



**Your Stars. Our Passion. Their Future.**

**PARENT HAND BOOK**

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## Welcome

Dear Families! Thank you for choosing Smart Stars Academy II to fulfill your childcare needs. As mothers ourselves, we truly understand that caring for young children is a responsibility and duty that we take very seriously. It is our goal to not only meet your child's physical and academic needs, but also to help them reach their potential, create a nurturing, safe, home-like environment where they can learn and grow physically, emotionally, creatively, intellectually, and socially at their own pace. We want to help your child increase their confidence, identify, and develop their unique character and individuality, while allowing them to express themselves in the variety of facets. We strive to make your child's time at our daycare the best experience it can be for them as well as for you, the parents.

Please take time to read this handbook, as it will answer many of the questions you may have concerning our policies and procedures. Our role is to supplement, but not take the place of, the primary role of families in providing care for their children. By establishing and maintaining open and ongoing communication with families, we are able to strengthen the ties that connect the home with our center and enhance the individual development of the children in our care. When families entrust their children to us, we are challenged to have a significant and positive influence by providing a program of the highest quality designed to help give children the foundation they need to build self-esteem, develop school readiness, and reach their fullest potential in learning. We encourage you to become an active participant in our school activities and programs that we offer. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to talk to your child's teacher or the center's director. Our objective is to care for your child the same as you would.

Excellent education and care replicates many of the aspects of a good and loving home, where caring adults nurture children and help them to learn and grow.

## Our Philosophy

Smart Stars Academy II was envisioned and developed by three working mothers who wanted to create a childcare that is high quality for kids and supportive of working parents. We strive to provide a quality Early Childhood Program with carefully chosen staff members, filled with love and compassion for children. We believe that children are our most important resource and that their early childhood experiences are crucial in the development of their future. Each staff member strives to offer an environment that is high in quality and stimulates the child's senses and where warmth and friendship are abundant, to meet the needs of the total development of your child. The program we pursue is geared toward helping your child develop habits of observation, questioning, and listening while building a positive self-esteem. Our staff members are partners with our parents working together to meet both the needs of the children and their families. Our core values are:

- Fueling minds with quality meals and using farm fresh and/ or organic ingredients
- Challenging, yet an engaging and innovative curriculum with lots of hands on learning
- Free play is fundamental for the development of each child
- Outdoor time and nature exploration are crucial components to raise an environmentally conscious child
- Movement is paramount at this age and allows children to connect concepts to action. We offer different sports activities throughout the year, in order to help children recognize their potential talents, passion, and interest
- Music and performing arts are an integral part of our curriculum. Music can stimulate the mind. There are many things in music, to which one can listen and bring attention. Music can raise someone's mood, get them excited, or make them calm and relaxed. Music ignites all areas of child development and skills for school readiness, including intellectual, social-emotional, motor, language, and overall literacy. It helps the body and the mind work together. Exposing children to music during early development helps them learn the sounds and meanings of words. Music also - and this is important - allows us to feel nearly or possibly all emotions that we experience in our lives. It boosts concentration, self-discipline, listening, and social skills. It also has a tremendous organizing quality to the brain and aids in developing memory, emotion and mood.
- Technology is an integral part of our lives now and we recognize that introducing age appropriate use of technology will help with:
  - Better hand-eye coordination
  - Improve language skills

- Promote school readiness and cognitive development
  - Encourage higher capacity for visual attention
  - Enhance social interaction skills
  - Increase motivation to complete tasks
  - Develop more dynamic spatial skills
  - Increase problem solving skills
- 
- Learning a second language boosts problem-solving, critical-thinking, and listening skills, in addition to improving memory, concentration, and the ability to multi-task. Children proficient in other languages also show signs of enhanced creativity and mental flexibility. The cognitive benefits of learning a language have a direct impact on a child's academic achievement. Compared to those without an additional language, bilingual children have improved reading, writing, and math skills, and they generally score higher on standardized tests.
  - We recognize the importance of communication and we want to develop caring and sharing partnerships with all parents. Communication is provided through our closed Facebook group for parents only, daily report forms, daily conversations, and parent-teacher conferences. We also provide live feed camera access for our parents, to observe your child's day through our proprietary application, fostering a classroom to home relationship.
  - We strive to create a home away from home environment that is warm, safe, encouraging, and nurturing.

## Information to Parents

Department of Children and Families

Office of Licensing

### INFORMATION TO PARENTS

Under provisions of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (N.J.A.C. 3A:52), every licensed childcare center in New Jersey must provide to parents of enrolled children written information on parent visitation rights, State licensing requirements, child abuse/neglect reporting requirements and other childcare matters. The center must comply with this requirement by reproducing and distributing to parents and staff this written statement, prepared by the Office of Licensing, Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families. In keeping with this requirement, the center must secure every parent and staff member's signature attesting to his/her receipt of the information.

Our center is required by the State Child Care Center Licensing law to be licensed by the Office of Licensing

(OOL), Child Care & Youth Residential Licensing, in the Department of Children and Families (DCF). A copy of our current license must be posted in a prominent location at our center. Look for it when you're in the center.

To be licensed, our center must comply with the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers (the official licensing regulations). The regulations cover such areas as: physical environment/life-safety; staff qualifications, supervision, and staff/child ratios; program activities and equipment; health, food and nutrition; rest and sleep requirements; parent/community participation; administrative and record keeping requirements; and others.

Our center must have on the premises a copy of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers and make it available to interested parents for review. If you would like to review our copy, just ask any staff member. Parents may view a copy of the Manual of Requirements on the DCF website at

<http://www.nj.gov/dcf/providers/licensing/laws/CCCmanual.pdf> or obtain a copy by sending a check or money order for \$5 made payable to the "Treasurer, State of New Jersey", and mailing it to: NJDCF, Office of Licensing, Publication Fees, PO Box 657, Trenton, NJ 08646-0657.

We encourage parents to discuss with us any questions or concerns about the policies and program of the center or the meaning, application or alleged violations of the Manual of Requirements for Child Care Centers. We will be happy to arrange a convenient opportunity for you to review and discuss these matters with us. If you



suspect our center may be in violation of licensing requirements, you are entitled to report them to the Office of Licensing toll free at 1 (877) 667-9845. Of course, we would appreciate your bringing these concerns to our attention, too.

Our center must have a policy concerning the release of children to parents or people authorized by parents to be responsible for the child. Please discuss with us your plans for your child's departure from the center.

Our center must have a policy about administering medicine and health care procedures and the management of communicable diseases. Please talk to us about these policies so we can work together to keep our children healthy.

Our center must have a policy concerning the expulsion of children from enrollment at the center. Please review this policy so we can work together to keep your child in our center.

Parents are entitled to review the center's copy of the OOL's Inspection/Violation Reports on the center, which are available soon after every State licensing inspection of our center. If there is a licensing complaint investigation, you are also entitled to review the OOL's Complaint Investigation Summary Report, as well as any letters of enforcement or other actions taken against the center during the current licensing period. Let us know if you wish to review them and we will make them available for your review or you can view them online at <https://data.nj.gov/childcare-explorer>.

Our center must cooperate with all DCF inspections/investigations. DCF staff may interview both staff members and children.

Our center must post its written statement of philosophy on child discipline in a prominent location and make a copy of it available to parents upon request. We encourage you to review it and to discuss with us any questions you may have about it.

Our center must post a listing or diagram of those rooms and areas approved by the OOL for the children's use. Please talk to us if you have any questions about the center's space.

Our center must offer parents of enrolled children ample opportunity to assist the center in complying with licensing requirements; and to participate in and observe the activities of the center. Parents wishing to participate in the activities or operations of the center should discuss their interest with the center director, who can advise them of what opportunities are available.

Parents of enrolled children may visit our center at any time without having to secure prior approval from the director or any staff member. Please feel free to do so when you can. We welcome visits from our parents. Our center must inform parents in advance of every field trip, outing, or special event away from the center, and must obtain prior written consent from parents before taking a child on each such trip.

Our center is required to provide reasonable accommodations for children and/or parents with disabilities and to comply with the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination (LAD), P.L. 1945, c. 169 (N.J.S.A. 10:5-1 et seq.), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), P.L. 101-336 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). Anyone who believes the center is not in compliance with these laws may contact the Division on Civil Rights in the New Jersey Department of Law and Public Safety for information about filing an LAD claim at (609) 292-4605 (TTY users may dial 711 to reach the New Jersey Relay Operator and ask for (609) 292-7701), or may contact the United States Department of Justice for information about filing an ADA claim at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514- 0383 (TTY).

Our center is required, at least annually, to review the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), unsafe children's products list, ensure that items on the list are not at the center, and make the list accessible to staff and parents and/or provide parents with the CPSC website at <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls>. Internet access may be available at your local library. For more information call the CPSC at (800)638-2772.

Anyone who has reasonable cause to believe that an enrolled child has been or is being subjected to any form of hitting, corporal punishment, abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment, or any other kind of child abuse, neglect, or exploitation by any adult, whether working at the center or not, is required by State law to report the concern immediately to the State Central Registry Hotline, toll free at (877) NJ ABUSE/(877) 652-2873. Such reports may be made anonymously. Parents may secure information about child abuse and neglect by contacting: DCF, Office of Communications and Legislation at (609) 292-0422 or go to [www.state.nj.us/dcf/](http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/).

## Hours of operation

Smart Stars Academy II is opened year-round, Monday – Friday, 6:30 am to 8:00 pm.

We offer a year-round program for ages 18 months – 4 years old.

### School closings

New Year's Day (Jan 1st)  
Martin Luther King Jr. Day  
President's Day  
Passover (Half Day – 2 pm)  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Yom Kippur  
Columbus Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Black Friday  
Christmas Eve (Dec 24)  
Christmas Day (Dec 25)  
New Year's Eve (Dec 31)

## Emergency and Inclement weather policy

Snow day closings are posted on our website and social media. Parents will also be notified through email and text.

Snow days are rare. We make every effort to stay open as we serve working parents, many of whom do not get snow days. However, safety of staff and children is our top priority. It is up to Director and Owner to make the final call.

# Enrollment

## Required documents

In order to enroll at Smart Stars Academy II for any program you must bring the following (filled out and signed):

- Smart Stars Academy II Enrollment Forms
- Custody Court Order (if applicable)
- Receipt of Information Checklist
- Emergency contact information and consent form
- Universal Child Health Record AND Immunization Record
- Signed privacy policy for camera access. Consent for photographs, videos, and interviews. The use of social media policy and any other applicable confidentiality related policies.

## Immunizations and Physicals

All children who attend childcare programs in New Jersey are required by law to be fully vaccinated. Smart Stars Academy II requires all children enrolled in the program to be immunized. Families must contact their local health department to obtain a signed certified *Nonmedical Waiver Form* for delayed vaccines. A *Universal Child Health Record* form is required prior to enrollment. This form requests a record of your child's immunizations, date of last physical examination as well as the results. It must be completed and signed by a NJ licensed physician ANNUALLY.

It is your responsibility as parent or guardian, to maintain up-to-date immunizations and physicals for your child (ren). Updates must be reported to the center director in writing.

Smart Stars Academy II reserves the right to terminate any child who has not provided the immunization records or physical records in a timely manner. In such instance, there will be no refunds or credits given. The child may return to the center after the necessary medical documentation is provided.

If your child requires an EpiPen you must supply the center with 2 (two) EpiPens, clearly labeled with your child's name and physician's contact information.

### **Custody Orders Affecting Enrolled Child**

Until custody has been established by a court action, one parent may not limit the other from picking-up a child in our care. The center must be notified immediately of any changes in custody orders. Certified custody orders must be given to the center director.

### **Parent Responsibility for Updating the Information**

Parents are responsible for promptly updating information on file, including but not limited to:

- Contact information such as address, phones, etc.
- Emergency information
- Custody court order changes
- Medical information (such as allergies and medical conditions)

All updates must be submitted to the Administration in writing  
(email: [Parents@SmartStarsAcademy.com](mailto:Parents@SmartStarsAcademy.com))

## **Tuition and fees**

### **Price calculation**

At our center we strive to offer the best value and convenient hours.

As such, our *standard tuition* is based on a 6:30 am – 8:00 pm day. We also offer extracurricular activities during those hours. Each activity can be discussed individually if a parent is interested. If a parent needs before or after care, this can also be discussed on an individual basis.

This is done so that we can make sure we have enough staff on site to meet the ratio requirements, not overwork our staff and serve the needs of our students. Additionally, we need to make sure we have enough meals prepared based on the amount of students we plan to have in our care.

### **Payment schedule**

All payments are due in full on the 27<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month, unless prior arrangements were made with the Administration (in writing).

Bounced check fee: \$50 for each bounced check.

There are NO DEDUCTIONS, REBATES OR MAKE-UP DAYS due to illness, vacation, absences, inclement weather, or school closings. However, you are entitled to 5 days of vacation each year, which will be prorated within the month you choose to use them in.

### **Late Payments**

Monthly payments are due by the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. Late payments will incur a daily fee, equaling 2% total monthly rate.

### **Subsidized care**

We are in the process to get approved to accept the subsidized payments; however, once we are approved, you are responsible for the difference between the total tuition and the subsidized part paid by the state.

### **Multiple child discount**

We offer 10% off of the total tuition for the 2<sup>nd</sup> child enrolled, 5% off for the 3<sup>rd</sup> child enrolled, and for families with 4 or more children please discuss it with the Administration.

## Supply Fee

Smart Stars Academy II does not require a deposit. Every classroom has a supply fee, which is used to secure your child's placement. The supply fee is \$200 for our 18 month and 2 year old student classrooms, \$250 for our 3 year old student classrooms, and our Pre K class has a supply fee of \$300. The supply fee is annual, for each school year. The supply fee is used for consumable materials, such as workbooks, textbooks, and our online portion of the curriculum. We also provide our students with electronic devices, such as iPads and/or Chrome Books. The use of school property is covered by the supply fee, but the items must be kept in good condition. If a student breaks or destroys school property, the parents are held responsible for fixing or replacing that item. Additionally, we will provide a list of personal items that each student will need for the school year, and this will be the responsibility of each child's parent(s). This will be a supply list of pencils, notebooks, folders, and what your classroom teacher will require for the upcoming school year.

## Termination

We appreciate as much advance notice as possible when terminating and will give the same courtesy in return. If you decide to withdraw, we require at least 2 (two) weeks written notice. The last two weeks payment must be paid in full regardless weather or not the child is in attendance.

We will give two weeks' notice of termination for which full tuition is due, whether or not the child is in attendance. The provider reserves the right to give written notice of immediate termination where there are extreme circumstances that affect the well-being of the provider or other children in attendance. **No refunds will be made.**

Anyone who terminates daycare and has a balance that is outstanding will need to have the account settled within 30 days. All accounts not settled within 30 days will be turned over to a collections agency regardless of amount owed. All accounts turned over to collections will have a \$20 per week late fee plus 35% collections fee added to amount due.

## Confidentiality

Within Smart Stars Academy II, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of Smart Stars Academy II on a "need to know basis" in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as Smart Stars Academy II strives to protect everyone's right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, or other health related information of anyone associated with Smart Stars Academy II.

Outside of Smart Stars Academy II, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent/guardian of the child has given written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of Smart Stars Academy II, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

Any parent who violates the Confidentiality policy will not be permitted on school property thereafter. Refer to the policy regarding Parents Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of a child when a parent is prohibited from accessing school property.

You may observe children at our center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child's privacy. Employees of Smart Stars Academy II are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.



## Privacy Policy of CCTV usage

Although we've implemented maximum level security measures to protect against unauthorized access to the Smart Stars Academy II Surveillance System, you as parents and guardians have the responsibility of protecting your Usernames and Passwords. Remember, your Usernames and Passwords provide unique identifiers that enable our system to identify authorized users.

Therefore, your login information is the first line of defense against unauthorized access. As concerned parents and users of Smart Stars Academy II Surveillance System, it is your responsibility to maintain exclusive control and use of your Username and Password and protect it from inadvertent disclosure to others. **YOU SHOULD NEVER GIVE YOUR PASSWORD TO ANYONE.** In addition, Parents **MUST NEVER** post snapshot pictures taken thru the surveillance cameras on social media.

## Social media use (including sharing of pictures/videos)

You will receive one or more pictures of your child throughout each day. At our events you may take pictures and videos of your child and their friends. We ask that you do NOT share any of the pictures that has anyone but your own child on Social media platforms, even if they are supposedly temporary (like SnapChat). Please make sure you only post pictures that you have rights to. Additionally, please refrain from making demeaning, negative comments about our teachers, other students, administration, and center overall. If you have an issue with something or someone you are welcome to bring it up with the Administration and resolve it constructively.

## Mandated reporting

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of Smart Stars Academy II are considered mandated reporters, under this law. The employees of Beacon Preparatory Academy are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We, at Smart Stars Academy II, take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the staff of Smart Stars Academy II cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in "good faith."

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child's body
- Severe verbal reprimands
- Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, and season
- Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- Not providing appropriate meals including a drink for your child
- Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- Sending a sick child to school, while medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside.
- Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

### **Parent Code of Conduct**

Smart Stars Academy II requires the parents of enrolled children at all times, to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of Smart Stars Academy II is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn, and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of Smart Stars Academy II but is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the center. Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment. Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on school property thereafter. Please refer to the Policy on Parent's Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of the child when a parent is prohibited from accessing agency property.

- Swearing or Cursing

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on school property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive and will not be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

- Threatening of employees, children, other parents or adults associated with Smart Stars Academy II

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In today's society, Smart Stars Academy II cannot afford to sit by idly while threats are made. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the agency will not

assume the risk of a second chance. **PARENTS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES.**

- Physical/verbal punishment of your child or other children at Smart Stars Academy II

Smart Stars Academy II does not support nor condone corporal punishment of children, and therefore such acts are not permitted in our school facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate, it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child. Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures.

Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or center director.

Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or director's attention. At that point, the teacher and/or director will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, teachers and/or the center director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in our school have privacy rights and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the center.

- Smoking

For the health of all Smart Stars Academy II employees, children, and associates, smoking is prohibited anywhere on school property. Parents are prohibited from smoking in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot of Smart Stars Academy II. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the parking lot.

- Violations of the safety policy

Parents are required to follow all safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed not as mere inconveniences, but to protect the welfare and best interest of the employees, children, and associates of Smart Stars Academy II. Please be particularly mindful of Smart Stars Academy II entrance procedures. We all like to be polite. However, we need to be careful to not allow unauthorized

individuals into the center. Holding the door open for the person following you may, in fact, be polite; however, that person may not be authorized to enter the premises. Security procedures are only as strong as the weakest person in our organizational chain. Be alert and mindful. Immediately report any breaches to the Center Director.

- Confrontational interactions with employees, other parents, or associates Smart Stars Academy II. While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of Smart Stars Academy II or the parents of the other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

- **Violations of Confidentiality**

Smart Stars Academy II takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the school. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families, and employees associated with Smart Stars Academy II. Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential, pressures employees or other parents for information, which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

### **Parents' Right to Immediate Access**

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child, whenever they are in care at Smart Stars Academy II, as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) Smart Stars Academy II must be provided with a certified copy of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

In the absence of a court order on file with Smart Stars Academy II, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. Smart Stars Academy II cannot, without a court order, limit the access of one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, Beacon Preparatory Academy

suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. Smart Stars Academy II staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the center's director, and are allowed in the childcare facility only at the discretion of the center's director. An employee of Smart Stars Academy II will accompany visitors at all times, throughout the center.

Smart Stars Academy II will dismiss any child whose parent is prohibited from entering upon school property. Due to the parents' right to immediate access policy, as well as state and federal regulations, Smart Stars Academy II cannot have a child at the agency when the child's parent is prohibited access. Smart Stars Academy II will not agree to any request to maintain a child's enrollment even if the parent agrees to stay out of the center. Such an agreement is a violation of the law and will not be entertained.

## Curriculum

At Smart Stars Academy II we strive to help our students build a foundation that will form a strong beginning point for the rest of their education careers. Our goal is to foster children's development in all areas, from academic, to social and emotional skills. Every child develops at their own pace, and we are here to help along the way. Every child also has a different learning style. That is why our teachers are developing custom lesson plans for their classrooms for their appropriate group of kids. We are here to challenge and encourage children's growth. We are here to make them successful. But we don't define success by just being an early reader or amazing at certain sports. One can be successful because of their emotional intelligence and knowing how to be empathetic, how to make friends and be a team member. It is important for children to learn how to learn, and not only to learn how to be taught.

Smart Stars Academy II has a curriculum especially designed, by adapting the most relevant and beneficial aspects of philosophers such as Maria Montessori, Vygotsky, Piaget, and Howard Earl Gardner.

Our curriculum is based on a multiple intelligence approach developed with a "theme" in mind that will be presented and taught in various forms reflecting the seven intelligences. As educators and mothers, we understand that children learn in various ways. Some children grasp better through the visual or musical form, others need bodily kinesthetic or interpersonal experiences. Gardner's theory states, **"Parents and educators need to look for signs of innate precociousness in children and then help in developing them."**

Smart Stars Academy II developed a curriculum which is structured in such a way that every child will be encouraged to learn and flourish in their own unique way and at their own pace.

## Programs

At Smart Stars Academy II we offer an incredible preschool program (you can learn more on our website at [www.smartstarsacademy.com](http://www.smartstarsacademy.com)):

All year:

Young Toddlers (18 months - 2 years old)

Early Preschool (2 - 3years old)

Preschool (3 - 4 years old)

Pre K (4-5 years old)

We, at Smart Stars Academy II, also offer extracurricular activities, even to our youngest toddlers. Please feel free to inquire with the center's director for more information, as these change according to our students and their family's needs.

### **Daily Routines**

#### **Daily Schedules**

Daily schedules vary by classroom. Each classroom has adequate time for learning, playing, resting, and outdoor time, as necessary per the age of the students. You can learn more about each age group and their individual schedules on our website ([SmartStarsAcademy.com](http://SmartStarsAcademy.com)) and by requesting it from the main office.

**Please LABEL everything!**

Item-please label each	Check List
Sleeping Bag in a Laundry Bag	
Slippers	
Baby Wipes	
Change of Clothes (2)	
Bibs (if applicable)	
Diapers (if applicable)	
Paper Towel Roll	
Tissue Box	
Lysol Wipes	
Pajamas	

**What not to bring**

Parents will be informed on what items their child is required to bring prior to the first day of school. Each age group has different requirements, based on their different needs.

Please leave the following at home/in the car:

- Toys
- Any valuables
- Fancy clothing/shoes that cannot get stained/ruined
- Jewelry

Smart Stars Academy II is not responsible for any loss or damage to personal property, kids' clothing etc. which took place during normal learning and exploration activities.



**Staff to Child Ratios**

State of New Jersey has requirements for the proper staff to child ratio. Smart Stars Academy II not only meets these requirements, but we surpass the minimum by always providing more than the required number of staff members for our small group sizes.

Age	Ratio
18 -30 months	1:06
2.5 y.o.– 4y.o.	1:10
4 y.o.-5y.o.	1:12
5 y.o. and Older	1:15

**Nap/rest time**

All children under the age of 4 who remain at the center after 12:00 pm will have a rest/nap time as per N.J.A.C. 10:122-6.4. The length of time will vary per class, taking into consideration the age of the children and individual rest/sleep needs. Please provide a clearly labeled sheet (crib size fits best) and a small blanket, or a sleeping bag, for your child to use at rest. These items will be sent home each week to be laundered. Pillows are not allowed (unless small and sewn into the sheet), and toys are best to be avoided, unless absolutely necessary.

**Outside Time**

Children of all age are taken outside daily, in almost any weather. Please dress your child(ren) in weather appropriate clothes, which you would not mind getting dirty/messy. For gardening (or just wet) days it might be a good idea to have rainboots and wetsuit to avoid getting all messy. Although, we will send a reminder out if we need a wet suit or rain boots for gardening purposes.

**Dress code**

Children enjoy their independence. Clothes that are easy to put on and off, that don't restrict their movement and are ok to get dirty are best. Make sure your child has outdoor clothes that are weather appropriate. Please provide your child with extra clothes, for all grades, and label all of their belongings

**Sunscreen and bug repellent policy**

During sunny months, we ask that you apply the first round of sunscreen on your child prior to dropping them off to daycare. Our staff will reapply sunscreen as needed (after nap time, after water play, etc). Please LABEL it with your child's name. Also, for safety purposes pressured spray (aerosol) sunscreens or bug repellants are NOT

allowed.

### **Birthday party policy**

We are happy to be a part of your child's birthday celebration. However, time and format must be mutually agreed upon with the lead teacher and administrator. Please respect our daily schedule. Any pictures taken during the celebration should not be shared publicly if they have any other child in them.

Our school has a no candy, no junk food, and no nuts policy. Given that many children might have some specific allergies or dietary restrictions it is best to send any treats/party favors home with the children. We will not let children consume the treats that are brought in. It is always best to let the parents decide what is ok and how much for their own child. We will take the party favors from you and send them home with each child.

### **Parent Teacher conferences/communication**

There will be 3 parent-teacher conferences per school year: November, February, and May.

Back to school night will be hosted within the first weeks of September.

Additionally, you will be receiving communication in the form of daily reports or email about your child's day. You will also have access to the live video feed through our proprietary application. Additional communications will be made through our social media presence such as our closed Parent Facebook Group and Instagram page.

You are welcome to ask the teacher brief questions about your child's day, during drop off and/or pick up times. If you require more lengthy discussion, please schedule a phone or in person conference outside the classroom time.

### **Evaluation and Assessment**

Evaluations and assessments are executed mostly informally at such a young age. These evaluations and assessments are predominantly used for the teacher to better understand each young child and accommodate their needs, keep the parents informed, and be able to better plan the lessons (all while keeping the goals in mind along with the individual students in each classroom).

The students have short- and long-term goals set for them and as they progress from the young toddler group to the Pre K class the curriculum and goals become rigorous and more complex.

## Meals and Snacks

Never a cookie-cutter, and always an innovator, we pride ourselves on the passion of our students, our staunch commitment to wholesome, nutritious meal preparation, our stringent sanitation and food safety program, and our dedication to serving the students well, each and every time they sit down to eat.

We understand that environmental stewardship is important to the educational development of students. Going beyond simply environmental awareness, we want to be environmentally innovative, instructive, creative, and proactive.

All processed foods, hydrogenated oils, high fructose corn syrup, refined sugars, refined flour, dyes, nitrates, additives, and chemicals are banned from our food list. Local, organic milk is served throughout cafeterias in addition to organic fruits and vegetables as much as possible.

Eating a balanced meal while sitting down calmly, is important in the development of a healthy child. It helps them to digest food properly, avoid stomach aches, and avoid sapped energy levels in the afternoon.

If children are eating food that's nourishing AND tastes delicious, they can focus and learn and hopefully take a little bit of their happy bellies into the rest of their lives.

All our meals are made daily in our on-site fully licensed and squeaky-clean kitchen. Our menu and portions are developed by nutritionists to ensure a well-balanced diet. We offer three meals a day: breakfast (8:45 am-9:00 am, group based), lunch (11:45 am – 12:30 pm, group-based) and dinner (3:30 pm – 4 pm, group-based). We also offer snack times: morning (around 10:30am) and evening (around 5:30pm). Both snacks consist of fresh seasonal fruits or vegetables sometimes with the addition of some sort of grain (crackers, homemade granola/muffin/etc). We strongly encourage parents to send in additional snacks for their children, but to maintain healthy snack options-only.

We only offer water to drink in between the meals, during the meals we offer the choice of water, tea, compote, or fruit- infused water. No juices will be served.

We distribute weekly menu via our application and private Parents Facebook Group, so you can familiarize yourself with the menu. Parents are required to provide written notification of any food/dietary restrictions. (i.e. lactose intolerance, vegetarian diets, wheat free/gluten free diets). We will always make a reasonable effort to

accommodate any dietary restriction your child might have, but we ask that parents provide the foods that are specific to your child, if applicable. Please speak to the Administration.

If your child has any food allergies or diet changes, please inform administration immediately. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the school of any food related allergies, as well as of any other medical conditions.

### **Food and Drinks Policy**

If you wish to send your own food and drink for your child – you are welcome to do so. Please put everything in clearly labeled containers. We will refrigerate and/or warm up the food if necessary. We do not allow any sugary drinks such as sodas or juices.

### **Nut Free School**

Our school is a nut free facility. Please refrain from ANY nut products regardless if a child in your classroom has an allergy or not.

### **Arrival**

Upon arrival at Smart Stars Academy II, the parents or the adult dropping the child off must sign the child into Procure on the pad or tablet located in the reception.

Smart Stars Academy II strongly discourages parents from sneaking out of the center. Some children exhibit **separation anxiety** when it is time for their parent to leave. We believe it is best for parents to tell the anxious child upon arrival that they are leaving, the parent will kiss, hug, and say goodbye to the child. This will prepare the child for their departure. The teachers present in the classroom will comfort and assist the child through the anxious time. Parents are asked to leave promptly after saying goodbye. The longer the parent of an anxious child drags out the departure, the more anxiety the child is likely to feel. The administrator is available to discuss other options if the child does not settle into the arrival routine after a reasonable period of time.

At arrival, parents are required to follow the Medication Policy if a child must receive medication during the day.

Parents are required to notify the child's teacher or center director of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. The parent must present the special instructions in a written form as well as verbally discuss them with either the classroom teacher or center director. These special instructions include but are not limited to early pick up, an alternative pick up person, health issues over the previous night which require to be observed, and/or any general issues or concerns, which the childcare

providers should be aware of to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

### **Notification of Absence**

Parents are required to inform the center by 9:00 a.m. (at the latest) if a child will not be at the center on a scheduled day. This will enable the center to more effectively maintain appropriate ratios and help the classroom teacher effectively plan for the day.

If your child is ill, we request that you notify the center director not only of the absence, but also of the nature of the illness. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with staff on a “need to know” basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the director, so that the parents of the children in the school maybe notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared not your child’s name. Beacon Preparatory Academy will take all measures necessary to protect your child’s confidentiality. Parents are required to present a doctor’s note with a diagnosis upon return.

### **Late Arrival**

Parents who know in advance that a child will be late are required to notify the center by 8:30 a.m. to maintain the appropriate staff to child ratios upon your child’s arrival at school. Parents are expected to be considerate of the fact that the daily routine and activities are in progress and help their child join the class with as little disruption as possible. We ask your cooperation in seeing that your child is ready for the beginning of the school day. This means arriving at least ten minutes before the start of the day to prepare for class. The preschool classes have different schedules, depending on the age of each group. We ask that you familiarize yourself with your child’s class schedule. Please arrive on time for breakfast. However, if you arrive after breakfast has been served, please ensure that your child has breakfast at home. This will assist in a less disruptive arrival into the classroom, if the students are already in the process of learning, and also will help ensure that your child is not hungry until the next meal/snack time.

### **Policy on release of children**

No child will be released to anyone else other than parents or people indicated on the emergency or registration forms. If you have someone else picking up a child, a written note is required (email). Please remember to have the individual picking up your child present ID, whether they are not on the “pick up forms” or if it is their first time picking up your child. This will allow us to match the name and picture on the ID to the name on the “pick up forms” or your email. We take the safety of our students extremely serious.

Parents or other authorized adult are required to sign their child out of care on the Procure Fingerprint System located on the main office counter. Once a parent signs their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on school premises. The parent may not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms and/or playground. Parents are required to handle all business issues prior to signing out their child and are required to directly exit the building once they have signed their child out of care.

Parents or persons designated to act in their place are required to sign any incident/accident reports from the day at pick-up. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you or another authorized adult at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest or the teacher’s prep time if the parent(s) is/are unable to meet at the center during the day.

### **Late Pick-up**

All measurements of time are to be according to the Procure Fingerprint System located in the reception. Late fees are a \$10 for first 10 min and a \$1.00 per minute after, per child. If you are past the time indicated on your enrollment contract, you’re considered to be late. Please inform the school via phone call or email if you will be late, so we can plan accordingly.

### **Persons appearing to be impaired by drugs/alcohol at pick-up**

The staff of Smart Stars Academy II will contact local police and/or the other custodial parent should a parent appear, to the staff of our center, to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The parent’s right to immediate access does not permit the school from denying a custodial parent access to their child even if the parent is or appears to be impaired. However, Smart Stars Academy II staff will delay the impaired parent as long as possible, while contacting the other parent, the local police, and/or

Child Protective Services.

Any other authorized person who attempts to pick-up a child and appears to the staff to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will be denied access to the child. The staff of Smart Stars Academy II will contact the child's parents, local police, and/or Child Protective Services to notify them of the situation.

### **Emergency/Alternative Pick Up Forms**

At enrollment, parents will be presented with an Emergency/Alternate Pick-up form. Parents are encouraged to include on this form any, and all persons who, in the course of events, may at one time be asked to pick-up their child from Beacon Preparatory Academy. In an emergency situation the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached the staff will call the persons listed on the enrollment form until someone can be reached.

Parents do not need to be listed on the Emergency Contact Form. The nature of the parental relationship affords the parents (in the absence of a court order indicating otherwise) the right to pick-up their child. Parents are required to handle all business issues prior to signing out their child and are required to directly exit the building once they have signed their child out of care.

Parents or persons designated to act "in loco parentis" are required to sign any incident/accident reports from the day at pick-up. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you or another authorized adult at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest or the teacher's prep time if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the center during the course of the day.

### **Field Trip Policy**

Smart Stars Academy II will notify parents in advance of any field trip(s) planned, that will result in the children leaving the premises of the center. In case of such field trips, parents will be provided with detailed information of the nature of the trip, the mode of transportation, the fee, and will be asked to sign permission slips.

**Transportation**

At Smart Stars Academy II we have our very own school bus. We have taken every precaution and measure to ensure the safety of the use of our bus. It is brand new and the driving record of our school bus driver has been extensively checked. If you choose to utilize this exclusive service for transportation from home to school, school to home, school to activities, or a field trip, Smart Stars Academy II will require applicable paperwork to be filled out and signed. Otherwise, your child will not be allowed to use the school bus. You may always reach out to the office for further information and pricing for this option.

**Parental Involvement**

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many ways in which parents can participate and volunteer at the childcare center.

Parents may volunteer to attend trips, read in the classroom, assist teachers, and/or coordinate special events. Teachers will share any volunteer opportunities available with the parents of their classroom. Parents not interested in volunteering directly in the classroom may donate items, do maintenance work, or assist in the front office.

Parents with court orders detailing custodial arrangements will only be permitted to volunteer on days in which they are afforded custody (joint/shared custody arrangement) as per the court order. For example, if a parent is afforded custody on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, the parent will only be able to volunteer on those days. Parents with visitation only (sole/exclusive custody arrangements), will only be permitted to volunteer with the express written permission of the custodial parent.

Smart Stars Academy II reserves the right to make volunteer assignments.



**Health and Safety:****Management of illness and Communicable Diseases**

If a child exhibits any of the following symptoms, the child should not attend the center. If such symptoms occur at the center, the child will be removed from the group, and parents will be called to take the child home, immediately.

- Severe pain or discomfort
- Sore throat, trouble swallowing, or loss of voice
- Continuous wet or dry cough
- Runny nose (other than clear)
- Elevated temperature of 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit
- Lethargy
- Yellow eyes or jaundiced skin
- Red eyes and/or discharge of any kind from the eyes
- Infected, untreated skin patches or open sores/blisters
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Skin rashes with or without an accompanying fever or behavior changes
- Skin lesions that are weeping or bleeding
- Mouth sores (inside or around the mouth)
- Stiff neck
- Diarrhea- occurring 2 or more times within a 4-hour period
- Vomiting- if your child has vomited once, we require a 24-hour period of monitoring before they can return to school

Once the child is symptom-free for 24 hours (without medication) and has a health care provider's note stating the diagnosis, clearing the child and the child is no longer ill, the child may return to the center.

## EXCLUDABLE COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

A child or staff member who contracts an excludable communicable disease may not return to the center without a health care provider's note stating that the child presents no risk to himself/herself or others.

Note: If a child has chicken pox, a note from the parent stating that all sores have dried and crusted is required.

If a child is exposed to any excludable disease at the center, parents will be notified in writing.

## COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REPORTING GUIDELINES

Some excludable communicable diseases must be reported to the Health Department by the center. The Department of Health's Reporting Requirements for Communicable Diseases and Work-Related Conditions Quick Reference Guide, a complete list of reportable excludable communicable diseases, can be found at:

[http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/reportable\\_disease\\_magnet.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/reportable_disease_magnet.pdf).

## Medication Administration Policy

**PURPOSE:** This policy was written to encourage communication between the parent, the child's health care provider, and the child care provider to assure maximum safety in the giving of medication to the child who requires medication to be provided during the time the child is in child care.

**INTENT:** Assuring the health and safety of all children in our center is a team effort by the childcare provider, family, and health care provider. This is particularly true when medication is necessary to the child's participation in childcare. Therefore, an understanding of each of our responsibilities, policies, and procedures concerning medication administration is critical to meeting that goal.

1. Whenever possible, it is best that medication be given at home. Dosing of medication can frequently be done so that the child receives medication prior to going to childcare, and again when returning home and/or at bedtime. The parent/guardian is encouraged to discuss this possibility with the child's health care provider.
2. The first dose of any medication should always be given at home and with sufficient time before the child returns to childcare to observe the child's response to the medication given. When a child is ill due to a communicable

disease that requires medication as treatment, the health care provider may require that the child be on a particular medication for 24 hours before returning to childcare. This is for the protection of the child who is ill, as well as the other children in childcare.

3. Medication will only be given when ordered by the child's health care provider and with written consent of the child's parent/legal guardian. A "Permission to Give Medication in Child Care" form is attached to this policy and will hereafter be referred to as Permission Form. All information on the Permission Form must be completed before the medication can be given. Copies of this form can be duplicated or requested from the childcare provider.
4. Please keep in mind if the child is ill, he/she must remain home until 100% well to return to school for their safety and the safety of others. Medication given in school, would only apply in cases where the child is not contagious and needs the medication for other reason's stated by their health care provider, such as allergy medication, asthmatic medication, etc. It is addressed on an individual basis between the center's director and the student's family.

5. "As needed" medications may be given only when the child's health care provider completes a Permission Form that lists specific reasons and times when such medication can be given.
6. Medications given in the center will be administered by a staff member designated by the center director and will have been informed of the child's health needs related to the medication and will have had training in the safe administration of medication.
7. Any prescription or over-the-counter medication brought to the childcare center must be specific to the child who is to receive the medication, in its original container, have a child-resistant safety cap, and be labeled with the appropriate information as follows:
  - a. Prescription medication must have the original pharmacist label that includes the pharmacist's phone number, the child's full name, name of the health care provider prescribing the medication, name and expiration date of the medication, the date it was prescribed or updated, and dosage, route, frequency, and any special instructions for its administration and/or storage. It is suggested that the parent/guardian ask the pharmacist to provide the medication in two containers, one for home and one for use in childcare.
  - b. Over-the-counter (OTC) medication must have the child's full name on the container, and the manufacturer's original label with dosage, route, frequency, and any special instructions for administration and storage, and expiration date must be clearly visible.
  - c. Any OTC without instructions for administration specific to the age of the child receiving the medication must have a completed Permission Form from the health care provider prior to being given in the childcare center.
8. All medications will be stored:
  - Inaccessible to children
  - Separate from staff or household medications
  - Under proper temperature control
  - A small lock box will be used in the refrigerator to hold medications requiring refrigeration.
9. For the child who receives a particular medication on a long-term daily basis, the staff will advise the parent/guardian one week prior to the medication needing to be refilled so that needed doses of medication are not missed.

10. Unused or expired medication will be returned to the parent/guardian when it is no longer needed or unable to be used by the child.

11. Records of all medication given to a child are completed in ink and are signed by the staff designated to give the medication. These records are maintained in the center. Samples of the forms used are attached to this policy and include:

- Permission to Give Medication in Child Care
- Universal Child Health Record
- Emergency Contact Sheet
- Medication Administration Log
- Medication Incident/Error Report

12. Information exchange between the parent/guardian and childcare provider about medication that a child is receiving should be shared when the child is brought to and picked up from the center. Parents/guardians should share with the staff any problems, observations, or suggestions that they may have in giving medication to their child at home, and likewise with the staff from the center to the parent/guardian.

13. Confidentiality related to medications and their administration will be safeguarded by the center director and staff. Parents/guardians may request to see/review their child's medication records maintained at the center, at any time.

14. Parent/guardian will sign all necessary medication related forms that require their signature, and particularly in the case of the emergency contact form, will update the information as necessary to safeguard the health and safety of their child.

15. Parent/guardian will authorize the director or director designee to contact the pharmacist or health care provider for more information about the medication the child is receiving, and will also authorize the health care provider to speak with the director or director's designee in the event that a situation arises that requires immediate attention to the child's health and safety, particularly if the parent/guardian cannot be reached.

16. Parent/guardian will read and have an opportunity to discuss the content of this policy with the director or director's designee. The parent signature on this policy is an indication that the parent accepts the guidelines and procedures listed in this policy and will follow them to safeguard the health and safety of their child. Parent/guardian will receive a copy of the signed policy including single copies of the records referenced in this policy.

The Medication Administration in Child Care Policy will be reviewed annually by the Smart Stars Academy II director.

## Allergies

For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide a signed copy of the “Authorization For Emergency Care for Children with Severe Allergies” form, detailing any allergies, food or otherwise, from which their child suffers, at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. This form must be filled out by the child’s physician and parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and must be updated every six months, or more frequently, as needed. In addition to this form, parents must provide a copy of any additional physician’s orders and procedural guidelines relating to the prevention and treatment of the child’s allergy. This form can be obtained by request from the center director.

Parents must also execute a “Release and Waiver of Liability for Administering Emergency Treatment to Children with Severe Allergies” form. This form releases Smart Stars Academy II from liability for administering treatment to children with severe allergies and taking other necessary actions set forth in the “Authorization for Emergency Care for Children with Severe Allergies” form, provided Beacon Preparatory Academy exercises reasonable care in taking such actions.

Any medication required to treat an allergic reaction must be provided in accordance with the Medication Policy detailed herein.

## Biting

Smart Stars Academy II recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the 18 months through 2 ½ year old classrooms. Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their children may be bit or will bite another child. The staff understands that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations which, provoke, or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. The staff will not punish, or harshly discipline children in the younger classrooms for biting behavior; they will simply redirect the children to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior.

Parents will be notified by incident/accident report that a biting incident occurred during the course of the day. The staff may not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is considered to be confidential and cannot be disclosed. The staff of Smart Stars Academy II cannot discuss the medical history of any child involved in a biting incident with the other party. It is recommended that any child involved in a biting incident be seen by their family physician if the parents are concerned about communicable diseases possibly resulting from the biting.

Please rest assured the staff of Smart Stars Academy II will do the best they can do avoid these situations, at all times. We will also be conscious of students that tend to bite more than the expected age appropriate developmental stages, and will handle each individual situation with care, compassion, but also keeping everyone's safety in mind.

## **Fire and Emergency Drills**

Smart Stars Academy II conducts monthly fire and emergency or evacuation drills. Parents, staff, and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency and/or evacuation plans.

During a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation, parents may not sign children into or out of the program. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child in or out of the program, for that day. Parents may feel free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe-zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of a real fire/emergency situation, the director or designee will inform each classroom teacher that the school will be closing. At this time any parents waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. All other parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by telephone of the situation. As with the sick child pick up policy, children must be picked up within 45 minutes of the telephone call.

Parents wishing to sign their child out of the program during a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation are expected to have patience with the staff as they are trying to maintain order during an often hectic and dangerous situation. If the center is in the midst of a fire/emergency drill, parents will be required to wait until the drill is completed and the staff and children are returned to the building to sign their child out of the program. If the center is having a real fire/emergency situation, parents will be asked to wait until the director or designee has accounted for all staff and children and gives the staff permission to release children. Once again, it is important for parents and staff to work together, remain calm, and cooperate with the fire/emergency personnel and center administration during these important and critical situations.

### **Alternate Safe Location**

Should the administration of Smart Stars Academy II or any emergency service personnel determine the building, which houses the child care, to be too dangerous to be occupied, the staff and children will be taken to the location designated in the evacuation plan. Once the children are assembled there, the staff will begin contacting parents or emergency contact persons for pick up. As stated before, children must be picked up within 45 minutes of the telephone call.

Emergency evacuation locations (as of July 07, 2020)

6:30 a.m. – 8 p.m. Kelvin's Basketball Academy

6:30 a.m. – 8 p.m. Marlboro Banya



6:30a.m. – 8p.m. Beacon Stars Enrichment Center

### **Incident/Accident Reports**

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident during the course of the school day, a staff member will complete an Incident/Accident Report.

Parents or persons designated to act “in loco parentis” are required to sign any incident/accident reports from the day at pick-up. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in-depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest or the teacher’s prep time if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the center during the course of the day.

Should a person other than the parent or one designated to act “in loco parentis” pick-up the child, a parent or person designated to act “in loco parentis” must sign the Incident/Accident Report and return a copy to the center director within 24 hours.

Failure to sign and return an Incident/Accident in this time period will result in your child’s exclusion from the program until such time as the report is returned signed.

Please note, New Jersey State requires all childcare providers to immediately notify parents by phone in case of the following accidents:

- Any injury shoulders and up
- Fall from height greater than their own

This means that even if there is a minor scratch, Smart Stars Academy II staff will call and/or email you. At the same time, you can rest assured that we report all accidents, not only “visible” ones.

## **Policy on Methods of Parental Notification**

It is very important at Smart Stars Academy II that we have open communication with all our parents and staff members.

We use many forms for communication to notify parents and staff members of news, reminders, updates, emergencies, changes to programs/calendars, etc.

Lines of communication include:

- Telephones (landline – home)
- Cell Phones
- Work Phones
- Text – cell phone
- Written “hard copies” put in children's cubbies
- E-mails (mail to: [Parents@SmartStarsAcademy.com](mailto:Parents@SmartStarsAcademy.com))
- Mail (165 Amboy Rd, Building F, Morganville, NJ 07751)
- Parent – Teacher Conferences
- Parent – Director Meeting
- Website: [SmartStarsAcademy.com](http://SmartStarsAcademy.com)
- Facebook: Beacon Preparatory Academy & Smart Stars Academy II
- Facebook: Parents of Beacon Preparatory Academy & Smart Stars Academy II
- Instagram:
- Our Proprietary Application

If parents need to contact the Smart Stars Academy II director or any staff member any and all of the above methods of communication are acceptable.

## **Expulsion policy**

Unfortunately, there are sometimes reasons we have to expel a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced.

The following are reasons we may have to expel or suspend a child from this center:

### **IMMEDIATE CAUSES FOR EXPULSION:**

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or himself/herself.
- Parent threatens physical or intimidating actions toward staff members.
- Parent exhibits verbal abuse to staff in front of the students

### **PARENTAL ACTIONS FOR CHILD'S EXPULSION:**

- Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's immunization records
- Habitual tardiness when picking up your child

- Verbal abuse to our staff

#### CHILD'S ACTIONS FOR EXPULSION:

- Failure of child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time
- Uncontrollable tantrums/ angry outbursts
- Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children
- Excessive biting, hitting, or any other behavior deemed dangerous to him/herself and others in the school
- Destruction to school property

#### SCHEDULE OF EXPULSION:

If after remedial actions have not worked, the child's parent/guardian will be advised verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior warranting an expulsion. An expulsion action is meant to be a period of time so that the parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or to come to an agreement with the center. The parent/guardian will be informed regarding the length of the expulsion period and the expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return to the center. The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent sufficient time to seek alternate childcare (approximately one to two weeks' notice depending on risk to other children's welfare or safety). Failure of the child/parent to satisfy the terms of the plan may result in permanent expulsion from the center.

#### A CHILD WILL NOT BE EXPELLED IF A PARENT/GUARDIAN:

- Made a complaint to the Office of Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements
- Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the center
- Questioned the center regarding policies and procedures

#### PROACTIVE ACTIONS THAT CAN BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO PREVENT EXPULSION:

- Try to redirect child from negative behavior
- Reassess classroom environment, appropriateness of activities and/or supervision
- Always use positive methods and language while disciplining children
- Praise appropriate behaviors
- Consistently apply consequences for rules
- Give the child verbal warnings
- Give the child time to regain control
- Document the child's disruptive behavior and maintain confidentiality
- Give the parent/guardian written copies of the disruptive behavior that might lead to expulsion

- Schedule a conference including the director, classroom staff, and parent/guardian to discuss how to promote positive behaviors
- Give the parent literature of other resources regarding methods of improving behavior
- Recommend an evaluation by a professional consultation on premises
- Recommend an evaluation by a local school district study team

### **Withdrawal policy**

Two weeks written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason from our program.

The parents and child, following their last day of enrollment, are not permitted to re-enter school property without prior permission of the center director. A withdrawn child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the director of Smart Stars Academy II. Appointments are made at the discretion of the center director and are not a right of the withdrawn child or parent.

Parents who wish to change their child's days or times of enrollment at Beacon Preparatory Academy must submit a request to do so two weeks in advance of the proposed change. Schedule changes are subject to a change fee.

The center director will notify the parents in writing if the new schedule is available. A schedule change will not be final until a new fee agreement is signed. If the schedule change requires an additional deposit and/or registration fee, the change will also be contingent upon payment of these monies. If the requested schedule is not available parents may choose to continue with the current schedule until such time as the requested schedule becomes available or may choose to withdraw their child from the program. The date the request is submitted to the director will be used to toll the two weeks' notice required for withdrawal.

## **Media Use policy**

### **Policy on Television, Computers and Video Usage**

The American Academy of Pediatrics discourages media usage by children younger than age 2 and recommends limiting older children's screen time to no more than one or two hours a day. Too much screen time has been linked to obesity, irregular sleep, behavioral problems, impaired academic performance, violence and less time for play.

As part of Smart Stars Academy II curriculum, "media" shall include TV, computer and video usage. Teaching staff will:

- Not offer and TV/Computer or Video usage to children ages 2 years of age and younger
- For children 2 years of age and older:
  - Only offer media in conjunction with learning themes and must be academically appropriate
  - Never use media as a substitute for planned activities or passive viewing
  - Never use media during mealtimes or snack time
- Take advantage of training courses and resources which update their knowledge and understanding of effects of media on young children
- Work with parents to help them understand the importance of limiting media exposure for the physical and psychological health and well-being of their child.

### **Policy on Social Media Usage**

This social media policy applies to parents and staff of Smart Stars Academy II. This policy includes (but is not limited to) the following technologies:

- Social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat)
- Blogs
- Discussion forums
- Collaborative online spaces
- Media Sharing services (i.e. YouTube)
- Micro-blogging (i.e. Twitter)

As part of our duty to safeguard children it is essential to maintain the privacy and security of all our families. We therefore require that:

- No photographs taken within the school setting or at school's special events and outings with the children, are to be posted for public viewing, except those of your own child. Parents are advised that they do not have a right to photograph anyone else's child or to upload photos of anyone else's children. (This excludes those photographs taken by staff for use on Smart Stars Academy II website or social media pages and in other advertising material, if

parental permission is given).

- No public discussions are to be held or comments made on social media sites regarding the center's children or any that would offend any member of staff or parent associated with the center
- Staff are advised to manage their personal security settings to ensure that their information is only available to people they choose to share information with
- Parents are not allowed to be "Facebook friends" with staff unless they were "friends" prior to parent-teacher relationship at Smart Stars Academy II
- If staff names the center in any social media they do so in a way that is not detrimental to the school or its families
- Staff observe confidentiality and refrain from discussing any issues relating to work
- Staff should not share information they would not want children, parents, or colleagues to view
- Staff and parents should report any concerns or breaches to the director of Smart Stars Academy II. Any member of staff, parent, or volunteer found to be posting remarks or comments that breach confidentiality, bring the school into disrepute or that are deemed to be of a detrimental nature to the center or other employees, or posting/publishing photographs of the setting, children, or staff may face disciplinary action in line with the center's disciplinary procedures. Any comment deemed to be inappropriate is to be reported to the director and any action taken will be at their discretion

**General guidelines for using social media:**

- Personal security settings should be managed to ensure that information is only available to people you choose to share information with
- Remember that no information sent over the web is totally secure and as such if you do not wish the information to be made public refrain from sending it through social media
- Maintain professionalism, honesty, and respect
- Apply a "good judgment test" for every social media post you make

Note: Smart Stars Academy II staff will use social media as a means of parent communication and for marketing purposes throughout the year.

**Student Code of Conduct, Bullying and Sexual Harassment**

It is important that school be an environment which is emotionally and physically safe for all students and staff. In order to foster such an environment, negative acts of violent, physical, verbal, or emotional nature will not be tolerated. Parents are expected and encouraged to review these policies with their child to ensure they are understood.

As a preschool with children between the ages of 18 months through Pre K, we feel that this will never be the case, but would like to ensure that we will seek to support students with interventions and disciplinary action where appropriate, holding students accountable and simultaneously helping students learn from their mistakes. Our intent is not to suppress or punish normal and developmentally appropriate behaviors. The response to misconduct is dependent on the student's age, the student's prior misconduct, the number of prior instances of misconduct, the nature, severity, and scope of the behavior. Discipline may include, but is not limited to, suspension or expulsion.

The below are included in this handbook, because as a facility we cater to students ages 18 months through students 13 years of age. It is likely, none of this will apply to our younger students, but nonetheless it is important to discuss.

**Examples of unacceptable behaviors include, but are not limited to:**

- Weapons, including but not limited to pocket knives, are not permitted on school premises.
- Violent or Physical behavior (hitting, punching, pushing, tripping, fighting) involving another student, staff member, or visitor
- Behaving in a way that is dangerous or compromises the safety of oneself or others, including tampering with fire alarms or possessing any hazardous materials
- Destroying or damaging student work, teacher materials, school-supplied resources, or school property



- Writing on walls, bulletin boards, or school furniture
- Stealing or destroying the property of others or of the school
- Insulting or putting down another student or teacher
- Serious or habitual classroom disruptions
- Bullying, threatening, or intimidating another student
- Sexual harassment
- Possession, use, selling, distributing, or being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, including improper use of prescription drugs
- Smoking or vaping on school premises
- Cheating
- Lying to avoid punishment for wrongdoing or otherwise
- Inappropriate student communication involving cell phones and/or texting, internet, messaging, or any social media platforms
- Using profane, obscene, or vulgar language
- Leaving class or school premises without permission
- Use of a cell phone during the school day without explicit permission by a faculty member

*The above list includes some examples. It is not a comprehensive or all-inclusive list. Students may also be disciplined for common sense violations or violations of school community values other than those enumerated above.*

### **Student Bullying and Harassment Policy**

Physical and verbal aggression, the use of abusive language, hazing, bullying, and harassment of any kind are prohibited. This policy applies not only at school and school sponsored or affiliated trips and events, but also to certain conduct that occurs outside of school and in cyberspace. The school reserves the right to discipline those in the school community who engage in harassment/bullying of other school community members at any location and at any time. If such harassment/bullying causes a substantial disruption to the school community in the discretion of the school, this may result in expulsion from the school.

#### **Bullying**

Harassment/bullying is the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, including cyber bullying, that (A) has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; or (B) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety; or (C) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to

cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student; or (D) occurs off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation, or abuse's effect might reach school property. Acts of harassment/bullying shall include, but not be limited to, those acts based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (which includes gender identity and/or expression) or sex. Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slurs, quips or negative stereotyping that relate to any of the categories above. This list is not all-inclusive. Other unwelcome acts of an offensive nature may also constitute harassment/bullying.

Bullying behavior can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Deliberately excluding another community member
- Threatening physical harm
- Teasing
- Taking, hiding, or damaging someone's belongings and/or property
- Gossiping about another community member
- Name calling
- Pushing, tripping, kicking, or hitting

### **Sexual Harassment**

Bullying/harassment includes sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a specific abusive behavior that involves unwanted and unwelcome sexual attention. A behavior is considered sexual harassment on the basis of the target's perception of "unwelcome" sexual behavior; in other words, it is defined by the impact of the action rather than the intentions of the harasser(s). Sexual harassment also includes any "unwelcome" behaviors, which create a hostile or intimidating learning environment.

Harassment may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Touching, rubbing, or pinching of a sexual nature
- Unwanted requests for sexual favors or dating
- Unwelcome stories, comments, or jokes concerning the anatomy, behavior, sexual preferences, or gender identification of oneself or others
- Displaying or circulating offensive written or graphic sexual material
- Sexual gestures or noises
- Transmitting or causing to be transmitted unwanted sexually-oriented material via email, text, social media, mail, or other means

- Rating individuals based on physical attributes or appearance
- “Pantsing”, wedgies and, bra snapping

Other examples of the type of behavior that may constitute sexual harassment include demands for sexual activity; sexual flirtations, advances or propositions; sexual innuendoes or suggestive jokes; comments of a sexual nature to describe an individual or an individual’s body; any type of coerced sexual activity including sexual abuse; displays of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; obscene gestures or materials, spreading rumors of a sexual nature, or leering.

The above lists are not all-inclusive. Other “unwelcome” acts of an offensive nature may also constitute sexual harassment/bullying. Sexual harassment can occur between individuals of different genders or individuals of the same gender.

**Procedures for Reporting Bullying/Harassment**

The school requires all members of the school community (students, faculty, staff, parents, etc.) to report all incidents of harassment/bullying, regardless of who the offender may be. Smart Stars Academy II will take prompt, reasonable action to prevent, investigate, and remedy harassment/bullying allegations. Reports should be made to a member of the faculty, staff, or administrator. All Beacon Preparatory Academy employees are required to report such incidents to the Head of School if they receive a report or otherwise learn of an incident.

If comfortable doing so, students are encouraged to inform the offender that the conduct is unwelcome and request that the bullying/harassment stop.

After receiving a complaint of conduct prohibited by this policy, the Smart Stars Academy II Administration in consultation with the individual that is deemed appropriate by the Head of School, will promptly investigate the complaint. School employees and students are under a duty to cooperate with an investigation. The school will try to be as discrete as possible during an investigation and confidentiality will be maintained to the highest extent possible, given the facts and circumstances of the complaint and the need to do a fair and thorough investigation.

If the school determines that this policy has been violated, the violator will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include but is not limited to a verbal or written reprimand, referral to appropriate counseling, suspension, or expulsion, in the case of a student or discharge in the case of a school employee.

The school will not retaliate against anyone who, in good faith, reports a violation under this policy or who participates in the investigation of a complaint. Any person who engages in such retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action including expulsion or termination.

## Positive Discipline policy

Positive discipline is a process of teaching children how to behave appropriately. Positive discipline respects the rights of the individual child, the group, and the adult. Methods of positive discipline shall be consistent with the age and developmental needs of the children, and lead to the ability to develop and maintain self-control.

Positive discipline is different from punishment. Punishment tells children what they should not do; positive discipline tells children what they should do. Punishment teaches fear; positive discipline teaches self-esteem.

### You can use positive discipline by planning ahead:

- Anticipate and eliminate potential problems
- Have a few consistent, clear rules that are explained to children and understood by adults
- Have a well-planned daily schedule
- Plan for ample elements of fun and humor
- Include some group decision-making
- Provide time and space for each child to be alone
- Make it possible for each child to feel he/she has had some positive impact on the group
- Provide the structure and support children need to resolve their differences
- Share ownership and responsibility with the children. Talk about our room, and our toys so that he/she may gain self-control. (ONE MINUTE FOR EACH YEAR OF THE CHILD'S AGE IS A GOOD RULE OF THUMB)
- Divert the child and remove from the area of conflict
- Provide alternative activities and acceptable ways to release feelings
- Re-direct to a new activity to change the focus of a child's behavior
- Provide individualized attention to help the child deal with a particular situation
- Use time-out -- by removing a child for a few minutes from the area or activity so that he/she may gain self-control (ONE MINUTE FOR EACH YEAR OF THE CHILD'S AGE IS A GOOD RULE OF THUMB)
- Point out natural or logical consequences of children's behavior.
- Offer a choice, only if there are two acceptable options.

- Criticize the behavior, not the child. Don't say "bad boy" or "bad girl." Instead you might say "That is not allowed here."

You can use positive discipline by showing love and encouragement:

- Observe the child exhibiting "good" behavior, respond to that behavior, and reinforce positive behavior; acknowledge or praise to let the child know you approve of what he/she is doing
- Provide positive reinforcement through rewards for good behavior
- Use encouragement rather than competition, comparison, or criticism
- Overlook small annoyances, and deliberately ignore provocations
- Give hugs and care to every child, everyday
- Appreciate the child's point of view

Positive discipline is NOT:

- Disciplining a child for failing to eat, sleep, or for soiling themselves
- Hitting, shaking, or any other form of corporal punishment
- Using abusive language, ridicule, harsh, humiliating or frightening treatment or any other form of emotional punishment of children
- Engaging in or inflicting any form of child abuse and/or neglect
- Withholding food, emotional responses, stimulation, or opportunities for rest or sleep time
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for an inappropriately long period of time

Positive discipline takes time, patience, repetition, and the willingness to change the way you deal with children. However, it is worth it, because positive discipline works.

**Firearms and Weapons Policy**

At no time is any person permitted to carry any type of firearm, ammunitions, and/or weapon on school property for any reason. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

**Staff employment by parents (at home babysitting)**

Employment refers to any relationship outside of the agency's services which involves an employee of Smart Stars Academy II to interact with current or former clients of Smart Stars Academy II. Such relationships include but are not limited to, babysitting, house-sitting, mother's helper, nanny services, and carpooling regardless of whether those services are voluntary or paid.

We ask that you refrain from hiring our teachers as babysitters. We would like to ensure that our teachers have enough time to have a good work-life balance. However, we understand that situations might be different, and at the end of the day, we do have the best teachers you can trust. We require the scheduling of such extra work to never be in the way of employee's regularly scheduled hours. We also ask that outside employment is to never be discussed on school's premises. Additionally, Beacon Preparatory Academy has no liability for the services provided by their employees when not on the school's premises.

## **Our Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy, please contact us:

165 Amboy Rd, Building F #603, Morganville, NJ 07751

Phone: 732-696-8699

Website: [www.SmartStarsAcademy.com](http://www.SmartStarsAcademy.com)

E-mail: [Parents@SmartStarsAcademy.com](mailto:Parents@SmartStarsAcademy.com)

Educational Director / Co-owner – Veronica Gorban

Financial Director / Co-owner – Inna Kotsubey

Administrative Director / Co-owner – Marianna Vinnik