

Elf Preschool

Parent Handbook

Our Mission

Our ultimate goal as educators is to build self-esteem. With a positive self-image, successful experiences follow. Early Learning Fun preschool (ELF) is a nurturing environment staffed with dedicated professionals who will facilitate learning based on trust, respect, and integrity.

At ELF preschool, we have created an age-appropriate curriculum that involves cognitive skills and social interaction. We enhance each day by involving the children in art, music, writing skills, free play, and circle time discussions.

Eligibility

Children are eligible for admission regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin. ELF will first open enrollment to age-appropriate children that have siblings currently enrolled at ELF as well as ELF alumni families, and then to children in the community on registration day.

All children should be potty-trained, meaning they can tell an adult they need to go to the bathroom; they are able to pull their pants up and down, wipe themselves, and wash their hands. Pull-ups are permitted for the first couple months.

Daily Schedule

Our school hours are from 9:30am-1:00pm and science from 1:00-2:00pm. Our daily rotations include Discovery, Circle, skills, art, snack, and outdoor play, with monthly themes contributing to our lesson plans.

ELF bag

All new students will be given an ELF bag to use each day that they are at ELF. Include a change of clothes and a water bottle in the bag. School papers will be sent home in the bag so please make sure you go through the bag each day. Also, a lunch is required each day. Please do not send large backpacks with numerous toys or stuffed animals. Small items are fine.

Tuition

Please see tuition rates and dates that you have received. Tuition is calculated annually with the option to pay monthly. We offer a 10% discount for siblings enrolled. **All payments are non-refundable and no reduction in tuition for absences whether caused by illness, vacation, weather, pandemic, or for any other reason. One month notice needed for withdrawal.**

Please make checks payable to ELF School and write the child's name in the memo section.

Tuition must be received the 15th of the month. Late tuition must include a \$10 late fee after the 20th of the month.

Attendance

Prompt arrival and pick up is appreciated. If your child is unable to attend due to illness, etc. please email or call to report the absence. There will be no make-up classes due to illness, vacation, weather, or any other reason.

Illness Policy

Please do not send your child to school if there is an illness present. If your child has had a fever, they must be fever free without medication for 24 hours before returning to school. This includes vomiting and diarrhea. If a medical emergency occurs at school, the parent/guardian will be called first and then 911. Medication Authorization forms must be filled out for any child requiring medication while in school or in case of allergy emergency. Please note that medication must be in original container unopened with expiration date visible.

Communication

Communication is key to a successful year! Please mark any important dates from the newsletter onto your calendar. Please look at any notes posted on your child's classroom door from the teacher. Each teacher will have her own form of communication and will let you know in her introduction letter in September. ELF will email the monthly newsletter and any important news and updates. Please let us know if you do not receive your first email in September.

Screen Time

Elf School does not use computers or any other type of screen devices daily. If weather has been inclement for a long period of time, we do have the option to watch a thirty-minute educational movie.

Arrival/Dismissal

Our classes begin at 9:30am. Students and families will wait outside until we open the front door. Children will walk to their classrooms. Sometimes a parent/guardian may find it necessary to accompany them to the classroom.

The front door will be locked at 9:45am. We will dismiss from either outside or from the classroom (depending on the weather) at 1:00pm (2:00 for science). If you have an unforeseen circumstance and are going to be a couple minutes late, please call the office, 301-540-3370, and let us know. Late pick up of 10 minutes will be charged \$5.00- and 5-minute increments after as well. Children will not be released to anyone that is not listed on the emergency form unless a written notice or email has been sent ahead of time.

Please monitor your child while on the property. We do not allow tree climbing, going in the cemetery, or walking on the tops of the picnic tables.

Discipline Policy

Self-control is a normal part of growing up. It is our job at Elf School to monitor age-appropriate behavior and help in the growing process. Our policy encourages cooperative play with others and to help the child handle situations, setting limits, and redirecting to other more appropriate activities when necessary. If the teacher is unsuccessful with any of these techniques, the child will be separated from the group for a minute and then return to the activity when ready.

As always, these incidents will be reported to the parent. If there is an incident of more severe behavior that involves the safety of other classmates, then a conference with Director, teacher, and parent will be necessary.

Clothing

Please have your child wear comfortable play clothes. Art time tends to get very messy. The paint says “washable” but you just never know! Please label coats, etc. for easy identification. Please put a change of clothes in a zip-lock bag and leave in their Elf bag. Little accidents can happen as well as hand washing that turns into arm washing! Please dress appropriately for the weather. We will go outside every day unless in extreme conditions.

Food at School

Please inform us immediately if your child has any allergies! Forms must be filled out and we will need special snacks from home in case of birthday or party celebrations. We will be having lunch time at 12:00pm. Please supply food, utensils, drink, water bottle, etc. for your child. Lunch boxes must be clearly labeled. Please note that lunch time is 25 minutes, so a large amount of food is discouraged.

Field Trips

We always go to the pumpkin patch and sometimes one more field trip. There will be a small cost for these. Most of the time siblings are welcome. Parents will be responsible for signing permission slip and for driving to the location.

Evaluations

Written evaluations will be sent home in November and April. The April evaluation will be more detailed and include your child’s individual skills. If anyone would like to speak with their teacher privately, then a conference can be arranged.

Holidays/Snow Days

We will follow MCPS schedule for holidays, most days off, and snow days. If MCPS is closed due to snow, then ELF will be closed as well. If MCPS opens 2 hours late, then we will open at 11:30am for lunch and activities. If MCPS has an early dismissal due to weather, then ELF will close at 12:00pm.

Emergency Release Forms/Immunization

Emergency Release Forms are available on our website. Parent or guardian must sign an emergency release form and include two emergency contacts including phone numbers. In the event a parent cannot be reached, we will call the emergency contacts listed. It is very important that you keep your cell phone on and with you while your child is in our care. Children must have all state required immunizations to start school.

Parking Lot

Please drive slowly in our parking lot!! We have a busy parking lot with many children coming and going. Please be aware that traffic moves in a **one-way counterclockwise direction**. A drawing will be posted in September. Also please note that our handicap parking spaces are for those who have a handicap tag/sticker.

Maryland Office of Child Care

All childcare in Maryland is regulated by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Early Childhood Development. Childcare licensing is the responsibility of the Office of Child Care (OCC). We will follow all rules and regulations set by OCC and this includes closures and recommendations set forth due to any pandemic. New waivers may need to be signed if a pandemic occurs.

Parent Contract

This serves as a contract between Elf School and Elf School families. There is a line on the Child Questionnaire for you to sign stating you have read the Parent Handbook. Please contact us if you have any questions.