



**Academy Hialeah**

2022-2023

Parent Handbook

## **General Information**

Welcome to ABF Academy Hialeah (ABF)! We are pleased that you have made the decision to have your child join our family. We are all – parents, staff, and directors – working to provide a happy, fun, and productive educational experience for your child. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the Principal (teacher) or the Director. We certainly hope that you will enjoy your involvement with ABF.

## **Vision Statement**

That all children are given the opportunity of quality care, to be part of a school family that values their individual needs, and provides a solid foundation for learning.

## **Our Philosophy**

At ABF every child is special! Together with the families, we will aid the child to develop socially, cognitively, and emotionally by providing active learning and educational experiences.

## **About Us**

ABF offers education for children in grades 6-12, creating confident learners for life. The school is staffed with certified educators eager to provide a safe and intellectually stimulation environment in a setting that facilitates the student's individualized education. Teachers encourage children to develop a spirit of independence, a sense of curiosity, and an intrinsic satisfaction with learning.

We offer:

- Certified bilingual teachers
- Low teacher / student ratio
- Individualized instruction
- Extended Care Services
- Yoga
- Creative Movement
- Physical Education
- Music
- Summer program

## **Why Choose ABF?**

Children have an extraordinary capacity to absorb information from their surroundings. Each child is special and unique. Montessori is an individualized method of education that allows children to work at their own pace, in an environment filled with lessons designed to excite the imagination and stimulate learning.

## **Developing Good Habits**

Respect for oneself, for others, and for the environment is the basis for all classroom rules. Children are treated with respect by the adults; thus, they learn to treat themselves and others in a kind manner.

## **Practical Life**

Practical life exercises satisfy the children's need for meaningful activity, and instill care for oneself, for others and for their environment. Children are offered tasks in which they may imitate adults such as washing dishes, sweeping floors and cooking. These exercises help young children improve their coordination and lengthen their attention span. They also instill motivation and self-discipline.

## **Contact Information & Admissions Policy**

For additional information, parents are encouraged to make an appointment to visit the school at 1851 Palm Avenue, Hialeah, FL 33010. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call us at 786-519-3699, as we are here to help.

ABF welcomes students of any sex, race, color, national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and other school-administered programs.

## **Open Door Policy and Safety**

Our hours of operations are from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday. ABF has an open door policy available to all parents. **Parents and visitors are welcome to visit between those hours.**

*In the morning, parents wishing to give special instructions to the teachers or assistants are asked to do so from 8:00 to 8:30 AM or 3:00 to 3:30 PM and be brief. Time spent speaking to adults is time away from the children.*

Conferences and questions are always welcome if you need to speak to the teacher for a more lengthy time as we are here to serve you. Please contact the office so that we may assist you. Children are not to be left in the parking lot or school office unattended.

Safety is our main concern. The physical and mental well-being of each child is important. Vigilance on the part of the adults will best insure the children's successful recess time. Language such as "Use your words, not your hands," "Keep your hands to yourself," and "Remember that there are other children here to watch out for," will be used by adults to remind children to be careful. If an issue needs adult intervention, each child will be given the opportunity to express his side of the incident. Florida Department of Children & Families staff/child ratios must be maintained at all times, in and out.

The school meets all legal requirements for space and facilitates with regard to applicable health, zoning, and fire safety regulations.

## **Hand Washing Procedures**

Hand washing is the first line of defense against infectious disease. Staff, parents and children are required to wash their hands at the following times:

- Upon arrival at school
- Before eating or handling food
- After going to the bathroom or assisting in toileting
- After touching body fluids (blood, mucous, feces, urine, vomits, etc.)
- After handling pets or their equipment
- After any cleaning activities

## **Sanitation Guidelines for Infection Control**

The following items are disinfected daily and frequently:

- Toilets and Toilet Seats
- Sinks and Faucets
- Floors & Tables
- Cloth Towels
- Mops
- Countertops
- Light switches

Personal items such as blankets, fabric toys, or hats will be sent home at least weekly to be washed thoroughly with a disinfectant bleach solution. Personal items, such as bedding, combs, and towels should not be shared and must be labeled. Soiled items going home will be sealed in a plastic bag and kept out of reach of children. If your child's item is misplaced please contact ABF as soon as you realize it. If it has been labeled it should be found and returned easily. If you are having a consistent issue with your child's items not being returned home please contact Mr. David Arteaga directly.

## **Toileting Procedures**

Children are assisted as needed with buttons, snaps, etc. Children are expected to be toilet trained unless they are in the Toddler classroom, but occasional accidents do happen in the upper levels. For that reason, as well as the fact that water activities are part of the curriculum, each child must have a complete change of clothing in their backpack at all times. If a child wets or soils him/herself, a staff member will assist him/her in changing his/her clothes. Wet or soiled clothes are sent home in a plastic bag. Replacements must come back the following day.

## **Health & Enrollment Forms**

Every August before your child can attend school, we must have on file your child's updated Immunization record (Form 680) and student physical (Form 3040) which can be obtained from your child's pediatrician and updated Enrollment forms. The forms must be updated each time your child receives more immunizations or when they are due to be given. The physical expires each year. Check the date on the form. These forms must be signed by the doctor. If your child's forms expire they may not return until the forms are updated by your doctor. You will be given advanced warning of this important information. The Department of Children and Families requires records must be up to date at all times. Any child not having their forms up to date may not attend.

## Arrival Routine

Please use the appropriate door when arriving to the school between the hours of 7:00 am and 8:00 am where we have Before School Care. **Please be sure to be brief when dropping off your child as we have limited parking. Otherwise, this will delay all of the parents dropping off behind you.** Please remember that lifelong habits are made beginning at age one. Classes begin promptly at 8:30 am. Any arrivals after this time are disruptive to the classroom and to your child. We kindly ask all parents arriving after 8:30 am to enter through the office door where one of the office staff members will take your child to their classroom. Any student over age 4 who arrives after 8:30 a.m. will be marked tardy. ABF will request a conference with the student's parent if they receive 5 or more tardies or absences. Please see the absence policy at the end of the Parent Handbook for more information on how many tardies will be allowed per school year.

## Dismissal Routine

At dismissal, please be prompt. If he or she does not usually stay for before or after school care and is dropped off early, or picked up late, the parent will be charged. **We close exactly at 6 pm. After 6 pm, there is an extra fee charged. Every minute after 6 pm is \$1. The extra fee must be paid the same day upon the parent's arrival and payment made directly to the teacher.** This fee has been implemented to avoid parents from arriving after 6 pm. **No child may be removed from the school by a person who is not approved to do so. Only individuals stated by the parent on the application form will be permitted to take the child.** Proper ID will be required. Telephone consent may not be given. Should an emergency arise please contact Mr. David Arteaga directly.

## Parking

We ask parents keep the driveway moving at all times as we do not want to block the cars behind you. It is imperative that anyone who is picking up your child be notified of this policy. If parking is not available inside the school property, please park outside the front gate in a fashion so that other cars are able to see when they are leaving the school's circular driveway.

## **Illness or Accident**

The school prohibits attendance of a child during an illness. If your child is sent to school sick, you will be called to pick him or her up immediately.

As per the Department of Health, your child is to be kept at home (**we cannot accept him/her at the school**) if he or she shows any of the following symptoms and should not return to the school until symptoms have subsided for at least 24 hours. We cannot make any exceptions as we will not jeopardize the health of the children at ABF.

- Fever
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Green nasal discharge
- Discharging or crusty eyes or ears
- Rash
- Conjunctivitis (Pink eye)
- Lice/Nits
- Ring Worm
- Excessive coughing

If a child has been exposed to a contagious disease, he/she should be kept at home and his/her condition should be reported to the school in order for us to observe the other children and notify parents.

There may be other symptoms which cause us to feel there is a concern that is not listed. In that event, the management has the right to decide when to require a doctor's note for return. This applies to injuries as well as illnesses.

We realize there are special cases where a child may have an on going allergy and have green nasal discharge. In such cases, we ask that the child carry a personal pack of tissues in their pocket for hygiene purposes. We also require a doctor's note stating the child is not contagious and his/her symptoms are only allergy related.

In case of an accident or any of the above mentioned illnesses at the school, you will be called immediately. If you cannot be reached, an authorized person indicated on your application will be called. If that person cannot be reached, then 911 will be called and your doctor notified.

## **Accident/ Incident Report Form**

At ABF, an accident/ incident report form is completed after all incidences or accidents. A staff member will speak with a parent or guardian about each incident or accident their child experienced in the day. If the Incident is urgent, the school will call the parent to notify them of said event. One copy is given to the parents; one copy is kept on file. If you have any concerns with an incident or do not receive an Incident report as soon as you pick up your child, contact Ms. Ana Gonzalez at 786-519-3699.

## Medication

According to FDCF standards, only *prescription medication* may be brought to the school by the parent. It must be in the original container with a label which includes the name of the doctor, the name of the child, and the name of the medication. *We are not allowed to administer any other medication (i.e. Motrin, Tylenol or Neosporin).*

A written authorization signed by a parent or guardian should accompany medication stating the name of the medication, along with the time and amount of dosages to be administered.

## Monitoring the Environment

**ANY POTENTIAL HAZARDS WILL BE REMOVED BEFORE CHILDREN ARE ALLOWED ACCESS TO THE SPACE. CHILDREN WILL BE SUPERVISED BY A STAFF MEMBER AT ALL TIMES. ALL TOXIC AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS (INCLUDING CLEANING MATERIALS) WILL BE KEPT AWAY FROM CHILDREN AND FROM ANY FOOD ITEMS.**

## First Aid Equipment

The main first aid kit at ABF is kept in the **school office and in the kitchen**. In addition, each classroom has a small first aid kit. The Assistant Director is responsible for keeping the kit's supplies at all times, which include the following items: adhesive tape, Band-Aids, compresses, gauze pads, rolled gauze bandages, disposable latex gloves, instant cold packs, ipecac, scissors, tweezers, and a thermometer.

## Use of First Aid Supplies

First Aid equipment may be used by ABF staff members trained in emergency first aid by an approved instructor in an FDC&F approved first aid course. Volunteers should not administer first aid. The First Aid kit must be kept out of reach of children at all times. When administering first aid for cuts and abrasions, latex gloves should be worn.

## **Identifying and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect**

According to Florida General Law, Chapter 119, the following people are those mandated to report suspected child abuse: family counselors, social workers, educational administrators, teachers, daycare workers, other persons paid to care for or work with a child in a public or private facility. ABF interprets this mandate to include all workers providing services to children and/or families. Therefore, an ABF staff member (employed full or part-time), who in their professional capacity, has reasonable cause to believe that a child under the age of 18 is suffering serious physical or emotional injury resulting from abuse, including sexual abuse, inflicted upon them by a caretaker, or from neglect, including malnutrition, or who is determined to be physically dependent upon an addictive at birth must:

1. Notify their supervisor immediately that they believe a report must be filed.
2. With the approval and assistance of the **Director**, the staff member who becomes aware of possible abuse will participate in the immediate filing of oral and written reports with the Florida Department of Children and Families (FDCF).
3. A written report (51A) must be filed within 48 hours of oral communication.
4. Staff will keep reports and outcomes confidential.
5. Staff must cooperate with the FDCF investigation.

## **Emergency Evacuation and Hurricane Policy**

In case of emergency the children will be evacuated to the playground area. We will notify all parents as soon as possible.

***Emergency closures due to hurricane threats or warnings will follow the same mandates Miami-Dade County Public Schools and recommendation by county officials announced on news stations across Miami-Dade County.*** Please ***check your email*** and/or call the school at 786-519-3699 daily to get an updated status of school closure and reopening. Missed school days due to a hurricane will be made-up as per Miami-Dade County School schedule and an updated school calendar sent home to parents. ABF reserves the right to cancel after school care in the case of an emergency such as a tropical storm or hurricane.



## **Lunch at School**

Lunch and snacks must be brought from home every day. Lunch will not be provided by the school. You may contact the office if you need an emergency lunch and the teacher will be notified.

ABF believes a child's learning and behavior is directly affected by what they eat. Each child should bring a well-balanced, nutritious main course for herself or himself, packed when possible in a reusable container marked with the child's name.

Packing lunches can be a daily challenge, but it can also provide an opportunity to help children take responsibility for their own good nutrition and learn what food and drink choices to make in the future as adults. We encourage you to involve your child directly in the process of packaging their own nutritionally balanced lunches from a variety of acceptable choices.

Assistance in eating will be provided to your child if necessary. You will be notified if your child does not eat his/her lunch. If any food is left uneaten by the child, or has not been opened (ex. yogurt), the teacher will send it home. If you notice your child is eating differently than they do at home please speak to the teacher and Mr. David. We want to ensure they get the proper nutrition they need at this crucial time of development.....

## **Birthday Parties**

**On your child's birthday** you may bring in gift bags and food.

## **Toys and transition items**

**NO TOYS PLEASE.** If your child brings a toy inside of the school it will be taken away and returned at the end of the day. Any toys that are unfamiliar to the family may belong to the school. If you find a toy of this nature, please return it to the school. We appreciate your help in this matter. We understand some of our younger students may need a transition item from home.

## **Uniform**

Children should wear the assigned uniform, which can be purchased at All Uniform Wear located at 8456 SW 8<sup>th</sup> ST. We will extend a 3-chance policy to children who do not wear their uniform consistently. The first warning will be verbal. The second warning will be written. The third time, we will not accept the child into the classroom. For more information on the uniform please read the uniform information sheet.

Please put the child's name on all items brought to school, including clothing, lunch boxes, Sippy cups, sweaters.

Roller backpacks are not allowed. They will be sent home as they are too large to fit in our storage areas.

## **Provisional (Trial) Period**

All students enrolling in any program for the first time are given a six-week trial period. The child may be removed from the program if ABF should decide during this period that the program is not meeting the child's needs. Tuition will be prorated for the time attended and any excess will be refunded.

## **Parent/School Communication**

It is the parent's responsibility to check the folder inside of their child's back pack every day. All bills, receipts, notes from teachers, and homework will be in this folder. We ask you to keep your email address with the school current at all times and check it every day for any announcements/reminders. If you would like another email which was not put on your application added to our email list please email it to Ms. Ana Gonzalez at [agonzalez.abfacademy@gmail.com](mailto:agonzalez.abfacademy@gmail.com).

We ask that you look at the bulletin board by the reception desk every day as we post important announcements there. We cannot stress the importance of staying up to date with all announcements so you can be an active participant in the educational development of your child.

## Questions or concerns

If you have any questions or concerns pertaining to your child, please contact the school to make an appointment with the Director of Operations, teacher, and the Head of School as we are here to help and want to ensure your questions/concerns are addressed. A conference will be set at the earliest convenience for you.

## Conferences

Conferences may also be requested without an observation. All conferences are confidential conversations between the parents and staff. Both parents are urged to attend the conferences. Conferences are scheduled at the time most convenient to both parents and staff members, but usually before and after school. Parents are encouraged to call the teachers if they need to speak to them. Except in emergencies, all calls to teachers should be made at lunchtime or before or after school hours.

## Payment Information

We accept cash, checks, money orders and credit cards. Bills will be provided the last school day of the month and sent home in your child's folder in their back pack. Daily before and after school care charges will be on your bill from the previous month (for example – August will be on your September bill), unless you pay for Unlimited Before and After School which will be charged to your account automatically.

*Parents may make their annual tuition payments in three ways: annually (5% discount – payment due by July 1st), semiannually (3% discount – payments due by April 1st and December 1st), or once per month for 10 months. The first of your 10 **annual** payments is due August 1st. All subsequent payments are also due the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month. Any parent paying after the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month, your account will be charged a \$50 late fee. We will be strict on this policy as delinquency on accounts has become an issue at ABF and we want to ensure our teachers are paid on time.*

Should an emergency arise where you are not able to pay on time please contact Ms. Ana Gonzalez, the school's Office Manager. We appreciate your prompt payment and understanding in this policy. Parents who give checks that are returned for Non Sufficient Funds will be charged \$35. If you find a mistake or have any questions about your bill, please call or come into the school office so we can rectify your account as quickly as possible.

## **Excused Absence Policy for students over age 4**

ABF follows the same guidelines as Dade County Public Schools. Attendance, defines Excused School Absence as: A. Personal illness of the student (medical evidence may be required by the principal or designee for absences exceeding **five** consecutive days). The written statement must include all days the student has been absent from school. If a student is continually sick and repeatedly absent from school due to a specific medical condition, the student must be under the supervision of a health care provider in order to receive excused absences from school. B. Medical Appointment: If a student is absent from school due to a medical appointment a written statement from a health care provider indicating the date and time of the appointment must be submitted to the principal. C. Death in immediate family. D. An approved school activity (absences recorded but not reported). E. Other absences with prior approval of the Head of School. F. Attendance at a center under Department of Children and Families.

## **Unexcused Absences**

Any absence that does not fall into one of the above excused absence categories is to be considered unexcused. Any student who has been absent from school will be marked with an unexcused absence until the required documentation is received. Failure to provide the required documentation within three school days upon the return to school will result in an unexcused absence. Unexcused absences include:

- Vacation, personal services, local non-school event, program or sporting activity
- Older students providing day care services for siblings
- Illness of others
- Non-compliance with immunization requirements (unless lawfully exempt).

Any student having 10 or more excused absences or 5 unexcused absences are subject to feeling excluded by their peers, and missing important building blocks in their education. Please understand the parents and the school work together to teach the child responsibility and respect for themselves and others and arriving on time and attendance is an important habit to instill in children at a young age.

## **Disciplinary Procedures and Expected Conduct**

The following procedures will be implemented to help improve any discipline problems:

1. If a child becomes disruptive, he/she will be redirected to a new lesson or activity that will interest the child. However, if the situation cannot be remedied, the child will be asked to sit in the thinking chair. This time is for the child to reflect upon his/her behavior and relax. He/she will be separated from the class during this time to allow the child to calm down.
2. Each child has the opportunity to discuss his/her feelings and behavior on a continuous basis with the directresses and staff to help clarify any situation.
3. If a child exhibits forceful behavior, the child will be supervised by an adult in a room separate from the other children in order to prevent him/her from hurting himself or other children.
4. The staff will never deny a child food, toilet, or nap privileges as a form of discipline.
5. The staff will never use physical, humiliating or frightening discipline towards any child.
6. Severe and continuous behavior problems will result in a parent/directress conference to discuss possible solutions and goals to resolve the situation. A probationary period of fifteen (10) school days will take place in order to allow time for the solutions to take effect and the goals to be achieved. A second conference will take place at the end of the probationary period to discuss the outcome. If at the time of the second conference the child continues to have disciplinary problems, ABF Learning Center/ Academy reserves the right to expel the child.
7. According to Chapter 827, Section .07 of the Florida Statutes, every staff member is required to report any suspected child abuse or neglect whether it be physical, sexual or emotional to the proper authorities.

Please sign below to acknowledge that you received your parent handbook, understand and agree to all terms outlined in such handbook.

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Parent/Guardian Signature

Date