



# Parent Handbook 2024-2025

# LITTLE SCHOLARS ACADEMY

## A School of Excellence for Young Children

### Vision Statement:

We believe that each child is a gift from God and that each child has a unique pattern of development within the broad framework of human growth and development. The purpose of the preschool program is to provide the opportunity for physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual development of children within a climate of Christian love and acceptance.

### Mission Statement:

At Little Scholars Academy (LSA), through individual and group instruction and activities, your child will:

1. Understand himself/herself and his/her world
2. Learn how to work as an individual and with others
3. Develop responsibility for self-expression
4. Acquire skills and information for solving problems of everyday living
5. Develop the desire for learning and creativity
6. Grow in their faith as they learn about Jesus
7. Understand and feel God's love and acceptance

Classroom activities are designed to invite curiosity and creativity, and will take into consideration individual abilities and interests. Your child will receive individual attention and will be given the incentive to learn and grow through self-discovery at his/her own pace. Most learning will take place through hands-on experiences and play. Each child will be encouraged to offer and share ideas and talk about his/her feelings. Christian principles will be taught and shared. The children will grow in their understanding of and appreciation for God's love for them and come to realize they are all very "special" in God's eyes.

The school day will include active and quiet times, free play inside and out, and individual and group activities. Creative arts and music are an important part of our program. Concepts, such as shapes, colors, and numbers are introduced during the year. The alphabet and reading readiness skills are also an important part of the curriculum.

This handbook is your guide to our policies and procedures. Please read it carefully. If you have any questions, please call our office.

### REGISTRATION

A registration form, **which can be found online**, must be completed in full for each child who attends LSA. These are kept on file in the LSA office. Please notify us if your address or phone number changes. This also includes work and emergency numbers.

We require an up-to-date State of Georgia Immunization Form (form 3231) for each child by

the first day of school. All children must remain current with their immunizations in order to attend preschool. If you have a Medical or Religious Exemption to have your child immunized, you must provide LSA with an Immunization Exemption form that has been notarized. You may request this form from the director.

LSA admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

## **FINANCIAL POLICY**

An annual Registration Fee of \$100 is required to reserve your child's spot in class. This fee is to be submitted along with your completed registration packet. There is also a \$100.00 activity fee that will be due with your first month's tuition. Both fees are **non-refundable**

Tuition payments are due no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month. If the tuition is not paid by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, there will be a \$25 late charge added to the amount due. You are required to pay the monthly tuition amount regardless of absence, illness, or holidays. Accounts not paid-in-full by the end of each month shall be cause to terminate enrollment of your child. The need for special financial arrangements concerning tuition payments may be discussed through a personal meeting with the LSA Director.

Please make all checks payable to Douglasville First United Methodist Church and include your child's name on your check. You can send your tuition payment to school with your child, make payments online by visiting our website or you can also fill out our form to have your tuition payment automatically drafted out of your checking account on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of each month. **This form is included in our Registration Packet.**

If a check is returned to the preschool due to insufficient funds, the parents will be charged \$35 and asked to pay in cash with the exact amount. We **will not** run the check through the bank again.

Before parents withdraw their child from the LSA preschool program, they must contact the LSA Director and give one month's written notice of their intention to withdraw. The parents are obligated to pay all tuition up to and through the next month from the date of notification of withdrawal. If the withdrawal is in May, tuition must be paid regardless of notice.

The Preschool will issue year-end statements of your child's account by written request only.

## **SCHOOL HOURS**

Our school hours are 9:00am-1:00pm, Monday through Thursday. LSA does not have classes on Friday. The drop-off door will open at 8:45 am, and unless previous arrangements have been made, we ask that you not bring your child before that time. Teachers may not be in their classrooms until 8:45 am, and a child may become frightened if he/she cannot find his/her room or teacher. After morning carpool the doors to the preschool wing will be locked for your child's safety. If you must come into the school after

the morning carpool time, please use the front door of the preschool. Just ring the doorbell beside this door and a LSA employee will meet you at the entrance. If no one answers the door, call the LSA office at 770-920-9059.

Teachers will be at the door each morning to help your child out of the car and see that he/she gets into the building safely. Other staff members will be inside the building to help your child get to his/her classroom.

Dismissal will begin at 1:00pm and carpool should be completed by 1:15 pm. Parents will be notified if there is a change in the schedule. If you are going to be late due to an emergency, please call the LSA office at 770-920-9059. There is a \$1 per minute per child fee for late pickup.

### **DROP-OFF, PICK-UP, AND CARPOOLS**

After their first day of school, ALL children should get out of the car and walk into the school by themselves; please encourage them to do so. This will make it easier for your child to begin his/her day, and it will help the teacher to start her day as scheduled at 9:00.

Individuals walking up to the carpool doors to attempt to pick up their child interrupt the carpool system, and could potentially put the lives of the children in danger in the carpool lane.

The school will not send your child home with a stranger. You must give the LSA Director a list of the names of those individuals that are allowed to pick up your child from school. If your child is to be picked up by a relative or friend that is not on the list, or go home in a carpool other than his own, **we must have signed written permission from the parent telling us who he/she will be riding with every time there is a change.** This must not be done verbally. The teachers are very busy in the morning concentrating on the children and getting the school day started, and we do not always have the same teachers getting children out of cars or putting your child in the car. For these reasons, verbal messages are not always reliable and may cause confusion. Therefore, **always put all changes in writing and sign the note.** We are concerned with the safety of your child and would appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

### **CARPOOL ARRANGEMENTS**

Each child's parents will be given a card with their child's first name on it. Please do not alter this card in any way. This card is to be placed in the windshield of your car when loading and unloading your child. It is especially important that the card be displayed during dismissal time. Additional cards are made available for other individuals who are on your approved pick up list.

## ATTENDANCE

Although we do not have a strict attendance policy, we take attendance each day for our records and expect children to be in class every day their class meets. However, if a child shows any indication of illness, please keep him/her at home. Please call or email the LSA Director to inform her of your child's illness so that, if necessary, we can inform the parents of his/her classmates that they may need to watch out for any contagious illnesses. If you have any questions about the signs or symptoms of the most common childhood illnesses and diseases, they are available on our website under the **Signs of Illness**.

## HEALTH

If your child has an allergy of any kind, please see that we have written information explaining the allergy and what reactions he/she has to the allergen. If the reaction is severe, we must have a written and signed letter telling us exactly what steps are to be taken to help your child. This information must also be included on the registration form. If your child requires an Epipen in case of severe allergies, you must furnish this Epipen for the school, and inform the staff when we would need to use it.

**We do not administer medication at school.** Please do not send any medications to school with your child. The only exception to this rule is if your child has an Epipen, and we need to be aware that they have an Epipen in their bag.

## CLOTHING

Comfortable, washable play clothes should be worn to school. Buttons, zippers and snaps should be on the front of the garment so your child can open and close them by him/herself. Please have your child wear tennis shoes to school. Sandals, flip flops, crocs, etc. are unsafe and inappropriate and should not be worn to school.

We play outdoors all year round, so please consider this when dressing your child during cold weather. The children will not be taken outside on very cold days, or wet days.

Any child attending LSA in the three- or four-year-old class must be toilet-trained when school starts. This rule does not apply to our one- and two-year-old classes. For these classes, please make sure you send in diapers, wipes, and underwear with your child. Please let your child's teacher know about your child's toilet training routine. **ALL** students should bring in a change of clothes in their bag in case an accident occurs.

## PERSONAL BELONGINGS

All items brought to school should have your child's name on them. Please always have one change of clothing in your child's backpack at all times; this includes a change of socks and underwear. Don't forget to label all outer clothing (jackets, sweaters, etc.), as well as articles your child brings to share on special days.

The school staff cannot be responsible for lost or broken items such as barrettes, jewelry, or special toys. Please use discretion in allowing your child to bring these to school.

For safety reasons, **WE DO NOT ALLOW BALLOONS AT ANY TIME**, so please do not bring them to school for parties or birthdays. War toys, guns, swords, etc., are NEVER allowed at LSA.

We also ask that unless it is a “show and tell” day that you do not allow your child to bring in toys, dolls, etc from home.

## **DISCIPLINE**

Maintaining discipline is an important factor in providing each child with a warm, safe, and happy environment in which to learn and play. Consistent discipline will be given with a loving and caring attitude. We have classroom and safety rules the children will learn to follow.

Our policy on discipline is that of “positive redirection”—guiding the child toward appropriate behavior. “Time Out” will be used, if necessary, to allow the child time to think about his/her actions.

**Ongoing disruptive behavior will result in dismissal of the child from the LSA preschool program.**

## **CLASSROOM NEWS**

You will receive frequent newsletters from your child’s teacher informing you as to what is being done in the classroom and what is being planned for the weeks ahead. This will help you communicate with your child about his/her school experiences and enable you to reinforce at home what your child is learning in school. It will also help to keep you informed about school events and special days.

Your child will need a book bag or backpack large enough to hold a folder. This will be used to carry everything between home and school, including jackets, sweaters, papers, artwork and other articles your child may bring to school. **Please send the bag to school every day!!** Notices, monthly newsletters, and messages will also be sent to you in a folder we will place in your child’s bag. Please empty and return the folder in his/her bag each day. The folder is also the best way to send a brief message to your child’s teacher if you need to do so.

## SNACK AND LUNCHTIME

Mid-morning snacks will be provided by either the school, or by parents on a weekly basis. Please include your child on making healthy decisions on which snacks to send to school for the class. We do have a refrigerator to store snacks that need to remain cold. A snack schedule will be sent home on a monthly basis for your child's class. If there is a child with an allergy in the class, an allergy notice and suggestions for snacks will be sent home at the beginning of the year. Please be mindful of snack choices if an individual in your child's class has an allergy. The snack schedule will take into consideration **your child's birthday**, so he/she may celebrate it at school. Please discuss any questions you have with your child's teacher.

Please pack a lunch for your child each day. Lunches should be ready to eat. Our teachers do **not** have microwaves in their classrooms. Lunches will be stored in the classroom, so pack it accordingly. Please **DO NOT** send in drinks for your child. All students will drink water at lunchtime. **We would like all students to bring in a non-spill cup labeled with your child's name. These non-spill cups will go home at the end of each day and should return the next day.**

## PARENT PARTICIPATION

A Preschool Orientation will be held the week before school starts. At this time you and your child will meet his/her classroom teacher and the assistant teacher. Your child's teacher will acquaint you with the class schedule, activities, and curriculum, and answer any questions that you may have.

Each class will have a Volunteer Room Parent, and we would like for each class to have an Assistant Room Parent. You will have an opportunity to sign up for these roles at Orientation. The Room Parent will contact the parents in their class throughout the school year regarding special events and holidays. Any parent may be asked to provide a special snack or item for each holiday or special event. More information about Room Parent responsibilities and special holiday events will be provided to Room Parents.

## PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES AND EVALUATIONS

If you wish to have a conference with your child's teacher, please send a note with your child or email your child's teacher with any questions you have. The teacher will be glad to talk with you on the phone, by email, or arrange for an appointment time at the school. Please refrain from discussing your child or other school matters when you bring your child in the morning or at pick up in the afternoon. Talking with parents at these times is difficult because the teachers are busy with the other children.

Evaluations of your child's progress will be performed twice a year for the 3-and 4-year-old classes; once in the fall, and once in the spring. These evaluations are simply for you to see how your child has progressed over the school year; they are not meant to be a stressful time for your child. Four-year-old classes will have a parent/teacher conference in the spring

to discuss the readiness for kindergarten. If you have any questions about your child's evaluation, please contact your child's teacher.

We welcome talking with parents and would like to know of any joyous happenings, upsetting experiences, or changed situations which may have a bearing on your child's behavior. This information helps us to help your child and will be kept in confidence.

If you have any special needs, concerns, or suggestions relating to your child or the school, feel free to discuss it with the LSA Director at any time.

## **SCHOOL CALENDAR**

Little Scholars Academy follows the Douglas County School System schedule as much as possible for all holidays and teacher work days, and for any closings due to inclement weather. If the Douglas County Schools suspend classes because of severe weather, the Preschool will also be closed. If the Douglas County Schools delay their school day because of severe weather, please be advised that the LSA may not have classes on those days either. Please listen for any announcements on local radio and TV stations. Closing information will also be announced on the LSA Facebook page.

A current school calendar for both the Douglas County School System and Little Scholars Academy will be posted on our website.

## **SAFE SANCTUARY POLICY**

In Georgia, as of July 2012, all volunteers and staff members in ministry with children and youth are mandatory reporters of child abuse, as are all clergy. Those "having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused shall report or cause reports of that abuse to be made." The purpose of the legislation is to provide protection of individuals whose health and welfare are adversely affected and further threatened by the conduct of those responsible for their care and protection. Anyone making a report in good faith is immune from any civil or criminal liability.

Please know that a LSA staff member who has witnessed, been told of, or suspects child abuse will record details of the accident, incident, or suspected abuse on selected forms and discuss with appropriate church staff. Incidents are handled by church staff who will offer alternatives to person in question, and will record a follow-up. For suspected abuse, DFCS needs to investigate. The reporter places the call to DFCS with knowledge and support of Ministry Director and Senior Minister (or SPR Chair).



## CONTACTING LITTLE SCHOLARS ACADEMY

We love to hear from our parents for any reason! You can reach the LSA Director in several ways:

By phone: 770-920-9059

**Please program this number in your phone in case of Emergencies**

\*You may leave a message at ANY time on the LSA Voicemail.

By email: [leslies@DouglasvilleFUMC.org](mailto:leslies@DouglasvilleFUMC.org)

By Message on our Facebook Page: Search for Little Scholars Academy