



2023 / 2024

Handbook

Educational Philosophy

The Learning Center K-8 School is committed to:

- **The Creative Process**
Exploration of the creative process within the arts and sciences allows students to engage aesthetically, make meaning of their world, and find their expressive voice.
- **Exploration**
Asking the children to look at challenges in many different ways, they are given the opportunity to discover and problem solve in authentic situations. Interdisciplinary thematic units are developed to cultivate critical thinking skills. As children acquire core knowledge and skills, they are able to use what they've learned to understand multiple perspectives and to be self-reliant problem solvers.
- **Fostering Curiosity**
At The Learning Center we allow the child's natural curiosity to direct his or her learning. Our multiage classroom, with planned developmentally appropriate learning goals, allows room for sparks of enthusiasm and insight that come from each unique group of students.
- **The Individuality of the Child**
The Learning Center believes that each and every child has the potential to bring something unique and special to the world. Our environment allows for a community of learners that contains not only academic diversity but also individual learning styles. We value each child, their individual way of learning, and their different strengths, and use these as a means to inform our teaching and curriculum.
- **Collaboration, Communication, and Community**
Collaboration and communication are key components in meeting the needs of the whole child. Students, parents, teachers, and community members are all respected contributors to our learning environment within and outside of the school. We work cooperatively to create a hands-on learning atmosphere that is safe, supports risk-taking, and invites the sharing of ideas. All voices are valued and welcomed in our intergenerational school community.

Overview

Creating Landscapes was originally designed in the summer of 1990 to answer the single question: *what happens to the songs and dances of early childhood?* It began on the campus of Allegheny College with Jan Hyatt (rhythm and dance), Mary Moody (creative writing), Dana Hunter (Allegheny College student intern) and 30 children between the ages of 5 and 10 years old. Since that time Creating Landscapes at Allegheny College has evolved to become 4 distinct educational outreach programs with more than 700 students ranging in age from infants through adults: The Summer Creating Landscapes Program (1990), Aesthetic Education for Educators (1990), The Gifted/Talented Enrichment Program for Middle and High School Students (1999), and the Adult Learning Force (2010). In the Meadville Community under the guidance of The Creating Landscapes Learning Center Inc. Creating Landscapes for Families (2009) and The Learning Center K-8 Independent School (2011) evolved.

Absences/Tardiness

The Learning Center upholds the importance of good school attendance habits. This is very important with the hands-on nature of our curriculum. However, we also stress that children who are ill must be kept at home. As long as the weather permits, children will be going outside each day. If your child is too ill to participate in regular school activities inside and outside, your child should not be attending. We ask that you call the school when your child will be absent or tardy.

If your child arrives more than five (5) minutes late, your child will be considered tardy. Three tardies equals 1 unexcused absence. If your child arrives after 8:30 or is picked up before 3:15, you will be required to sign your child in/out.

If your child misses more than 2 hours of a school day, this will be considered a half day. If there is an early dismissal day (11:30), your child must be in attendance from 8:30-11:30 to be considered present, there are no half days on early dismissal days.

If your child is absent due to a communicable disease (such as COVID-19, chicken pox, strep, pink eye, or lice), please let the school know immediately so that other families can be notified.

If a child becomes ill at school, parents will be called and asked to pick up their child as soon as possible. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached the person listed as the emergency contact will be contacted.

When your child returns to school, a written excuse must be received within three (3) days or it will be considered an unlawful absence.

Lawful Absence

An excuse is considered lawful when a student is prevented from attendance for mental or physical illness, family emergency, death of a family member, medical or dental appointments, and educational travel of five or fewer days and this absence is documented by a note from the parent or guardian. In the case of educational travel, we ask that parents submit an Educational Travel Form prior to the absence. ***A maximum of ten days of cumulative lawful absences verified by written notification are permitted during a school year. All absences beyond ten cumulative days require a written excuse from a physician.*** Although a note from a physician is not required until after your 10 parental days have been used, it is helpful to obtain one when sick to ensure your child does not go over those 10 days.

Unlawful Absence and Truancy

An absence for which the school does not receive a written excuse from the parent or guardian is considered unlawful. An absence, even with a written excuse from the parent or guardian, beyond the permitted ten (10) lawful absences is also considered unlawful. A student is considered truant if she is absent for three or more days without a valid excuse. In the case of an unlawful absence or if a student is considered truant The Learning Center is required to provide a written warning to the

parents and to contact the truant officer for your child's school district and Children and Youth Services.

The public school districts are responsible for enforcing the State's compulsory attendance laws.

Communication

Parents and teachers work cooperatively as a team to educate each child. Therefore parent teacher communication is a priority.

- Newsletters will be provided bi-weekly.
- School notes will be sent out via email weekly.
- Family (Parent/Teacher/Student) Conferences will be held twice a year.
- Parents will receive progress reports four times a year.
- School meetings are open to the entire school community.
- School email is checked daily. Our email address is connect@learningcenterk8.org.
- Each teacher has his or her own email address. It is simply their first name@learningcenterk8.org

Clothing

As part of our curriculum the students explore the property surrounding the school, create art projects with many different mediums and partake in multiple hands-on projects throughout their school day. Clothing should be comfortable for movement and appropriate for activities that could be messy. It is our policy to go outdoors every day that the weather permits. Send appropriate outdoor clothing for the weather. Please try to choose clothing for both indoor and outdoor activities that allows your child to be self-sufficient and that they can manage independently.

Each student should have:

- Indoor shoes - comfortable shoes that will not slip on the floor and will keep their feet from getting wet in the bathroom, these can be left at school each day
- Outdoor shoes/Appropriate gym shoes - sensible sole for running and jumping
- Rain gear - boots, jacket, pants are required for each student to participate in Forest School as they will be going outside in all weather
- Winter gear - boots, water-proof mittens, snow pants and hat

For warmer weather, we ask that no flip flops be worn to school, they may be worn for indoor shoes only. Please clearly label all of your child's outdoor gear and backpack.

The Learning Center will follow government mandates regarding masks for all students and staff.

Fees, Policies, and Procedures

Tuition

Tuition is due no later than the 15th of each month from August to June. If payment is not received by the 15th of the month a late fee of \$25 will be assessed. Any payment overdue by 30 days will result in enrollment being terminated until payment is received.

Tuition Discount

If a family has two children enrolled in The Learning Center, they will receive a 10% discount on the cost of total tuition. For families with three or more children they will receive a 15% discount on the cost of total tuition.

Withdrawals / Refunds

Monthly tuition may be refunded if notice of withdrawal is given prior to the first school day of the month for which tuition has been paid. If your student attends any days within a given month no tuition will be refunded for that month. No refunds in tuition will be made for temporary absences including vacations.

Field Trips

A signed permission slip will be required for all field trips requiring transportation or a fee. Transportation may be provided by parents, public bus, or by school bus. The teacher will have a first aid kit and list of emergency numbers. Seat belts may not be available on buses.

Students are expected to attend all educational field trips.

All field trips will be subject to current government mandates.

Health (allergies)

Current health, dental and immunization forms must be submitted at enrollment and updated as required by the state of Pennsylvania.

In order to maintain a healthy environment, we ask that any child who is ill or shows signs of becoming ill should be kept at home until fully recovered. **Children need to be symptom free (fever, vomiting, diarrhea) for 72 hours before returning to school.** Minor injuries, such as scratches and scrapes will be cleaned and bandaged if necessary and parents will receive notification. With more serious injuries, parents will be called immediately as well as the child's physician if necessary.

No medication, including cough drops, sun block and fluoride, will be administered by The Learning Center staff. Children are not permitted to bring medicine of any kind to school, including over the counter medications such as cough drops. If your child needs to receive medication during the school day, a parent will need to come to the school to administer it. While we ask that medication(s) be given at home before and/or after school, there are emergency medications such as an EpiPen for severe allergies, insulin or asthma inhalers in which administration in school may be necessary. Prior to receiving medication at school, the parent must provide the school nurse with a Medication Administration Consent Form signed by the student's parent/guardian. This form is available at the school. The school will also need a Medication Order form from a licensed prescriber. All medications must be in an original prescription bottle, container, or packaging.

Parents of children who have severe allergies need to notify the school in writing of specific allergies and precautions that should be taken. It is our goal to take all necessary measures to ease the worries of students, parents, and staff.

Inclement Weather

If Crawford Central schools are closed due to weather conditions, we are also closed. If Crawford Central schools are on delay, we will also be on delay. If Crawford Central schools close early due to weather conditions, we will close early. School delays and closings will be broadcast on the Erie television stations. Additionally, an email notification will be sent to all families.

Lunch/Snacks

Lunch will be provided by the family of the student. Any perishable foods may be stored in the refrigerator until lunch time. Food may be reheated in the microwave at lunch time or hot foods may be sent in a thermos. Lunch is a supervised activity. Students and teachers will all enjoy their lunch time meal together.

There will be at least one daily snack time also. A small snack may be provided by the family of the student. We encourage families to provide healthy snacks. We also request that students bring reusable water bottles that they may have access to at any point throughout the day. Sharing of food by students is not permitted.

All food and drink containers need to be clearly labeled with the student's name.

Birthdays and Half-Birthdays are celebrated in each classroom with an activity chosen by the student and teachers. Please do not send in snacks or treats

Student Expectations and Discipline

Student Expectations

The Learning Center is committed to a learning environment that is respectful, safe, tolerant, inclusive, and encouraging. As part of maintaining that learning environment, The Learning Center expects and requires all students to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects and reinforces this commitment.

- Students will demonstrate respect and tolerance towards other students, teachers and all others, with their words and their actions.
- Students will behave in ways which ensure and encourage a safe, healthy, and nurturing learning environment.
- Students will respect the property of others and the school and will help to maintain a clean and safe learning space.
- Students are encouraged to express their opinions but will agree to do so in a respectful manner.
- Students will demonstrate an eagerness to participate, collaborate, and perform in the classroom to the best of their ability.
- Students will be asked to respect and uphold all other expectations of the school and classroom.

Code of Conduct

Students are expected to cooperate with the instructions of teachers and staff, and to follow all rules of the school and the classroom. Behavior that undermines our positive learning environment may result in disciplinary action. While not intended to list all forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable at The Learning Center, the following are examples of misconduct that may result in disciplinary action, as outlined below. These include but are not limited to:

- Acting in a way that is disrespectful or intolerant of others.
- Compromising the safety of others.
- Engaging in violent, hurtful, or unwelcome physical contact with others.
- Using language that is hurtful, threatening, disrespectful, or inappropriate.
- Bullying, intimidating, or harassing others.
- Damaging, stealing, or otherwise failing to respect the property of others.
- Possessing, using, or distributing drugs, alcohol, or tobacco products.
- Possessing or using weapons of any kind or making direct or implied threats with reference to weapons or violence.

Disciplinary Actions

- **Written Warnings:** Students whose behavior violates the code of conduct will receive a written warning. At those times teachers will help students to reflect on the choices that they make, presently and in the future. A copy of written warnings will be sent home to parents.
- **Removal from School:** Following two written warnings subsequent violations of the Code of Conduct will cause parents to be called to pick their child up for the remainder of the day.
- **Suspension and Expulsion:** Following a student's removal from the school in the scenario described above, a student may be suspended or expelled from the school, at the discretion of the Director.
- **Serious Violations of the Rules of Conduct:** When a student's behavior is determined to be dangerous to the well-being of staff or other students, is repeatedly and/or persistently disrespectful of staff or other students, is repeatedly and/or persistently disruptive of the learning environment, seriously compromises other students' right to a safe, nurturing and supportive environment, or is considered egregious by the Director, then the Director, at her complete discretion, may suspend or expel such student from the school, without Written Warning or Removal From School, as stated above.
- Any threat of violence, implied, written, or actual, upon another individual(s), will result in immediate suspension without Written Warning or Removal From School, as stated above.
- Students dismissed from the school for reasons of behavior will not receive a refund for the semester during which dismissal occurs.

Volunteers

All volunteers in the classroom, including parents, will be required to provide the following:

PA State Police Criminal Record Check

PA Child Abuse History Clearance

FBI Federal Criminal History Record.

(If you have lived continuously in PA for ten years and sign a sworn statement that you have not committed a crime that would disqualify you for contact with children you are not required to provide the FBI Federal Criminal History Record.)

Non-Discrimination Policy

Creating Landscapes Learning Center, Inc. admits students of any race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, gender orientation or handicap status to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, gender orientation, sexual orientation, or handicap status in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other school-administered programs.

Parent and Student Signed Statement

As a parent, I have read the 2023-2024 Learning Center Handbook with my child(ren) and understand the guidelines and expectations listed.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

As a student, I have read the 2023-2024 Learning Center Handbook with my parent/guardian and understand the guidelines and expectations listed.

Student Signature

Student Signature

Student Signature

Student Signature

Print Family Name

Date

