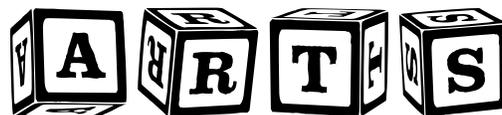


ARTS

READINESS

TRAINING

SCHOOL



Parent Handbook

2020-2021

Academy of Movement & Music

605 Lake Street • Oak Park, Illinois 60302 • 708•848•2329 • fax 708•848•2391

www.academyofmovementandmusic.com

academyofmovementandmusic@gmail.com

ABSENCES/ILLNESSES

DO call the office -

- if your child will be absent or on vacation
- to report a contagious illness ~ we send home “health notices” to alert parents of any infectious or contagious disease that they may have been exposed to
 - **in the case of covid positivity** of your child or a family member please contact us as soon as possible and observe the 14 day quarantine requirement before returning to school
- if you are going to be early or late picking up your child
- if you have problems or questions



Reasons for sending a child home –

- fever of 100 F or more
- diarrhea and/or vomiting

Covid Positivity

If a positive case is identified at school or in a preschool family, all families will be notified and all preschool staff & students will move immediately to eLearning for 14 days, self-quarantining. The teaching team will then get tested.

REMINDERS

1. **DO have your child wash his/her hands after eating and before coming to school – especially if the food has contained any nuts/peanuts or nut/peanut oils.** Even skin contact can trigger anaphylactic shock.
2. **DO check your email** for A.R.T.S. correspondence regularly.
3. **DO label everything!** Remember to do so at each change of seasons and/or as your child grows.
4. **DO NOT** bring any snacks to school.
5. **DO NOT allow** your child to bring toys, blankets, pacifiers, jewelry, money, gum, candy or other snacks into the Academy. Assure your child that these treasures will be waiting at home or in the car after school.
6. **DO bring any** medication that might be needed during school such as an epipen or inhaler **to the office. Label these clearly.**
7. **DO NOT** send children to school until they’ve been fever-free for 24 hours or have been on a full course of prescribed antibiotic for 24-hours or in the case of families affected by covid, a negative test result.

YOUR CHILD'S DAY

DOWNSTAIRS A.R.T.S.

To begin our school year all children will be together in one group and remain in Studio III. As more students are added we will monitor group size and divide children as needed to maintain a safe and manageable group size.

Studio III, the Art and Montessori room offers a variety of different activities. There is a book corner, shelf work, imaginative play area and a pre-writing table. Children generally participate in art projects on Mondays and Tuesdays. Wednesday and Thursday generally incorporate special projects and practical life exercises. The hour of activities concludes with circle time.

The second half of our day will focus on music and movement, also held in Studio III. Our music and movement curriculum will focus on basic motor and dance skills, as well as on problem solving using movement in space through time. Props can include rhythm instruments, puppets, scarves and bean bags. One or two days a week we will have special activities using balls, scooters, mats and balance equipment to help build strength, balance and flexibility. All materials and props will be sanitized continuously.

During the course of the year we work on thematic units that usually last about three weeks. Items in our imaginative play area, books, puzzles, shelf work, art and music vary with each theme.

We will not be serving our usual snack this year but will offer water breaks throughout the morning as needed as well as hand washing and bathroom breaks.

The teacher/student ratio is 2 teachers in the classroom and one floating aide in the hall to assist with bathroom needs and hand washing. Our floating aide also helps in the classroom as needed and is actively involved in the greeting and dismissal procedures.

Children 3 1/2 (by September 1) and older are eligible to participate in our Friday Montessori/STEM program that is held in our large open classroom upstairs.

UPSTAIRS A.R.T.S.

Children in the Upstairs A.R.T.S. program are grouped into two cohorts of no more than 12 students each.

Each morning, the carpool aide will direct the children to the mezzanine, where they will leave their outerwear and change into their slippers. Before heading up the stairs to the East Gym, they will use hand sanitizer, while a teacher or aide disinfects the outside of their water bottle.

In the classroom, each child will have an area for their project box and their supply caddy. The boxes will contain everything they work on, with a folder for “stay” projects, and one for “go home” projects, and the supply caddy their basic everyday materials.

They will keep their water bottles with their boxes in order to avoid many hands touching the same surfaces.

Once they have dropped off their water bottles, the children will get their daily calendar (from their “stay” box), and stamp the correct day with the corresponding weather stamp. Then it is free time until Morning Circle. The Project Area is open during arrival and break time. Aside from a changing selection of puzzles, projects, and games, we offer books that support the week’s theme, some that support preschool learning in general, and some that are just plain fun.

During Morning Circle, we will go over the day’s lessons, and the children will have an opportunity to tell their teachers and friends anything exciting that comes to mind. Every day has different activities, with two different classes lasting about 35 minutes each. There is a break between classes to wash hands, and for some free choice Project time. At the end of each day, the children will participate in picking up their supplies, and making sure that they are clean and ready for the next day.

Each group will line up and walk together to their coat hook area to get ready for dismissal.

Schedule

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Art	Creative Art	Literature & Culture	Creative Movement	Montessori/ Practical Life
Dance	Music	Physical Fitness	Music	Science
		Possible Outdoor Walking Day	Possible Outdoor Walking Day	Possible Outdoor Walking Day

UPSTAIRS A.R.T.S. CLASS DESCRIPTIONS

Art on Mondays offers students a first look at art theory (learning about colors, shapes, styles, and media) and history (introduction to and discussion of famous artists, works, and periods), with hands on activities to enforce that learning; while **Creative Art** on Tuesdays takes a more crafty approach with “traditional” preschool projects that coordinate with the lesson plan and seasons in general.

Literature & Culture is a class that aims to introduce the children to stories from around the world and provide them with historical and cultural context. In this class, we also discuss traditions, celebrations, and humanity at large.

Dance and Creative Movement are similar but different. Both classes set movement to music, and both classes work toward a performance opportunity; however, while **Dance** focuses on learning basic movement patterns/rhythms: marching (4/4 time), leaping, skipping, polka or step-together step hop, and on learning simple choreography from different styles of dancing; **Creative Movement** is centered around the children’s interpretations and expressions in a freestyle format. It is oriented toward problem solving, and inspired by music and imagination.

Physical Fitness engages the children’s gross motor skills in ways that also require coordination, but without a performance based focus. Preschool games and cardio play integral

parts in Physical Fitness, which may introduce activities inspired by yoga, body weight workouts, ball play, all adjusted to the body and muscle development of preschoolers. All movement classes seek to engage crossbody coordination. Music class introduces the children to rhythm, pitch, simple instruments, and early music theory and terminology. Through songs and fingerplay, we will explore different genres of music while also practicing singing in harmony and unison.

Our **Friday** classes are an opportunity for students to try different hands-on experiences.

Science introduces the children to the concept of positing and testing a theory, and recording our results - be they successes or failures - in a journal. **Practical Life** inspired by Montessori covers exercises in two main areas of childhood development: care of self and care of the environment. Friday classes are taught in smaller cohorts, which means that each child will have ample opportunity for one-on-one instructional time with the teacher.

What all classes in the ARTS program have in common is the integral incorporation of early math concepts such as symmetry, skip counting, and pattern recognition. All movement classes work with directional concepts, and art, literature/culture, science, and practical life classes practice letter recognition, fine motor skills, and hand-eye coordination, even when writing or drawing is not the primary objective.

Outdoor Walking Days will be decided on the day of. Throughout the year, we will plan field trips as usual; in addition to these field trips, we will go for walks around the neighborhood to see what we can see. We will observe the changing of the seasons, enjoy seasonal decorations, perhaps even revel in a light sprinkle of rain or a dusting of snow. Therefore, always be prepared. If the forecast requires a light jacket, please have your child wear a light jacket to school, and as the seasons progress, make sure that your child will be able to go outside in appropriate footwear and outerwear.

This year, due to mask recommendations, some activities may be limited to insure that everyone can participate comfortably.

PEANUT POLICY

We have students at the Academy with life-threatening allergies to **PEANUTS, NUTS, and all PEANUT/NUT PRODUCTS**. Please be sure that before coming to school your child washes his/her hands after eating – especially if the food has contained any nuts/peanuts or nut/peanut oils. Children may snack or eat breakfast on the way to school; please realize that nut allergies can be triggered by skin contact. Use wipes before exiting the car on arrival at school. We appreciate your attention to this important matter.



IMPORTANT

CLOTHING FOR SCHOOL

• CASUAL, LOOSE-FITTING CLOTHING •

• Simple shorts, leggings, or sweat pants with a T-shirt or sweatshirt work best. Dresses get in the way during our more active classes. If dresses are a must for your preschooler, they need to be worn over leggings, bike shorts, or tights. No jewelry please as this also gets in the way. Our art experiences are frequently messy, so please dress your child in something washable.

• SHOES •

• Children are **required** to have **leather ballet slippers**. It is dangerous for children to run and dance in gym shoes or bare feet. Heavy shoes can hurt other children; bare feet are cold, and socks are slippery on the floors. All children will leave their ballet slippers at school. If your child is taking a separate ballet class during the week we will see that their ballet slippers are waiting for them at their class.

• HAIR •

• Long hair needs to be tied up so that it's not in the way while they do physical fitness class. Please also be mindful of bows, headbands and barrettes that easily come out. They can be distracting to your child and easily get lost.

• CHANGE OF CLOTHES •

• Occasionally accidents happen at school and clothing becomes wet or soiled. Please send an extra set of clothing to keep at school. The teachers will store your child's extra clothing. The aides will change your child's clothing and send home the soiled clothing in a plastic bag. Just wash and return a set of clothes the next time your child comes to school.

• LABEL EVERYTHING! •

• Ballet slippers must have name and telephone number written on the inside of the shoes so we can contact you if they're lost. Children need to have their shoes, boots, outer garments and water bottles labeled as well. Many children have similar boots, sweaters and jackets. As the seasons change and children grow, please remember to label all new clothing.

DROP OFF/PICK UP PROCEDURES

Safety Restraints

We are required to follow Illinois law regarding car seats and safety restraints. Greeters cannot put a child in a car lacking these mandatory safety devices. Please walk in to get your child until you have safety restraints appropriate for your child's age and weight.

Drop off and Pick up procedures begin the first day of classes.

Please do not drop children off more than 10 minutes before classes begin at 8:45 AM.

• DROP OFF PROCEDURE •

- There is a greeter to escort children into the building from 10 minutes before the start of class to 10 minutes after, 8:35-8:55 am.
- Drive up to the utility pole far enough so that two cars can let off children at the same time.
- **Please have your children on the passenger side of the car.**
- Roll down the window closest to your child's seat, in order that the carpool attendant can ask a few questions about your child's health and take their temperature, before helping them out of the car. Please be mindful and have everyone in the car wear a face mask during this interaction.
- Stay in your car and let the greeter get the children out of your car.
- When walking or biking to school, you will be greeted at the front door by a staff member, who will ask about your child's health and take their temperature.

• DISMISSAL PROCEDURE •

**You may choose to park and walk up to the entrance
of the building to pick up your child,**

OR

If you choose to use the carpool pick-up service:

- We have an established Pick Up routine, which you can elect to use. Each child will receive a Pick Up Number assigned by the office.
- ***Please do not arrive 20 minutes early and just sit in line.*** Our neighbors complain and call the police. 5 minutes is maximum.

- A greeter watches at the outer door for the Pick Up Numbers, and then escorts the children to the car.
- **Show your number** when you pull into the Academy Drive by holding up your number **outside** the car window.
- **When your child is brought outside you may then pull up to the utility pole.** If you are first in line do not assume that your child will be the first to be brought out. If the last person's child comes out first, that person may drive around the other cars to get their child.
- **Wait in your car.** Do not get out of your car to get your child because this will delay the line.
- **Having your child's car seat on the passenger side of the car is safest and best.**

You can help us insure a safe and effective dismissal in these ways:

- If you need to pick up your child early, call the office to make arrangements.
- Do not park in employee spaces around the building or Bishop Quarter Lane at any time or for any reason.
- Please be sure to **walk on the sidewalk along the fence**, not on Bishop Quarter Lane or on the condo driveways.

The Academy can release children only to authorized persons – a child's parent(s) or legal guardian. Only the child's parent(s) or legal guardian can authorize another person to pick up a child, including siblings 11 years and older. Authorizations should be in writing and must be signed by the parent(s) or legal guardian. The Academy has long-term and short-term forms available in the office. The Academy will accept a signed note or letter from a parent or guardian instead of one of the Academy forms. Phoned authorizations will be accepted at the discretion of the Academy office.

Below is the link/email address to the carpool video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=78Spy4wjdJo&feature=youtu.be>

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

• DOWNSTAIRS A.R.T.S. •

We will celebrate birthdays by recognizing the child with a special sticker, singing happy birthday during circle time and also reading the birthday child's favorite book to the group which they are welcome to bring from home.

• UPSTAIRS A.R.T.S. •

Birthdays will of course be celebrated! We can create birthday banners with photos of the child (e-mailed to staff), sing the birthday song, light a candle, and start a new tradition: the birthday child gets to pick their favorite book to have read to the whole class. Please, no snacks or birthday favors. While parents are not able to join us in person, they may record a short video for their child, which the teacher will share with the whole class; or they can arrange with the teacher to set up a zoom session during the celebration. If families would like to donate a gift for the school in honor of their child's birthday, this can be arranged with staff.

SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS

Seasonal celebrations will still be observed. The children will be invited to wear a special costume to school for Fall Masquerade, they may dress up for holidays, and we will make themed crafts etc. Instead of a party with special snacks, we will have special fun and games. Staff will make sure to take pictures of the children to share with parents.

UPSTAIRS A.R.T.S. PERFORMANCES

Upstairs Performances are a tradition at the Academy of Movement and Music, and we will still work toward creating small performances, and more elaborate shows. Instead of inviting families to watch our performances during the day, at the school, we will record them for all to enjoy over and over at home – and to share with family members who would normally not be able to come. Children will be asked to wear specific colors or types of clothing for performances, until we feel that wearing Academy costumes is once again safe.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Annual A.R.T.S. Important Dates Calendar will be sent to you at a later date.

• COMMUNICATIONS •

For both Downstairs and Upstairs A.R.T.S., your first line of communication is to call the office; office staff will then contact the appropriate staff member.

• OBSERVATIONS •

Until having guests in the building is considered safe for the health and well being of students and staff, parents will be invited to sign up for a virtual observation time via zoom – dates to be determined, information will be sent out at a later date.

• CONFERENCES •

All conferences this year will be phone conferences or done virtually.

A.R.T.S. PTO

As a parent of an Academy A.R.T.S. student you are immediately accepted as a member of the Parent Teacher Organization. The PTO is here to nurture a school community of active and engaged parents and foster a volunteer culture.

The PTO sponsors and organizes social events, assists the A.R.T.S. program in purchasing new supplies, and supplements Continuing Education for staff. This year funds will also go toward providing the extra supplies necessary to provide a safe environment for our kids in these unprecedented COVID times and toward PPE for our teachers and staff. The PTO is more important than ever!

Your energy adds to the overall success of the program and to your child's experience. Or talk to any PTO officer about what you can do to help out. We look forward to reconnecting with returning families and welcoming new friends! **Join us at the PTO Kickoff Meeting (via Zoom) on Thursday, September 17th at 8pm.** A call-in number will be circulated via e-mail.



A.R.T.S. PTO Calendar 2020-2021

August 29	PTO Welcome Back Playdate, 10:00 am Rehm Park, 900 Gunderson Ave. OP
September 2 & 3	PTO Spirit Days ~ Wear Academy T-shirt
17	PTO Kick-off Meeting, 8:00 PM, Via Zoom, Link will be sent
October 7 & 8	PTO Spirit Days ~ Wear Academy T-shirt
November 4 & 5	PTO Spirit Days ~ Wear Academy T-shirt
December 2 & 3	PTO Spirit Days ~ Wear Academy T-shirt

EMERGENCY CLOSING PROCEDURES

The Academy has only closed a few times in thirty years due to bad weather. If we can't get snow-plowed, we can't open. Should this or any other emergency occur (i.e., loss of power), you will receive an email to advise you of the closing, unless you have indicated that you prefer to be telephoned. **Do not assume** that if Oak Park Public Schools are closed that the Academy will be closed. We are registered for school closings due to inclement weather at www.emergencyclosings.com. Enter "Academy of Movement and Music" to check our status.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

What is the Academy's discipline policy? This is a question many new parents ask us when they are considering the Academy for their child. Our goal, as educators, is to provide our students with a safe environment where they can, with our guidance, learn self-discipline and self-control. It is our task to present them with choices and actions appropriate for the situations they encounter in our classrooms. When a child chooses an inappropriate behavior – such as interrupting another child's work with educational materials, or trying to sit on another child's mat – a teacher will approach the child and, one-on-one, explain why this choice is inappropriate. With children who are becoming more verbal, teachers help children to use words to express their feelings and guide them through conflict resolutions.

Sharing common materials (toys), respecting another's personal space and learning to wait for a turn are all a part of the preschool classroom experience. We help children learn problem-solving skills and to develop "scripts" to deal with classroom social interactions and activities. Occasionally it is necessary to ask a child to sit to the side and to observe and to see for him/herself what the other children are doing; this is a part of the learning process. The teacher may also point out to the observing child what it is that the other children are doing that is appropriate or by praising the behavior of another child the teacher can motivate others to choose a similar behavior.

As much as possible, we try to help the child with positive directions. In those cases where a child demonstrates dangerous/harmful behavior (i.e. biting or hitting), it is necessary to remove him/her from the situation to another area of the room or out in the hall. This "Time Out" provides the child an opportunity to calm down, regain control, as well as providing the teacher an opportunity to talk with the child. Usually talking about the reasons why the child is feeling so upset and identifying and acknowledging the child's feelings is enough to calm him/her enough to return to the classroom. Rather than view our

discipline policy as a negative punishment, we see our task as educators as one where we use constructive interruptions to refocus, redirect and educate.

What is the Academy’s Biting Policy? To ensure that every child is safe while in the Academy’s care, we work to provide an environment that encourages and promotes cooperative interaction, respect for others, and non-aggressive problem solving between the children. Biting is a normal stage of development for young children who are teething and are still developing their language skills. It is usually a temporary condition that is most common between 18 and 24 months of age.

For safety and health concerns, we take biting seriously. When it happens, it is very scary, frustrating, and stressful for children, parents, and teachers. It is also not something to blame on children, parents, or teachers and there are no quick and easy solutions to it. Children bite for a variety of reasons ranging from lack of verbal skills to teething. Knowing that the effect of their biting will hurt another person is not yet part of the mindset of children this age who have not yet internalized cause-effect relationship.

The policy for handling a biting incident is the following:

We tell the biter immediately to “Stop – biting hurts.” We console the bitten child and wash the bitten area with soap and water. If necessary, we apply ice to reduce any swelling or bruising. We remove the biter from the situation for an appropriate amount of time and then suggest alternative solutions to biting.

We will give written report to the parents of all children involved when they are picked up that day. We will not release the name of the biting child because it serves no useful purpose and can make an already difficult situation more difficult.

In an effort to prevent further biting, an intensive review of the context of each biting incident is conducted to look for any patterns.

Staff will work with each biting child on resolving conflict or frustration in an appropriate manner.

If there are repeated incidents of biting, we will discuss the situation with the parents and make a determination as to whether our environment is the appropriate place for the child.

EARLY INTERVENTION

Each child grows in a unique way and has special talents and abilities. At times, there are areas of development where some children need extra support. Frequently, the preschool years are a time when challenges in a particular area of development are first identified.

The Faculty at the Academy of Movement and Music are invested in providing a stimulating environment that enhances the child’s development. We have been

participating with the Collaboration for Early Childhood in the community, and we are strong supporters of the village wide effort to provide Early Intervention Services. Please contact the Family Support Coordinator or ask in the office for a list of service providers in the area. Studies have shown that Early Intervention is very effective at assisting children in maximizing their development. If a child is experiencing ongoing challenges with an activity, skill, or transition, the teacher will discuss this with the parent.

General Traffic Regulations

See page 6 & 7 for Traffic Regulations specific to Preschool A.R.T.S.

The Academy is located in a densely packed residential neighborhood. The high school playing fields are nearby and they, along with the Academy, generate a great deal of traffic. The following rules were put in place to help the Academy stay on good terms with our neighbors and to enable our clients to drop off and pick up their students safely.

Please comply with these traffic regulations!

1. Academy traffic **must travel ONE WAY** on Bishop Quarter Lane – entering on the east side of the U shaped drive by turning RIGHT as you drive west. Please **do not turn left from North Blvd** as you travel east. **For the safety of all, traffic should never move on the drive at more than 5 miles per hour.**
2. If you are **picking up** your student, you may join the carpool lane on the east side of our drive - this lane is intended to be slow moving at all times. Please DO NOT COME EARLY and just sit in the driveway and NEVER leave your car unattended in that lane. Most students need a few minutes to get their belongings or change clothes after class; if you come early, you will not get your student earlier. You must stay in the east lane of the Bishop Quarter Lane until you see your student on the Academy steps. Please be aware that if a group of students exits the building at the same time, chances are the student of the person in front of you in line is also out and they will be moving forward to collect their student, so there will be no need for you to pull out of the east lane. If, however, the car in front of you does not move with the other cars, **when there is room to go around the curve and pull up to the pole**, you may move out of the east lane and go forward to get your student. **You must not stop in front of the neighbors' drives while in the west lane.** Please yield right of way to any neighbor attempting to pull in or out of his/her drive.
3. If you are **dropping off** your student, coming 10 – 15 minutes before class starts to allow time for the student to change clothes is a good plan. You may travel in the west lane of the drive, but you must be very careful to pull up all the way to the pole and your student should be quickly ready to exit the car. This is not a good time for discussions. When our traffic piles up, blocking the whole driveway, our neighbors become very upset with the congested drive, especially if they need access to their driveways.
4. When walking your child to and from the Academy, **please use the sidewalk!** Do not walk in the middle of the driveway and **never walk across the neighbors' driveways or through their private courtyard.**
5. **PLEASE DROP OFF OLDER DANCERS OUT ON LAKE STREET TO WALK INTO THE ACADEMY.**
6. **Never enter into or park in the U-shaped drive to the north of our building off of Lake Street. This is private property, and although the neighbors are gracious about having our students walk from Lake Street, they have a very active towing service for non-resident cars. You will be towed!**
7. PARKING next to the Academy building or in front of the Academy garages is reserved for STAFF ONLY. Please do not park even for “just a minute” – **park only on Lake Street, East Avenue or in the METERED slots on North Blvd.** Please do not pull into the townhome driveways at any time.
8. **To accommodate our Preschool A.R.T.S. parents**, we have Academy staff available to greet and dismiss children whose parents choose to use our carpool system during preschool hours. *See page 6 & 7*
9. **Failure to comply with these regulations may result in your student's dismissal from the Academy. The rules apply to everyone, and keeping a good relationship with our neighbors is important to the Academy!**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.