

Western Hills Academy

Family Handbook

524 Thunderbird Drive

El Paso, TX 79912

Tel. 915-584-6642

www.westernhillsacademy.org



Our Mission

The mission of Western Hills Academy is to provide a safe, nurturing environment of mutual respect while inspiring children to achieve their academic potential as life-long learners. Students will be valued for their individuality and diverse capabilities as they are taught to face the future and contribute to society with compassion, courage, knowledge, and vision.

Office Hours & Calendar

The school office is open daily Monday- Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. from August to May. June and July hours are subject to change depending on programs offered.

The school calendar is posted on the school website: westernhillsacademy.org

Western Hills Academy 2020/ 2021 Teaching Staff

Director	Patricia Aguirre
Business Manager	Audrey Esparza
Nursery	Lorena Vazquez
Two's	Marisela De La Garza
Two's	Carmen Lerma
Three's	Argelia Ortiz Adriana Davie
Pre-K1 Pre-K2	Christel Mendoza Karla Aguilar
Kinder	Annette Gonzalez
1st Grade	Laura Ramirez
2nd Grade	Laura Ramirez
3rd Grade	Barbara Stegmiller
4th Grade	Barbara Stegmiller
5th Grade	Barbara Stegmiller

Enrollment

Western Hills Academy is open to all children, regardless of race, nationality, creed, and those with special needs who may benefit from our type of program. Families with children currently enrolled in our program will have the first opportunity to enroll for the next school year. Any openings will then be offered to the community on a first come first serve basis.

- Children must be at least nine months old by September 1st to enter our early learning classes (ages 9 months-3years).
- Children must be at least four years of age by September 1st to enter into our Pre-Kindergarten programs.
- Children must be at least five years of age by September 1st to enter into our Kindergarten programs.
- Children must be at least six years of age by September 1st to enter into first grade.

The following documents must be provided when registering your child:

1. Enrollment form
2. Birth certificate
3. Immunization and Health Records
4. Physician Form
5. Allergy Form
6. TB Questionnaire
7. Report Cards/Transcript/Records from last school attended (if applicable)
8. Valid Identification of Parent/Guardian enrolling student

Additional admission information:

Food allergy plans signed by a physician are required before admission if the child has need.

Health statements are due within one week of enrollment.

A student may not start school without the immunization record on file.

A state health department affidavit is required of parents who have objections, religious or otherwise, to their child receiving immunizations.

Cell Free Zone

In order for your child to receive your undivided attention during the important arrival and departure time of their day, we provide a "Cell Free Zone." Please leave your cell phones in the vehicle or place them on silent when you enter the facility. This will allow you to give your child that one-on-one time to say your good-byes and hellos.

Withdrawal Policy

Parents may withdraw a child from the program at any time. If you need to withdraw your child, two weeks written notice is required and must be submitted to the school office. The registration fee is non-refundable and no portion of your monthly tuition will be refunded upon withdrawal. In addition, any registration or tuition payments cannot be transferred for another purpose or child.

Arrival

Before school care is provided starting at 7:30 a.m. daily. There will be a charge of \$2.00 each morning your child attends or a \$20 flat fee after attending 10 days within a month. Should you have need for before school care, the program is held in room #C9. Children will not be received in their own class until 8:30 a.m. Any time before 8:30 a.m. interrupts the teachers scheduled prep time.

Dismissal

The school day ends at 2:30 p.m. for children in age 1 year through Kindergarten, and 3:00 p.m. for grades 1st-5th. Any child not picked up by their designated dismissal time will be placed in **after school care in rm. C9**. Children will only be released to parents or persons designated on the "Enrollment Information Form". Remember to inform your child's teacher of any new person that may be arriving for your child. We will ask for identification and only adults 18 or older may pick up children.

After School Care

After school care is held in **room C9 from 2:30-5:30**. The after school staff can be reached through REMIND. The charge for after school care is \$8 for each afternoon or \$80 flat fee after staying 10 days within a month.

Parents picking up their children from after school care past 5:30 will be charged an additional fee of \$10 for every 15 minutes after 5:30.

Tardy and Absence Policy

The day is scheduled in a manner where every moment is valuable education time. In order to respect the entire class' stability and learning potential, you are asked to keep attendance and reduce tardiness. Any child arriving after 8:30 will report to the office to receive an entrance pass.

Excused tardiness includes medical appointments (for which a doctor's note will be required), and extreme circumstances.

Regular attendance is necessary for the best learning situation. Excessive absences can require a child to repeat a grade. When a student is unable to attend school, parents should call the school office between 7:30 a.m. and 8:30 a.m. **If a child is absent 3 or more consecutive days, a doctor's note is required.**

Students are responsible for all missed work. For every one day the student is absent, he/she has one day in which to make up assignments. Homework assignments for absent students may be obtained by calling or e-mailing the teacher.

Early Learning Center tuition for students will be charged and payment is expected even when the child is absent.

Carpool Pickup

Western Hills Academy operates a carpool pick-up system when arriving to pick up your child at the end of each school day. Children in Pre-kinder and Kinder will need to be picked up in the area between the Chapel and gymnasium in front of the school off of Thunderbird Dr.

In order to ensure that a smooth transition is made during pickup, carpool numbers will be distributed. This number needs to be made visible each time you pick up your child. Carpool numbers will only be distributed to children in Pre-kinder and Kinder.

For children in grades 1st -5th, carpool pickup will be in the parking lot next to the blacktop/cement slab.

For safety reasons, please do not exit your vehicles during carpool. Please refer to the carpool map in this handbook as a reference.

Children ages 1-3 years are to be picked up in their classrooms.

Grading Policy

Each quarter consists of 9 weeks. End of quarter grade averages are given in numeric value in all academic subject areas. The school's grading scale is as followed for grades 1st – 5th:

A:	100 - 90
B:	89 - 80
C:	79 - 75
D:	74 - 70
F:	69 – 0

A letter grading scale is used for non-academic subjects for students in 1st-5th grades, as well as students in Pre-kinder and Kinder programs. The letter grading scale is as follows:

O = Outstanding
S = Satisfactory
NI = Needs Improvement
U = Unsatisfactory

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher Conferences are held twice a year with report card distribution. Extra appointments should be scheduled in advance (24 hour notice) either in person, by phone, or with your child's teacher. Parents must come into the office and sign-in prior to any conference. Teachers will not conference outside of normal hours.

Chapel

At Western Hills Academy we serve families of all denominations and we focus on the development of strong moral and ethical values, and respect for others. Our students attend chapel service every Wednesday morning at 8:45 a.m. to focus on this development. Parents are welcome to join us for this special time of worship.

Parent Feedback and Program Evaluation

At Western Hills Academy, performance of our teaching staff is of utmost importance. In addition, every staff member values parental opinions concerning the care and education we provide. We welcome written and verbal feedback pertaining to our schools operations.

Discipline

Western Hills Academy teaching staff will post acceptable classroom behavior policies. Teachers will guide the children toward appropriate behavior through positive reinforcement, diversion, distraction, brief separation, or necessary intervention if actions are harmful to the child or others. Above all positive pro-social behavior will be recognized and encouraged. Teachers will set limits, create consistency and model appropriate behavior. The teachers will facilitate problem solving by validating feelings and assisting children in discovering solutions.

Depending on the circumstances, simple redirection or allowing children to experience natural consequences may provide enough guidance to deter the unwanted behavior.

Disruptive behavior will be dealt with firmly and with loving concern for the child's growth and well-being. Removal from the group for a period of time will be used for a child who continually demonstrates unacceptable behavior. Suspension/expulsion will take place in extreme situations but a school board/parent conference must take place before this happens.

This is a time when the child may calm down, remember what behavior the teacher is asking for, and decide for him or herself when he/she is ready to return to the group with acceptable behavior.

When a child exhibits behavior that is harmful to him or herself, the other students, or the staff, we will work with the parents and the child to resolve the issue.

Confidentiality

Disclosure of children's records beyond immediate family members, your classroom teachers, regulatory authorities, and consultants require familial consent listed on the enrollment form. We shall maintain confidentiality and shall respect family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life. However, if we believe that a child's welfare is at risk, we will share information with agencies that may be able to intervene in the child's interest.

Parents and guardians have the right to add information, comments, or other relevant material to your child's record. You also have the right to make a written request to delete or amend any information contained in the record.

Photographs and Publicity

Photographs of children participating in our program may be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures, school newsletters, social media or school website. These photos are to be used at the discretion of the school and families will not receive any compensation for such use. If you do not wish to give this consent please indicate this on the school enrollment form.

Standards and Accreditation

Results of the latest State Inspection are posted on the bulletin board in the school office. A copy of the minimum standards is available for you to review in the school office.

Gang Free Zone

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas Law. Western Hills Academy is a gang-free and gun-free zone.

Transportation & Field Trips

Under no circumstance will Western Hills Academy provide transportation to its students. Parents are responsible for transporting their own children. We strongly encourage parents to make appropriate arrangements to attend field trips with their child. Should you find it necessary to send someone else in your place, please notify the office at least one week prior to the scheduled event. All chaperones must be 18 or older.

Independent Toilet Use

Children who are 3-5 years old enrolled in early learning classes must be able to use the toilet independently and take care own their hygiene needs. Our 3 year old classrooms are not equipped for changing diapers. You are welcome to bring in a box of the flushable toilet wipes to keep in your child's class. Make sure it is labeled clearly with your child's name (Only for your child's use)

Special instructions for children 1 -2 years old

- Send a sack lunch each day labeled for all returnable items.
- Label all lunch sacks or boxes, where the names are clearly visible.
- Be mindful of choking hazards, provide food cut into bite-size pieces. Children who are under three years of age must have their foods cut into ½ inch pieces or into manageable bites as individually appropriate. Please, cut foods before they are packed in your child's lunchboxes. Cutting foods for multiple children can be very time-consuming and it's time taken away from the children.
- Send a bib with their lunch daily or a plastic bib to stay in class for meals
- Label sweater, diaper bag, extra clothing, bottles, cups, lunch box, thermos, books, toys, and anything else that is to go home with you.
- Provide wipes and disposable diapers daily.
- Should any special situations arise, please address them directly with your child's teacher.

Nursing

Western Hills Academy encourages, provides arrangements for, and supports breastfeeding mothers. In addition to nutrition, breastfeeding supports optimal health and development. According to the AAP CFOC, “human milk is also the best source of milk for infants for at least the first twelve months of age and, thereafter, for as long as mutually desired by mother and child. Breastfeeding protects infants from many acute and chronic diseases and has advantages for the mother, as well.” Therefore, you are welcome to pump or nurse in our after school care room (#C9) at any time.

Uniforms & Clothing

Students from Pre-kinder through 5th grade are required to wear the approved uniform which consists of the following:

Girls:

- Khaki or navy blue uniform skirts, shorts, rompers, or pants.
- Blue or red polo shirts with school logo

Boys:

- Khaki or navy blue uniform pants or shorts
- Blue or red polo shirts with school logo

Uniform shirts can be purchased in the school office for \$12 each.

*Students in the Early Learning Center (ages 1-3) are not required to wear school uniforms.

Extra Clothing (ages 1-Kindergarten)

Children in all early learning classes will also be required to have an extra change of clothes available in case of an emergency. This extra change of clothes will be kept in the classroom and should be suitable for the season. Send clean clothes to replace any soiled ones that were sent home. All clothing (especially coats, sweater, hats and mittens) should be labeled with the child’s name.

Toys and Personal Items

Please **do not allow** your child to bring toys, jewelry, money, candy, make-up, etc. Special items may be requested for projects or “Show & Tell” occasions. You will receive specific notices for special days. Each classroom reserves the right to modify this policy for its particular classroom needs.

Nap Time and Rest Periods

Napping and rest are appropriate and necessary for children. Generally rest time is after lunch for the duration of 1-2 hours for children ages 1-3.

Children ages 1-3 are welcome to bring a security item such as a blanket or stuffed animal as they transition to the classroom. The teacher will advise you when it’s no longer necessary.

Provide a sleeping mat, to be left at school. Make sure all blankets, small pillows, and other returnable items are labeled with your child’s name on each item. Items must be compact in size due to storage space limitations. It is strongly recommended that sleeping mats be taken home at least every two weeks to be washed.

Children in Pre-kinder and Kindergarten have a short quiet time after lunch which will vary in length of time according to need and the schedule.

Lunch Policy

Lunch is held daily at 11:30 in the school gymnasium. Our school is a sack lunch program. We suggest that you send healthy nutritious meals for the development of your child. Please label lunches, utensils, etc. with child's name. We are not able to heat or refrigerate lunches, so make sure that all food items are equipped to stay fresh. **We do not allow candy, soda, and other sugary treats for lunch.**

Western Hills Academy offers a pre-order lunch program at a cost of \$4.00 per meal. Menus for this program are sent home once a month and all orders must be paid in advance to the school office. Unfortunately late orders for the lunch program will not be accepted. This lunch program is available to students ages 3 years-5th grade.

Lunchroom Rules

The following rules were developed to ensure that all students have a safe and friendly eating environment:

1. Walk to the hot lunch line or directly to your table
2. Prayer will be said once all classes arrive
3. Stay seated and raise your hand if you need help
4. Use indoor voices while talking to others
5. Ask for permission to use the restroom
6. Please be courteous and responsible by cleaning up after yourself
7. Verbal warnings will be given for inappropriate behavior. If a second warning is issued, the student will be escorted to the office for the remainder of the lunch period.

Student Technology Agreement

I understand my school's policy on using computers and the Internet. I promise to follow all the rules below:

- If I see or am asked anything that makes me uncomfortable, or that I don't understand, I will tell my teacher immediately.
- I will never send anything over the Internet or in email without the permission of my teacher.
- I will not bother others while they work and learn on the computer.
- I will treat the computer with kindness and not bang the keyboard or mouse, or hurt the machine in any way.
- I will not steal or mess with anyone's work on the computer or papers from the printer.
- I know my password is secret and that only my teacher can know it.
- I will not add any programs or games on the computer at school. I will not mess with any settings on the computer unless my teacher says it is ok. I will be careful to not waste paper when printing and always keep track of my disks or the teacher's software CDs.
- I understand that if I break any of the rules above, I may not get to use a computer or not be allowed to come to school for certain amount of time.

Parent Involvement

As partners in the educational process we ask parents, to set rules, times, and limits so that your child:

- Arrives at school on time and is picked up on time at the end of the day
- Is dressed according to the school dress code
- Completes assignments on time
- Has a healthy and nutritious lunch every day

Furthermore, parents should:

- Actively participate in school activities such as Parent-Teacher conferences
- Notify the school when the student will be absent or tardy
- Notify the school of any changes of address or important telephone numbers
- Meet all financial obligations to the school
- Inform the school of any special situation regarding the student's well-being, safety, and health
- To complete and return to school any requested information promptly
- To read notes and newsletters and to show interest in the student's total education
- To support and cooperate with the discipline policy of the school
- To treat teachers with respect and courtesy

Grievance

By definition, a "grievance" is a complaint regarding any action taken by a teacher or administrator toward a student in the enforcement of discipline, policies, and/or regulations.

When grievances occur between staff, parents, or Western Hills Academy policies, the initial step towards solution to the problem will be handled on a person to person basis with the director. If this does not work, an arbitration committee composed of school board members, the staff person involved, and the director will collaborate to resolve the problem.

Health Policy

Keep your child home if he or she shows any of the following symptoms:

- Any illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in the center's activities including outdoor play
- Any fever over 100.00 F during the past 24 hours (exception of teething)
- Any vomiting during the past 24 hours
- More than 2 loose bowel movements within the past 24 hours
- Bowel movements not contained in the diaper
- Any discharge from eyes or ears
- Contagious illness (example: chicken pox)
- Persistent cough, unless parent presents written verification from a doctor that it is a non-contagious condition
- Any sign of abnormal breathing
- Rash (excluding diaper rash) unless doctor verifies in writing it is of a noncontagious nature

Upon arrival, please direct your child to wash his/her hands. Each child will be given a health check, upon arrival each morning. The teacher has authority not to admit the child and/or call parents to pick-up an ill child.

Your child may not remain in school if any symptoms of illness appear during the day. If this should occur, your child may be isolated from others and you will be contacted to pick up your child immediately. If your child needs to be immediately excluded, he will be in the school office with another caregiver.

We advise parents not to rush a child's return to school following an illness. Please keep in mind that if we send your child home because of fever, vomiting or diarrhea, the child will not be admitted the next day because the 24-hour period will not have elapsed. In addition, if the child's physician prescribes a course of antibiotics for any reason, the child may not return to the classroom until a full 24 hours have passed since the first dose of medication was administered.

If your child is sick for 2 consecutive days, please call the school office. Notify the school if your child contracts a contagious illness. Parents will be advised if an unusual level or type of communicable illness was reported in their child's classroom. Children with a contagious illness will not be allowed back in class until released by a physician or has completed the incubation period.

Universal Health Precautions

These are designed to protect children and staff members from contagious diseases.

If your child vomits or has a toileting accident, the soiled clothes, blankets, sheets, etc. will be sent home in a plastic bag. Please remember to send another change of clothes for a replacement.

Also, please adhere to the following guidelines for ensuring your child's health, as well as, helping the program run efficiently:

- Send clean clothes to replace any soiled ones that were sent home.
- Be sure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather and has extra clothes suitable for the season.
- Enforce good hygiene habits at home including thorough hand washing.
- Bottles, dishes, and cups that have been sent home need to be washed before returning to the school.
- Wash your hands with soap and water immediately when entering any classroom.

Epidemic Plan

Western Hills Academy is committed to fighting epidemics by observing proper procedures. If the children are exposed to a contagious illness, a notice will be posted immediately to inform parents of the exposure. We will work closely with the local health officials to help control the spread of disease.

Medication

Ask your doctor to prescribe 12hr doses if it is needed. When these medications are not available in 12hr doses, parents must sign "Permission to Administer Medication Form" with the director. The prescribed medication must be in its original container indicating the name of the child and dosage required prescribed by the physician. Medication must be delivered directly to the school office and may NOT be placed in your child's lunch box or backpack.

Immunization and Screening Requirements

It is required by the state of Texas that you keep your child's immunization records current. Please provide us with a written copy of all immunization boosters immediately after they are given during the school year. Keep these records up to date! Non-compliance may mean suspension of your child from school until completed.

Health information is critical, ensuring that the individual needs of children are met, while protecting the health and safety of all children in care.- DFPS Minimum Standards

According to Texas Administrative Code, "Exclusions from compliance are allowable on an individual basis for medical contraindications, reasons of conscience, including a religious belief, and active duty with the armed forces of the United States. Children and students in these categories must submit evidence for exclusion from compliance as specified in the Health and Safety Code, §161.004(d), Health and Safety Code, §161.0041, Education Code, Chapter 38, Education Code, Chapter 51, and the Human Resources Code, Chapter 42."

A child will be excluded from the Center immediately upon an outbreak of any vaccine preventable disease to which the child is susceptible due to his/her under-immunization for that disease due to religious or personal objection or medical need.

The Texas Department of Health requires that all children 4 years and older be screened for vision and hearing problems. The school is equipped to perform these screenings if necessary.

Child Abuse

All cases of suspected child abuse will be reported to TX Dept. of Family & Protective Services at 1-800-252-5400 or www.dfps.state.tx.us. If you need to contact a local D.F.P.S call (915) 834-5739. All staff members participate in annual training regarding Child Abuse and Neglect- recognizing, reporting, prevention, and minimizing stress in education.

Please refer to information on our Family Bulletin Board in the school office.

Postings include information concerning signs and symptoms, community resources, and parenting skill resources to prevent and recognize child abuse and neglect.

Pesticides

Pesticides are used periodically indoors and outdoors. Our procedure is to schedule the treatments while school is not in session.

Safety Drills & Procedures

Depending on the circumstance of the emergency, we will use one of the following protective actions:

Fire: The school evacuation plans are on file in the school office and posted in each classroom. Fire drills are conducted monthly. A record of the drills is maintained in the files of the school office and available for parental review if requested.

Evacuation: Total evacuation of Western Hills Academy becomes necessary if there is a danger in the area. In this case, children will walk to the Western Hills Methodist Church Sanctuary.

Other Emergencies: The administration is responsible for the planning and the execution of procedures for other emergencies in cooperation with the proper local authorities.

Inclement Weather

If the school must be closed due to inclement weather, please listen to the radio/news for an announcement, or view the school website at www.westernhillsacademy.org and *Facebook* page.

As a general rule, Western Hills Academy will follow the inclement weather schedule of the El Paso Independent School District (EPISD). Before and after school care is not available on inclement weather days.

In case of inclement weather while school is in session, students, faculty, and staff will relocate to the church Sanctuary for safety. Parents will then be required to pick up their child in this area.

Birthdays and Special Occasions

Birthday parties are celebrated once a month with a joint celebration for all birthday's within that month. This is created to limit the amount of sweet treats associated with birthday celebrations and time taken from scheduled class activities. Homeroom teachers will coordinate the celebration of birthday parties.

Due to allergies and other health needs, all food items must be cleared with the classroom teacher.

Insect Repellent and Sunscreen Policy

Parents will be responsible for the application of sunscreen and insect repellent as needed at home before bringing the child to school.

Statement of Acknowledgement

I hereby acknowledge that I/we have received and will read and understand the policies and procedures stated within the Western Hills Academy Family Handbook and agree to abide by all policies and procedures.

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● Cell Free Zone	● Nursing
● Withdrawal	● Uniform & Clothing
● Arrival/Dismissal	● Toys & Personal Items
● Tardy/Absence	● Nap/Rest Periods
● Carpool	● Lunch Policy
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● Photographs & Publicity	● Pesticides
● Standards & Accreditation	● Safety Drills & Procedures
● Gang Free Zone	● Inclement Weather
● Transportation & Field Trips	● Birthdays & Special Occasions

Parent/Guardian of: (please print)

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

Teacher Signature

Date