Weather:**

- **Snow:** Heavy coat, waterproof boots, hat, and mittens.
- **Rain:** Raincoat and waterproof boots.
- **Variable Temperatures:** Layered clothing for warmth or coolness.

**Footwear Guidelines:** Children should wear shoes that provide adequate support for running and climbing. Suitable options include sneakers, gym shoes, or shoes with rubber soles that securely enclose the feet. Inappropriate footwear includes flip-flops, beach sandals, or shoes like crocs, which may come off easily during play.

### **Clothing Guidelines:**

- Avoid clothing with drawstrings or loops that could get caught on playground equipment.
- Ensure clothing provides adequate protection from the weather.
- Shorts should be worn underneath skirts and dresses for safety and comfort.

Starlight Academy is committed to ensuring that all children enjoy active, safe, and comfortable outdoor play. Please help us by dressing your child in weather-appropriate clothing each day!

## **Outdoor Play and Learning Policy**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines and practices for providing preschool-aged children with regular and meaningful outdoor play and learning experiences. These opportunities support children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development, contributing to their overall well-being and growth.

### **Policy Statement**

Our preschool is committed to offering daily outdoor play and learning time as a critical part of the children's developmental experience. We recognize that outdoor play enhances physical fitness, promotes creativity, fosters social skills, and offers hands-on learning opportunities that cannot be replicated indoors. To ensure the children have a safe and engaging outdoor environment, we will adhere to the following guidelines.

### **1. Outdoor Playtime Frequency and Duration**

- Daily Outdoor Time: Preschoolers will have access to outdoor play at least twice per day, weather permitting, for a minimum of 60 minutes each session. This time may be split between morning and afternoon sessions to allow children to experience different outdoor environments and activities.

- Additional Outdoor Learning Opportunities: In addition to the structured playtime, outdoor learning may occur as part of specific lessons, nature walks, gardening, or field trips to local parks, which will further integrate the outdoors into the curriculum.
- Weather Considerations: Outdoor play will be offered in most weather conditions, unless safety concerns exist (e.g., extreme heat, cold, or inclement weather). Educators will monitor weather forecasts and adjust outdoor time accordingly to ensure children's comfort and safety.

## **2. Variety of Outdoor Play and Learning Experiences**

Outdoor play is essential for fostering creativity, physical activity, and social development. To make the most of outdoor playtime, a variety of activities and learning opportunities will be provided:

- Physical Play: A range of large motor activities will be available, including climbing structures, riding tricycles, running, jumping, and playing ball games. These activities will develop children's coordination, strength, and gross motor skills.
- Exploratory Learning: Children will engage in nature exploration through activities like bug hunting, leaf collecting, water play, and observation of weather patterns. Natural outdoor spaces, such as gardens, wooded areas, or nearby parks, will be used to stimulate curiosity and environmental awareness.
- Creative Play: Outdoor play will also include opportunities for children to engage in imaginative play, such as building with blocks, pretending to be animals or community helpers, and creating art with natural materials (e.g., leaves, sticks, sand).
- Sensory Play: Sensory activities like sand and water play, feeling different textures, or playing with mud will encourage children to engage all of their senses and help develop their fine motor skills.
- Social Interaction: Structured and unstructured outdoor activities will allow children to work together, share materials, negotiate roles, and practice social skills such as turn-taking and conflict resolution.

## **3. \*Ensuring Full Engagement in Outdoor Time**

To ensure that children fully benefit from outdoor play, we will implement the following strategies:

- Active Supervision: Educators will actively engage with children outdoors by participating in activities, guiding play, and ensuring all children are safe. Staff will provide encouragement, structure, and direction when necessary, while allowing children the freedom to explore and play independently.
- Purposeful Planning: Outdoor time will not be treated as a "break" but as an integral part of the learning day. Educators will plan specific outdoor activities that align with developmental goals and areas of learning, such as social-emotional development, motor skills, and cognitive growth.
- Encouraging Exploration and Inquiry: Educators will provide open-ended materials and prompts to encourage curiosity and exploration. For example, children may be given tools to observe the natural world (magnifying glasses, binoculars, etc.) or encouraged to ask questions about the environment and make predictions.
- Inclusive Play: Outdoor play environments will be designed to support a variety of abilities and ensure that all children can participate. This includes providing adaptive equipment for children

with differing abilities, ensuring the space is accessible for children with mobility challenges, and offering modifications to activities as needed.

#### **4. Health and Safety Considerations**

The health and safety of all children during outdoor play is paramount. The following practices will be adhered to:

- Sun Protection: Sunscreen will be applied to children before outdoor play, especially during warmer months. Children will be encouraged to wear hats and appropriate clothing to protect against the sun.
- Hydration: Water stations will be available, and children will be encouraged to drink water regularly, especially during hot weather or after physical activity.
- Weather-Appropriate Clothing: Parents will be asked to ensure their children are dressed appropriately for outdoor play based on the weather. This includes wearing layers in cold weather and comfortable, breathable clothing in warmer weather. Spare clothes will be available for children who may get wet or dirty during play.
- Safety Checks: Outdoor play spaces will be regularly inspected for potential hazards, including sharp objects, debris, and uneven surfaces. All equipment will be maintained in safe, working order.

#### **5. Parent and Community Involvement**

Outdoor play can be enriched through the involvement of families and the community. The preschool will:

- Communication with Parents: Parents will be informed about the importance of outdoor play and encouraged to dress their children appropriately for outdoor activities. Regular updates on outdoor play activities will be shared through newsletters, emails, or meetings.
- Community Partnerships: The preschool will seek out community-based outdoor learning opportunities, such as field trips to local parks, gardens, or nature centers, where children can engage with the larger community and learn about the natural world.

#### **6. Continuous Evaluation**

We will regularly assess the effectiveness and quality of our outdoor play and learning program:

- Observations: Educators will observe children's engagement in outdoor activities, noting what types of play are most popular, how children interact with each other, and what learning outcomes are being achieved.
- Feedback: Families will be asked to provide feedback on outdoor play experiences to help ensure the program meets the needs and interests of the children.
- Adjustments: Based on feedback and observations, we will continually evaluate and adapt the outdoor play program to better support children's development and ensure they have the best possible outdoor learning experiences.

## **Conclusion**

Outdoor play is a vital aspect of early childhood education that supports the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children. Our preschool is committed to providing a variety of outdoor experiences that foster a love of nature, physical activity, and lifelong learning. By following this policy, we ensure that children have the opportunity to grow, explore, and learn in a safe, engaging, and supportive outdoor environment.

## **WALKING TRIPS**

Teachers may choose to take the children for a walk as part of their outdoor time. If there are 8 or fewer children in the class, teachers may leave the premises alone. However, if there are more than 8 children, a minimum of two teachers must accompany the group to ensure proper supervision and maintain the required child-to-teacher ratio.

Before departing, teachers will leave the following information at Starlight Academy:

- A list of all children's names
- Teacher cell phone numbers
- Destination (if applicable)

Occasionally, we may visit local destinations such as the park, library, or other nearby locations. When this happens, a note will be posted on the front door with the specific destination.

**Walking Bags** contain essential items for the trip, including but not limited to:

- First aid supplies (bandages, ice packs, etc.)
- Emergency cards
- Hand sanitizer
- Facial tissues
- Diapers/wipes (as needed)

## **WATER ACTIVITIES**

Water play offers children a chance to engage in cooperative play, explore materials, and interact with props. It also encourages them to use rich vocabulary, engage in meaningful conversations, and learn from each other. Through water activities, children can experience and practice important math concepts such as "same," "equal," "more," "less," "empty," "full," "first," and "next."

Additionally, water play supports the scientific process by allowing children to make predictions, test them, experiment, and make exciting discoveries.

At Starlight Academy, we are committed to providing a safe, enjoyable water play experience. We take every precaution to ensure your child's safety and well-being during all swimming activities. Our staff closely monitors all swimming experiences, and we strictly adhere to all DCF rules and regulations.

## **DCF Swimming Area Rules:**

### **1. Swimming Pools:**

- Above-ground and in-ground pools, as well as beaches, on the premises may not be used by children in care.
- Swimming pools must be enclosed by a 6-foot fence with a self-closing, self-latching door.
- The spaces between the vertical posts of the fence shall be no more than 4 inches apart.
- Beach access must also be restricted by a 6-foot fence.

### **2. Wading Pools:**

- Wading pools may be used if the water is changed and the pool is disinfected daily.
- Supervision must meet the staff-to-child ratio requirements outlined in s. DCF 251.05(3) and (4).

### **3. Off-Premises Pools and Beaches:**

- If children are taken to an off-premises wading pool, pool, water attraction, or beach, the following conditions must be met:
  - The pool must meet the construction and operation requirements of DHS, SPS 390, and ATCP 76 for public swimming pools. Any beach must comply with local ordinances.
  - Certified lifesaving personnel must be on duty.
  - Staff-to-child ratios for swimming activities must be:
    - 1:1 for children under 3 years old.
    - 1:4 for children aged 3 years old.
    - 1:6 for children aged 4-5 years old.
    - 1:12 for children aged 6 years and older.

### **4. Mixed-Age Groups:**

- If children of different ages swim together, the staff-to-child ratio will be adjusted according to the number of children in the water and each child's age.

### **5. Swimming Ability:**

- Children will be restricted to swimming areas that are suitable for their swimming ability.

#### **6. Supervision:**

- When some children are in the water and others are not, at least two childcare workers will be present. One will supervise the children in the water, and the other will supervise the children who are out of the water.

Starlight Academy is dedicated to ensuring a safe and educational water play experience for every child.

### **Physical Activity Policy**

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that children receive adequate opportunities for physical activity to promote their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. Regular physical activity helps children build strength, coordination, and healthy habits, contributing to overall well-being and a positive attitude toward physical activity that can last a lifetime.

#### **Policy Statement:**

Our preschool program is committed to providing a variety of opportunities for children to engage in physical activity every day. These activities are designed to be developmentally appropriate, fun, and safe, helping children improve their motor skills, increase their energy levels, and support their social interactions.

#### **1. Time for Physical Activity:**

- Daily Physical Activity: All preschool children will have at least **\*\*60 minutes\*\*** of structured physical activity and **\*\*60 minutes\*\*** of unstructured, free play (totaling at least 120 minutes) each day, weather permitting. Structured activities may include group games, dancing, or guided motor skills exercises, while unstructured play might involve playground time, exploration, or other activities where children can move freely.

- Incorporation of Movement Throughout the Day: Physical activity will be integrated into the daily schedule. In addition to outdoor play, children will have opportunities for movement through activities such as circle time songs, stretching, yoga, and interactive games that encourage movement.

- Indoor Physical Activity Options: On days when outdoor play is not possible (due to weather or safety concerns), indoor physical activities such as music and movement, obstacle courses, or simple games will be provided.

- Breaks for Movement: Short movement breaks (e.g., stretching, dancing, or jumping) will be incorporated throughout the day to help children stay energized and engaged.

## **2. Encouraging Physical Activity:**

- Positive Role Modeling: Teachers and caregivers will actively participate in physical activities alongside children, demonstrating the joy and benefits of physical movement. This helps children see physical activity as a fun and natural part of daily life.

- Activity Variety: A variety of physical activities will be provided to appeal to different interests and abilities. These activities will include gross motor activities such as running, jumping, climbing, and throwing, as well as fine motor activities like drawing, building with blocks, and other hand-eye coordination tasks.

- Creative Play Opportunities: Children will be encouraged to engage in creative play that involves movement, such as dancing to music, pretending to be animals, or acting out different scenarios that require physical actions.

- Active Play Materials: The preschool environment will be stocked with a wide range of safe, age-appropriate equipment that promotes physical activity, such as balls, hula hoops, balance beams, climbing structures, jump ropes, and more. These materials will be available for both structured and free play times.

- Outdoor Play: Weather permitting, outdoor play will be a priority. Children will have access to a well-maintained outdoor play area where they can run, climb, ride tricycles, and engage in group games. Outdoor play will be supervised to ensure safety while encouraging exploration and physical activity.

- Encouraging Social Interaction: Group games and team-based activities will be incorporated into the physical activity plan to promote teamwork, cooperation, and social skills. These activities might include relay races, group parachute games, or cooperative games that require problem-solving.

## **3. Developmentally Appropriate Physical Activity:**

- Age-Appropriate Activities: Physical activities will be tailored to the developmental stages of the children in the preschool program. Younger children may focus on activities that help build basic coordination and motor skills (e.g., crawling, walking, and balancing), while older preschoolers will engage in more complex movements, such as running, jumping, and learning sports fundamentals.

- Skill Development: Activities will be designed to help children develop both gross motor skills (such as running, jumping, and climbing) and fine motor skills (such as using scissors, threading

beads, or manipulating small objects). Activities will be adjusted as necessary to meet each child's developmental level.

- Inclusive Participation: All children, including those with differing abilities, will be encouraged to participate in physical activities. Modifications and adaptations will be made to ensure that children of all abilities can engage in and benefit from physical activity.

#### **4. Health and Safety:**

- Supervision: All physical activities, both indoors and outdoors, will be closely supervised by trained staff to ensure the safety of the children. Staff will be trained in CPR and first aid and will be prepared to respond to any emergencies.

- Safe Environment: The physical activity environment will be regularly inspected to ensure it is safe, clean, and free from hazards. Equipment will be maintained and replaced as necessary to prevent accidents.

- Hydration and Rest: Adequate water will be available for children during physical activities, and rest breaks will be provided as needed to ensure children do not become overtired.

#### **5. Family and Community Involvement:**

- Encouraging Physical Activity at Home: Parents and guardians will be encouraged to engage in physical activity with their children at home. Resources such as tips for active play and ideas for family fitness will be provided.

- Community Resources: The preschool will explore opportunities for children to participate in community physical activity programs, such as local dance classes, sports, or outdoor excursions.

#### **Conclusion:**

Physical activity is a vital component of a preschooler's growth and development. By providing diverse, engaging, and safe opportunities for children to be physically active, we aim to foster healthy habits that will last a lifetime. This policy supports our goal of creating an environment where children are encouraged to move, explore, and enjoy the many benefits of physical activity.

## **CHILD GUIDANCE 251.04(2)(I)5**

### **STUDENT MANAGEMENT**

At Starlight Academy, we strive to provide a positive, nurturing environment where children can develop self-control, self-esteem, and respect for others. We set clear boundaries and expectations to guide students in making thoughtful decisions. We believe that cooperation between our staff and parents is essential for creating a successful learning environment.

We do not allow any form of punishment that could be humiliating, frightening, or harmful to a child. This includes actions such as hitting, spanking, shaking, verbal abuse, withholding food, or forcing food upon a child. These methods are never used at Starlight Academy, even at the request of a parent.

We emphasize the importance of taking "cool down" or "break" times. Just as adults sometimes need to step away from a tense situation, we encourage children to take a moment to breathe and reflect when necessary. Each classroom has designated safe spaces where children can take a break whenever they need it.

Time-outs will not be used at Starlight Academy, even upon the request of a parent. Instead, we focus on positive redirection and guiding children to make better choices. For children under 3 years old, any form of time-out is prohibited. For children ages 3 and up, we do not implement time-outs, as we believe they are not an effective means of guiding behavior. We focus on helping children learn emotional regulation through positive guidance and support.

At Starlight Academy, we believe every child has the potential to make thoughtful choices, and we are here to guide them toward positive decisions.

### **POSITIVE DISCIPLINE**

We use Positive Discipline (PD) techniques to foster a supportive environment where children learn from their actions and are encouraged to make responsible choices. Positive Discipline is based on the belief that there are no "bad" children—only behaviors that can be guided toward improvement. By focusing on reinforcing positive behaviors, we aim to create a community-centered environment where children understand and follow clear expectations.

Discipline is employed when a child misbehaves, while guidance is used to help children in both appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. Through positive discipline methods, children gain the tools they need to navigate social interactions and make good choices.

### **CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

Effective classroom management is essential for helping children develop appropriate behaviors and life skills. We use Positive Discipline within our classroom management practices, including:

- **Prevention:** We plan carefully to create a positive learning environment by setting clear expectations, scheduling activities, and fostering positive teacher-child interactions. We also maintain open communication with parents and ensure our practices are developmentally appropriate.
- **Practice:** We focus on active listening, positive reinforcement, indirect guidance techniques, and clear, consistent rules to support each child's growth and development.

Starlight Academy prohibits any actions that are cruel, humiliating, or that may cause psychological, emotional, or physical harm. This includes verbal abuse, physical restraint, confinement, or withholding food or rest. These practices are not allowed in our school, and we have a clear behavioral policy outlined in the Parent Handbook.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

We greatly value our partnership with families. If your child is exhibiting challenging behaviors, we encourage an open discussion with parents about potential behavior management strategies. We will work together with you to develop an appropriate plan tailored to your child's needs. As the child's first teacher, your involvement is essential to their success, and we want to ensure that we are all working toward the same goal.

## **UNWANTED BEHAVIORS**

It is common for young children to use behaviors like hitting, biting, or throwing tantrums as they learn to communicate and navigate their emotions. When these behaviors become frequent, our staff will bring the issue to the attention of the Director, and a meeting will be scheduled with the teacher and Director to develop a strategy for addressing the behavior.

Prevention is key in managing unwanted behaviors. Some preventive strategies include:

- Encouraging child/teacher partnerships through activities like walks or bathroom trips
- Fostering child/peer role models through group activities or free play
- Engaging children in specific activities designed to keep them engaged and prevent frustration

By working together, we can help children make positive choices and build strong social and emotional skills that will serve them well in the future.

## **TRANSPORTATION POLICY (251.04(2)(i)9)**

Starlight Academy does not provide transportation except for field trips. For special trips requiring transportation, parents will receive a Field Trip Permission form. All families will be notified at least one week in advance via email and written newsletters.

Starlight Academy utilizes teacher and parent volunteer vehicles for field trips. All drivers must have current car insurance and a valid driving record on file. If a chartered bus is used, a teacher will remain on the bus until all children have exited. This teacher will ensure that no children are left behind and that each child is with the appropriate teacher.

For field trips involving nine or more children ages 2+, at least two teachers will accompany the group to ensure proper staff-to-child ratios. Teachers will always carry a class list (attendance) and will conduct periodic headcounts throughout the trip.

If a chartered bus is used, the name, address, and phone number of the contracting firm will be on file, along with a representative's contact information for after-hours inquiries. For children with disabilities or limited mobility, a specific teacher or aide will be assigned to that child for the entire trip.

Emergency information, including Health History and Emergency Care Plan (Form CFS-2345), will accompany staff and children. This form includes physician contact details and emergency medical consent. Smoking is prohibited in any vehicle while transporting children, and any accidents must be reported to the Department of Children and Families within five days.

### **Requirements for Vehicles Not Owned by the Center:**

- Registered in Wisconsin
- Clean interior
- Uncluttered and free of obstructions on floors, aisles, and seats
- Children are only allowed in the cab of trucks (not the bed)

### **Child Safety Seat Requirements:**

- Rear-facing seat for children under 1 year old or under 20 lbs
- 5-point harness/front-facing seat for children ages 1-4 or 20-40 lbs
- Shoulder strap positioning booster seat for children ages 4-8 or under 80 lbs
- Children not required to use a safety seat must be secured with a seatbelt. Seatbelts may not be shared.

### **Additional Vehicle Safety Guidelines:**

- Passenger doors must be locked at all times during vehicle operation.
- Children under 13 years old are not allowed to ride in the front seat.
- No child will be left unattended in a vehicle at any time.

All staff and volunteer drivers must follow these safety requirements during field trips to ensure the safety of all children.

## **Contingency Plans – Fire, Tornado, and Other Emergency Procedures**

### **Staff Training & Emergency Preparedness**

All staff are trained in evacuation procedures. These instructions are reviewed during initial staff orientation and revisited bi-annually during in-service training. Training includes the use of fire extinguishers, evacuation routes, and staff responsibilities. The Administrator and/or Director will conduct these training sessions.

Children are informed about evacuation procedures during enrollment and will practice evacuation monthly. In case of a real emergency evacuation, parents and/or guardians will be promptly notified. Starlight Academy provides a vehicle for emergency situations. First aid kits are located on each floor and within all “Walking Bags” used when children are off-site.

### **Fire Evacuation Procedures & Staff Responsibilities**

When the fire alarm sounds, teachers will quickly line up all children at the door of their classroom. Children will stop all activities and proceed to line up at the door. Each child has been trained in the evacuation procedure. A designated teacher will grab the classroom binder containing emergency cards and attendance records and ensure that all children and staff have exited the building. They will close all windows and doors to prevent the spread of fire.

Children will be led to safety following the posted evacuation routes, which are displayed by every classroom door. The Administrator and/or Director will check all rooms before exiting. Teachers are trained on the primary and secondary exits during orientation and yearly in-service training.

Teachers must be aware of the number of children in their care at all times. After evacuating the building, children will gather on the sidewalk between the driveway and the neighboring house. Teachers will do a headcount, and the Director will conduct an overall headcount. In case of severe weather, coats or blankets may be gathered for the children. Teachers will inform fire personnel about any missing individuals.

The Administrator and/or Director will maintain an enrollment list with emergency phone numbers for all parents and guardians for immediate contact in case of evacuation. A designated location will be set for children to stay until parents can pick them up if the building cannot be re-entered.

Fire extinguisher maintenance is managed by the Administrator, who ensures yearly inspections. Smoke detectors are checked weekly. Fire and tornado drills are conducted monthly, and safety checklists are completed by the Director.

## **Tornado Procedures & Staff Responsibilities**

When the Village's emergency siren sounds, immediate shelter will be found. Children will be moved to pre-assigned safe locations on the lower level, including the bathroom and basement. Staff will gather emergency cards and attendance, close all windows and doors, and turn off the lights. Emergency supplies, including flashlights, batteries, radios, and blankets, are stored in each designated emergency location.

## **Missing Child Procedure**

In the event of a missing child, teachers will secure the children in their care. The lead teacher will immediately notify the Administrator and/or Director, and a thorough search of the building and grounds will begin. If the child is not located, the police will be contacted, and parents will be notified.

## **Loss of Building Services**

- **Heat Loss:** If there is no heat and no sign of restoration, Starlight Academy will close. Parents/guardians will be contacted for immediate pick-up. If necessary, blankets and coats will be provided for warmth. If the temperature falls to 67 degrees or lower, the building will be considered unsafe for children.
- **Air Conditioning Loss:** If air conditioning fails and is not restored, Starlight Academy will close. Parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up their children if the temperature rises above 80 degrees. Water play and frequent hydration will be provided until parents arrive.
- **Water Loss:** If the water supply is lost, drinking water will be provided from our reverse osmosis reserve tank. Water will also be brought in for other essential needs like toilet flushing and dishwashing. If the situation makes the building uninhabitable, parents will be contacted for immediate pick-up.
- **Plumbing Loss:** A plumber will be contacted immediately to address any plumbing issues. If the problem cannot be resolved promptly, parents will be contacted for pick-up.
- **Electricity Loss:** If there is a loss of electricity with no sign of restoration, Starlight Academy will close. Flashlights will be used temporarily. Staff will keep children in classrooms and continue with the day's activities until parents arrive. If the situation worsens, parents will be contacted for immediate pick-up.
- **Phone Service Loss:** A cell phone will always be available onsite. Parents will be notified via email if phone service is disrupted.

## **Injury Procedures**

- **Minor Injuries:** For minor injuries, such as bites or cuts, the child will receive immediate care. Wounds will be cleaned with soap and water, and a bandage will be applied. Parents will be notified by phone if necessary and will receive a report at pick-up. All incidents are logged in the Medical Logbook.

- **Serious Injuries:** In case of serious injuries, 911 will be called, and the child will be transported to St. Mary's Hospital. If a parent is present, they may decide the hospital destination. The Department of Children and Families will be notified within 48 hours of any incident requiring medical treatment.
- **First Aid & CPR:** Teachers are trained in basic first aid and CPR. Universal precautions will be followed during all injury treatments. If an injury occurs off-site, the same procedures will be followed. "Walking Bags" with first aid supplies accompany any classroom that leaves the premises.
- **Staff Injuries:** If a staff member is injured, the Director will assume responsibility for the classroom and call a substitute or emergency contact person if necessary. The Director will ensure that staff-to-child ratios are maintained.

## **Health and Safety Information**

Parents should inform teachers of any allergies upon enrollment. Deb Boley is our emergency contact, located just five minutes from Starlight Academy. All emergency numbers are posted near the phones in the facility. Teachers will be briefed on any special health considerations for children under their care, and health history cards will be maintained in the classrooms.

## **DAILY ATTENDANCE**

### **Authorized Pick-Up**

Each individual authorized to pick up a child must be listed with the staff. The person picking up the child will be required to present photo identification.

### **Unauthorized Pick-Up**

If an unauthorized person arrives to pick up a child, the child will be withheld until an authorized adult can be contacted.

If an authorized person appears impaired by any substance, the teacher will release the child and immediately contact the police, providing a description of the vehicle, license plate number, and the individual's name.

### **Attendance Tracking**

Children's attendance will be recorded using Starlight Academy's electronic system and monitored in each classroom. Each classroom will have an attendance clipboard with a Health History form for every child. The Program Director will oversee the attendance process to ensure that teachers have signed in and are aware of which children are present or expected to arrive.

## Parent Drop-Off Procedure

Creating a smooth and efficient parent drop-off routine involves balancing speed with a warm, reassuring environment for both children and parents. Here's a step-by-step guide to help establish a successful routine:

### 1. Establish a Consistent Routine

- **Time:** Set a specific drop-off window. For example, 8:00 AM to 8:15 AM.

### 2. Prepare the Child

- **Before Leaving Home:** Ensure your child has everything they need for the day, including their backpack, and any special items.
- **Emotional Preparation:** Talk to your child about the day ahead, reassuring them that you'll return to pick them up.

### 3. Arrival Process

- **Approach Calmly:** Arrive within the designated drop-off time. Rushing can add stress for both you and your child.
- **Parking:** The parking area is located behind Starlight Academy. Street parking is available on Franklin St. or Monroe St. Do not park in the fire lane in front of the building. This is not a student unloading zone.
- **Safety:** Hold your child's hand through the parking lot all the way to the stairs. One hand on the railing walking up the stairs. Never leave your child unattended in the building.
- **Belongings:** Have your child remove their shoes and leave them on the classroom shoe rack. Support your child in taking their belongings to their designated cubby space. Ensure all personal items are labeled with your child's name.

### 4. Drop-Off Procedures

- **Greeting:** Greet staff or teachers who are assigned to handle drop-off. A warm and friendly interaction sets a positive tone.
- **Goodbye Ritual:** Develop a short, consistent goodbye ritual. For example, a special hug or a high-five. Keep it brief to help ease separation anxiety.
- **Transition:** Encourage your child to transition smoothly by directing them to where they need to go, such as a tabletop activity in the classroom.

### 5. Ensure Safety and Efficiency

- **Safety Checks:** Make sure your child is safely handed over to a teacher or staff member.
- **Traffic Flow:** Follow the drop-off area's traffic flow rules to avoid congestion and ensure safety for everyone.

## 6. Communication

- **Daily Notes:** If necessary, send any important notes for teachers about your child's needs or special instructions through BrightWheel.
- **Check-In:** Briefly check in with teachers if needed to pass along any relevant information about your child's day.

## 7. After Drop-Off

- **Follow-Up:** If your child is particularly anxious, consider checking in with teachers later to understand how they adjusted to the day.
- **Reflect and Adjust:** Periodically review the routine to ensure it's working smoothly and make adjustments if needed.

## Tips for Success

- **Practice at Home:** If separation anxiety is an issue, practice short, positive goodbyes at home.
- **Stay Positive:** Your demeanor greatly affects your child's reaction, so remain upbeat and confident during the drop-off.
- **Engage in Conversations:** Encourage your child to share their feelings about school and address any concerns they might have.

A well-established drop-off routine can help make preschool mornings smoother and less stressful for both children and parents.

### **\*4K Only, Non Wrap Specifics**

We are staffed to open the door from **7:50-8:00 am** for morning drop off. 4K starts promptly at 8 am. Please walk your child inside after removing their shoes. Drop their items off at their cubbies and greet their teacher inside the classroom.

If you need before or after 4K wrap care please email [SLADirector0306@gmail.com](mailto:SLADirector0306@gmail.com)

## Pick Up Procedure

1. **Authorized Pick-Up List:** Ensure that you have the proper individuals listed on the authorized to pick up list.
2. **Identification:** Be prepared to show identification if asked. We have strict policies to ensure that only authorized individuals can pick up the children.
3. **Check-In with Staff:** Go to the designated pick-up area and check in with the teacher. They will confirm your identity and sign out your child. If children are on the playground, take your child first, then go inside for belongings.
4. **Collecting Belongings:** If your child has any personal items or schoolwork, make sure to collect those. Go with your child to their classroom and cubby to gather their items. No child should ever be left unattended in the building.
5. **Departure:** Once everything is confirmed and your child is ready, you can leave the school with your child. Hold your child's hand through the parking lot. Ensure that your child is safely buckled in the car seat if you're driving.
6. **Emergency Contacts:** Make sure the preschool has your current contact information in case they need to reach you.

### \* 4K Only, Non Wrap Specifics

4K ends promptly at **11:15 am**. Your child will be brought out to the front porch at 11:15 am with all their belongings and ready to depart.

## CUSTODY DISPUTES

Any custody disputes will be handled based on the court order provided by the parent(s)/guardian(s). Starlight Academy will not withhold a child from a legal parent/guardian without a court order or restraining order in place. The parent who signs the enrollment paperwork will be considered the primary point of contact for the Academy. This parent will be responsible for all fees and decision-making related to the child's care.

## HEALTH CARE 251.04(2)(i)2 - ILLNESS POLICY

At Starlight Academy, we prioritize the health and safety of both staff and children. Our illness policy applies equally to everyone to minimize the spread of sickness.

**Classroom Hygiene & Sanitization:** Our staff maintains clean, sanitized classrooms daily. Special sanitizing procedures are followed, especially on tables used during play and mealtimes. We ensure that proper hand washing is done by all staff and children before and after meals and toileting. Additionally, Starlight Academy follows a standard daily and monthly sanitizing schedule to keep our environment safe and organized.

**Exclusion of Children with Communicable Diseases:** Children with any communicable diseases are not permitted to attend the center. These may include, but are not limited to:

- Chicken Pox
- Strep Throat or any form of Streptococcal infection
- Mumps
- Measles
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

Certain diseases must be reported to the public health board, and we will follow the appropriate procedures for this.

**Admission Requirements:** Children will not be admitted to the center with the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100°F or higher
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Unidentified rash

If any of the above symptoms are observed during the day, you will be contacted to pick up your child. Please note that you will have **one hour** to pick up your child once notified. For example, if we call you at 10:30 AM because your child has vomited, you will have until 11:30 AM to pick them up. If your child's last symptom occurred at 3:30 PM, they may return to Starlight Academy no earlier than 3:30 PM the following day, provided they are symptom-free.

**Illness during the Day:** If your child develops a fever of 100°F or higher, has two or more irregular stools, or shows other signs of illness (such as lethargy, complaints of ear pain, eye redness, or discharge), we will contact you to pick up your child immediately. Your child will be separated from other children and offered quiet activities until you arrive.

**Emergency Contact:** If we cannot reach you, we will contact your child's emergency contact. A teacher will stay with your child until they are picked up. All information regarding your child's health will remain confidential.

**Return Policy:** Your child may return to the center after being symptom-free for 24 hours without the need for medication to regulate their temperature.

**Health Information:** Your child's emergency card (Health History and Emergency Care Plan, Form CFS-2345) will be kept in their classroom. All teachers assigned to your child will be informed of any special health needs they may have.

Thank you for helping us maintain a healthy and safe environment at Starlight Academy!

## **Head Lice Policy**

If any signs of head lice are observed in a child, the child will be immediately removed from the group and isolated. A thorough head check will be conducted by the Program Director or Administrator. Parents will be contacted right away for prompt pick-up.

### **Cleaning Procedure:**

- Each classroom will be thoroughly vacuumed, including fabric-covered furniture.
- Soft toys and comfort items (such as pillows, stuffed animals, blocks, etc.) will be sealed in plastic bags for at least 48 hours.
- Bedding and clothing will be washed properly. Bedding of unaffected children will be sent home for cleaning and should be returned the next day.
- Staff will conduct daily head checks for all children for at least one week.

The child(ren) with head lice may return after being lice- and nit-free for 24 hours. Please remember, head lice can affect any family and is not a reflection of personal hygiene. Lice do not carry disease and do not harm the scalp.

To help prevent the spread of head lice, avoid sharing combs, brushes, hair accessories, towels, bedding, hats, or scarves with anyone who may be infected.

## **STAFF ILLNESS**

Our staff follows the same illness policy as our students to maintain a healthy environment for all. If a staff member is too ill to attend Starlight Academy, a substitute teacher will be arranged to ensure the smooth continuation of the day. In the event that a substitute is unavailable, the Administrator and/or Director will step in to support the classroom.

## **MEDICAL LOGBOOK PROCEDURE**

The Medical Logbook is used to document the following for each child: medication intake, accidents, biting incidents, bumps or bruises, unusual or unexplained marks, and changes in behavior. The procedure for documenting in the Medical Logbook is as follows:

- No lines or pages may be skipped.
- Entries must be written in pen only.
- Each entry should include, when applicable:
  - Date and time
  - Child's name
  - Medication name and dosage (if applicable)
  - Description of the accident, injury, or unusual behavior
  - Treatment administered
  - Name of the staff member who administered treatment
- The Director will review the logbook every six months.
- All Starlight Academy staff members are authorized to write in the logbook.

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

Prescription and non-prescription medications may only be administered to a child under the following conditions:

1. A signed and dated written authorization from the parent is on file (Form CFS2345).
2. Prescription medication must be in the original container, labeled with the child's name, medication name, dosage, administering directions, date, and the prescribing physician's name.
3. Non-prescription medication must be labeled with the child's name and the parent's signed authorization, including dosage and administration directions.
4. All medication must be stored in a secured container labeled "Medication" that is not accessible to children.
5. Medication that requires refrigeration must be stored in a secured container labeled "Refrigerated Medication" in a child-inaccessible area of the refrigerator.
6. Parents will be notified immediately if any doses are missed or if errors occur.
7. A written report, including the medication type, dosage, time, date, and the name of the person who administered it, will be documented in the Starlight Academy Medical Logbook.
8. All medications must be in their original containers. If prescription medication is needed, a signed Authorization to Administer Medication form is required, and the original prescription label must be attached to the container.
9. Only teaching staff will administer medication, ensuring confidentiality.

**Please note:** Smoking is prohibited inside and on the premises of Starlight Academy.

## **DIAPERING AND TOILET TRAINING POLICY**

At Starlight Academy, the well-being and comfort of your child are our top priorities. We follow strict hygiene practices for diapering and toilet training, taking into account the needs of each child and their family culture.

### **Diapering**

To ensure the health and safety of all children, it is mandatory for all staff to wear disposable gloves when changing diapers, especially those containing bowel movements or other bodily fluids. Universal precautions will be used after each diaper change or bathroom visit.

We kindly ask that parents provide a sufficient supply of diapers and wipes daily. If your child uses cloth diapers, they are always welcome! Please provide a sealable bucket (such as a gallon ice cream container) for cloth diaper storage. Cloth diapers will be sent home each night for washing.

#### **Diapering Procedure:**

1. Wash hands with soap and warm water.
2. Disinfect the changing table.
3. Gather a clean diaper, wipes, and any necessary ointments. Put on gloves.
4. Place the child on the changing table and remove the soiled diaper.
5. Dispose of soiled disposable diapers in the foot-activated diaper pail.
6. Clean the child thoroughly and apply creams as needed.
7. Put a clean diaper on the child and dress them.

For cloth diapers:

1. Wash hands with soap and warm water.
2. Disinfect the changing table.
3. Gather a clean diaper, wipes, and any necessary ointments. Put on gloves.
4. Place the child on the changing table and remove the soiled cloth diaper.
5. Place the soiled cloth diaper in a plastic bag and put it in the pail with a sealed lid, provided by parents.
6. Clean the child thoroughly and apply creams as needed.
7. Put a clean cloth diaper on the child and dress them.

After each diaper change, the child will be placed back on the floor. The teacher will wash their hands and then clean the child's hands as well. The changing table will be disinfected thoroughly with soap and water, followed by a sanitizer solution to ensure a safe and hygienic environment for each child.

## **Toilet Training**

At Starlight Academy, we approach toilet training with flexibility and care, respecting each child's development and family values. We believe that toilet training should be a child-led process, with parents and teachers working closely together.

**When to Begin:** Children typically begin showing interest in potty training around 18-20 months. At this stage, we start introducing independence skills, like dressing and undressing, which can be challenging at first. If your child masters this skill early, it will support the potty training process later on.

Active potty training usually begins between 24-30 months, depending on the child's readiness. We will stay in close contact with you throughout this process, and communication is key. We ask that families be fully committed to the potty training process for it to be successful.

### **Potty Training Process:**

1-2 weeks before beginning potty training, a meeting will be scheduled between your child's teacher and Starlight Academy's Director to ensure everyone is aligned. During this meeting, we'll set a start date and outline the process to ensure consistency and clarity.

Potty training can take time, but with dedication, it will be a short-term process. Parents are asked to provide 3-4 complete outfits daily until your child has mastered the process. We will use positive reinforcement, such as praise, stickers, or stamps, to encourage success.

In case of accidents, we ask parents to remain calm and remember that accidents are part of the learning process. Soiled clothing will be sent home in a plastic bag for washing, and we request that parents return fresh, extra clothes the following day.

If difficulties arise, a meeting will be scheduled to discuss any challenges and explore additional strategies to support your child through the process.

Thank you for partnering with us in making potty training a positive and successful experience for your child!

Here's a revised version of the content for clarity and ease of reading for the preschool parent handbook:

## Universal and General Health Precautions

At Starlight Academy, we prioritize the safety and health of all students and staff. Universal Precautions are measures designed to prevent the spread of blood-borne diseases, such as HIV and Hepatitis B (HBV), and to minimize exposure to bodily fluids. These guidelines are based on treating all human blood and bodily fluids as potentially infectious, regardless of known health status.

To ensure the safety of everyone at Starlight Academy, the following health precautions are in place:

- **Gloves will be worn** during all diaper changes and toilet training.
- **Gloves will be worn** when handling any injury that breaks the skin.
- **Gloves will be disposed of** in a lidded container lined with a plastic bag.
- **Contaminated areas** will be disinfected immediately.
- **Hand washing** will be required for all staff and children and must be done as follows:
  - Wash hands upon arrival.
  - Use warm, running water and scrub with disinfectant soap for at least 20 seconds.
  - Rinse well under warm, running water.
  - Dry hands with disposable paper towels. Use a towel to turn off the faucet.

### Sanitizing Procedures:

- **Toys** are cleaned and sanitized twice a month and more frequently as needed, using a state-approved disinfectant.
- **Classrooms** will be thoroughly sanitized following any communicable disease outbreaks, including head lice or rashes.
- **After contact** with bodily fluids (such as urine, feces, blood, nasal mucus, or breast milk), the proper hand washing protocol must be followed by anyone involved.

### Health Forms

To ensure your child's health needs are met, please keep the following forms updated:

- **Child Health Report:** Updated at every wellness appointment, and within 90 days of enrollment. This form needs to be updated annually.
- **Health History and Emergency Care Plan (Form CFS-2345):** Complete with any special instructions related to your child's health.
- **Daycare Immunization Record (Form DPH-4192):** Must be submitted within 30 days of enrollment.

If you would like your child to use **insect repellent** and/or **sunscreen**, please provide the product and complete the necessary authorization form for application.

## **NUTRITION AND WELLNESS**

At Starlight Academy, we provide all snacks, lunches, and drinks. We offer breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack tailored to the age of your child. Beverages provided may include soymilk, almond milk, 1% dairy milk, and 100% juice. Encouraging strong, healthy eating habits is essential for the health, growth, and well-being of your child.

The CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program) nutritional requirements and menus are posted in the kitchen. You may request a copy of the menu to take home at any time.

For safety and hygiene, all food must be stored in airtight containers and labeled with the date.

The Kitchen Manager will complete four hours of annual continuing education and must have completed the cook orientation. The Kitchen Manager will ensure the kitchen remains clean and orderly, and dishes will be washed according to posted procedures. All staff members are required to wash their hands before and after handling food. Cleaning supplies will be kept out of children's reach.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination based on race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, political beliefs, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, income derived from public assistance programs, or genetic information in employment or any program activity funded by the USDA.

You are welcome to provide a birthday or celebratory treat for your child. We ask that these treats be nutritious and low in sugar. Healthy snack ideas include fruit salad, cheese and crackers, and fruit muffins. If you need more ideas, feel free to ask! Occasionally, we may ask parents to contribute items for special parties or cooking activities.

If your child has any allergies or a special diet (such as gluten-free, vegetarian, kosher, etc.), please ensure this information is clearly noted on their Health History Report. We will carefully monitor their food intake to avoid any allergens. A list of children with specific allergies will be posted in the classrooms and kitchen to ensure all staff members are informed. Teachers are briefed on this list during new hire orientation. Specialty menus will be posted monthly in the kitchen, along with the standard menus. All meals are prepared following Starlight Academy and CACFP guidelines.

## **Meal Times:**

- **Moonbeam Breakfast:** 8:00–8:45 AM
- **Shooting Stars Breakfast:** 8:15–9:00 AM
- **Sunshine Breakfast:** 8:30–9:15 AM  
Each breakfast will consist of hearty, whole foods to start your child's day.
- **Moonbeam Lunch:** 11:00–11:45 AM
- **Shooting Stars Lunch:** 11:15 AM–12:00 PM
- **Sunshine Lunch:** 11:30 AM–12:15 PM  
Each lunch will provide balanced, nutritious meals.
- **Afternoon Snack:** 2:15–3:15 PM

We encourage children to make healthy choices at mealtimes. Every child will be asked to try a small amount of everything offered. If they are unsure about something, we ask that they try just a small bite to explore the flavor and texture. Over time, this often helps children become more open to trying new foods.

## **Did You Know?**

Research shows that it can take up to ten tries of a new food before a child decides if they like it.

Mealtime routines will align with our daily schedule, and teachers will always sit with the children during meals. Starlight Academy practices family-style dining, where children help serve, pass, and clear the table, just as they would at home.

At Starlight Academy, we prioritize high nutritional and wellness values. We believe children learn best when they are well-fed and well-rested. All children receive a daily rest period. If a child does not fall asleep after the State of Wisconsin's mandated 30 minutes of rest, quiet activities will be offered. It is important that children understand why resting their bodies is beneficial. We strive to make rest time a peaceful and calming experience.

## **Child Nutrition Policy**

### **Purpose:**

The goal of this policy is to ensure that all children in our preschool program have access to nutritious, balanced meals that support their growth and development, promote healthy eating habits, and foster a positive mealtime experience. This policy also provides guidance for teachers, staff, and families on how to create an environment that encourages healthy eating.

### **1. Healthy Meal Planning:**

We will offer a variety of meals and snacks throughout the day that reflect the principles of good nutrition. Meals will be based on guidelines from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and/or other local food regulations, ensuring that children receive a balanced diet that includes:

- Fruits and Vegetables: At least two servings of fruits and vegetables at each meal.
- Whole Grains: Whole grain options will be provided, such as whole wheat bread, brown rice, and whole grain cereals.
- Protein: Lean protein sources will be provided, including beans, legumes, tofu, eggs, and lean meats.
- Dairy or Dairy Alternatives: Milk, yogurt, and cheese, or dairy-free alternatives such as soy or almond milk will be offered.
- Healthy Fats: Sources of healthy fats such as avocados, nuts, seeds, and olive oil will be included when appropriate.
- Water: Fresh water will be available at all times for children to drink.

### **2. Meal Times and Environment:**

Mealtimes will be structured in a way that encourages healthy eating and socialization:

- Mealtime Schedule: Meals and snacks will be served at regular intervals to ensure children receive proper nutrition throughout the day. Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks will be provided at appropriate times.
- Positive Mealtime Atmosphere: Teachers and staff will model positive eating behaviors by sitting with the children during meals, encouraging conversation, and fostering a relaxed, enjoyable environment. Mealtime will be a time for children to eat, socialize, and develop healthy habits.
- Portion Sizes: Age-appropriate portion sizes will be provided to meet the developmental needs of children.
- Food as Positive Reinforcement: Food will never be used as a reward or punishment. Positive reinforcement will focus on behaviors, not on food.

### **3. Food Preferences and Dietary Restrictions:**

We understand that children may have dietary restrictions or food allergies. To accommodate these needs:

- Allergies and Food Sensitivities: Families will be required to inform the school of any food allergies or sensitivities upon enrollment. A list of known allergies will be kept up to date and visible to staff.
- Special Diets: If a child requires a special diet (e.g., vegetarian, gluten-free, or dairy-free), the preschool will work with the family to accommodate their needs and ensure appropriate food substitutions.
- Cultural and Religious Dietary Practices: The preschool will respect cultural and religious dietary preferences and make necessary accommodations.

### **4. Education and Engagement:**

Education about healthy eating will be integrated into the preschool curriculum to foster lifelong healthy habits:

- For Children:
  - Nutrition education will be incorporated into daily activities, such as teaching children about the benefits of different foods, encouraging them to try new foods, and involving them in simple food preparation tasks.
  - Visual aids like food pyramids, plates, or charts will be used to help children understand healthy eating choices.
  - Storybooks, songs, and activities about food and healthy eating will be included in the learning process.
- For Teachers and Staff:
  - Teachers and staff will receive ongoing training on child nutrition, food safety, and strategies to encourage healthy eating behaviors in young children.
  - Staff will also be trained in handling food allergies and special dietary needs to ensure a safe environment.
- For Families:
  - Families will be provided with information about nutrition and healthy eating, including newsletters, handouts, and resources.
  - Parents will be encouraged to participate in nutrition-related activities, such as cooking classes, workshops, or family mealtime challenges.
  - A collaborative approach will be used to ensure families are engaged and informed about what their children are eating at school and how to support healthy eating at home.

## **5. Meal Planning and Communication with Families:**

Communication between the preschool, teachers, and families is key to supporting children's nutritional needs:

- Weekly Menus: A weekly menu will be provided to families so they are aware of what their child will be eating at school. The menu will reflect the balanced and varied meals and snacks offered.
- Feedback: Families will have opportunities to provide feedback about meals and suggest improvements through regular surveys or parent-teacher meetings.
- Celebrating Special Occasions: On special occasions or holidays, meals will be planned with health-conscious choices, and parents will be informed of any special events involving food.

## **6. Health and Safety:**

To ensure food is safe and healthy:

- Food Safety: All staff will follow proper food handling, storage, and sanitation procedures to ensure food safety.
- Clean Eating Environment: Tables and eating areas will be cleaned before and after meals. Children will be encouraged to wash their hands before eating.
- Meal Preparation: All meals and snacks will be prepared in accordance with state health regulations, and food will be stored at appropriate temperatures.

## **7. Monitoring and Evaluation:**

To maintain the effectiveness of our nutrition program:

- Ongoing Review: The preschool will regularly review nutrition policies, food menus, and mealtime routines to ensure they meet the evolving needs of children and reflect the latest guidelines on child nutrition.
- Family and Staff Involvement: Regular input from families, teachers, and staff will be sought to evaluate the success of the nutrition program and identify areas for improvement.

## **Conclusion:**

Our preschool is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment where children can develop positive eating habits. Through collaborative efforts, we will ensure that children receive the nourishment they need to thrive, both at school and at home. We believe that healthy eating habits established during the early years can have lasting benefits for children's health and well-being.

## **KITCHEN MANAGER**

The Kitchen Manager position requires an individual who meets the State of Wisconsin's requirements and is able to plan and implement Starlight Academy's nutrition guidelines.

## **JOB QUALIFICATIONS**

- Must be at least 18 years old.
- Must meet the requirements outlined in DCF 251.06(9)(c).

## **JOB RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Kitchen Manager will:

- Plan, schedule, and prepare lunches and snacks in alignment with the CACFP guidelines and Starlight Academy's nutrition standards.
- Maintain a clean and organized kitchen.
- Follow proper food storage procedures in accordance with DCF guidelines 251.06(9)(c).
- Ensure all equipment and utensils are properly washed and disinfected using the appropriate three-step procedure, as outlined in DCF 251.06(9)(b).
- Create a monthly grocery list based on menu cycles and make purchases as necessary.
- Wear clean clothing and effective hair restraints.
- Follow proper hand-washing procedures as outlined in DCF 251.06(g)(c).
- Maintain equipment and utensils, ensuring they are used correctly and repaired when needed.
- Ensure all food sources are clean, wholesome, and free from spoilage, adulteration, or misbranding, and are safe for consumption.
- Regularly inventory food and paper goods.
- Collaborate with the Administrator and Program Director.