



**2023-2024**  
**Student/Parent Handbook**

## Welcome

We would like to welcome students, parents, and families to the Academy at the Farm. This is an exciting adventure that hopefully will be a meaningful experience for everyone. The faculty and staff are eager to work with you to provide a quality education in a warm and positive environment. As President Roosevelt once said, “We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.” Working together, each of us will play a significant role in accomplishing this goal.

Your energy, support, and enthusiasm are greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Ray Polk, Director

Victoria Sutton, Preschool Principal

Marcia Dwyer, Primary Principal

Kathy Hobby, Intermediate Principal

Lori Gauttier, Middle School Principal

### Academy at the Farm

School Slogan: We do what’s best for kids!

School Mascot: Mustangs

School Colors: Red, white, and blue

Mission Statement: The **Academy at the Farm Preschool** educators facilitate a safe, caring academic environment for young children to flourish as lifelong learners.

The **Academy at the Farm** is a unique charter school designed to meet the needs of all students by promoting academic excellence, developing productive citizens through character building, and incorporating the advancement of agriculture and technology in the curriculum.

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## Dress Code Policy

### Dress Code for Grades Preschool - 8th Grade

In order to promote an orderly and safe environment that is conducive to learning, Academy at the Farm has established the following guidelines for student dress:

1. **Shirts:** Academy at the Farm collared polo shirt- purchased through the school's store.
  - Colors - Red or Navy
  - Length- Long enough to raise arms above head without exposing torso.
2. **Bottoms:** shorts, skorts or pants.
  - Colors - Navy, Khaki or Blue Denim.
  - Material - must be heavy, durable cotton or blue denim.
  - Length - shorts and skorts must be knee-length. No more than two inches from the top of the knee while standing.
  - Decorations, holes, and rips are not permitted.
  - Leggings and tights are not permitted.
3. **Lightweight Jackets/Sweaters:** Academy at the Farm logo sweaters and jackets purchased through the school office.
  - Colors- Red or Navy.
  - Middle School Only- Heather Gray hoodies are allowed if purchased through the AATF office with the school logo. Please note: No hoodies are allowed Pre-K to 5th grade.
4. **Outdoor Coats:** Any coat is fine since it will not be worn indoors.
5. **Socks:** If sock shows above the shoe, then:
  - Colors - Red, Navy, White, or Black
6. **Shoes:**
  - Sneakers are preferred for all students due to PE and recess.
  - All shoes must strap securely to the foot.
  - Flip flops, crocs, and other loose shoes are not permitted.
7. **Friday Shirts:** Any school approved T-shirt with the Academy at the Farm logo.
8. **Extras**
  - **Hair color:** must be of **natural** brown, blonde, black, or red colors. Dyed hair should reflect those natural colors.
  - **Body piercings:** should be limited to ears only.
  - **Face coverings:** are optional, however, if worn should be solid colored.
  - **Respect and Civility:** Any clothing, items, accessories or apparel which may or does disrupt the school setting or is offensive to good taste and are considered inappropriate for the school environment are not permitted.
  - **Labeling Belongings:** Jackets, lunch boxes, etc. should be labeled with the student's first and last name.

- **Lost and Found:** Any item turned into our lost and found without a name is subject to being donated. Items on the Lost and Found board are held for a maximum of two weeks.
- **Non-Uniform Days:** Students may choose not to wear their AATF uniform on these days, but must adhere to the AATF uniform policy.
- The Director may waive the school uniform policy on a case-by-case basis for either disability or medical reasons, as long as proper documentation is submitted.
- Parents who cannot afford school uniforms need to contact the Director.
- Dress code violations will be handled by teachers/administrators and parents will be notified.
- The Director/Principal shall determine the appropriateness of dress and appearance in accordance with the above guidelines. The Director/Principal will make the decision if a student's appearance meets Academy at the Farm standards and parents will be notified. The Director/Principal's decision on the appropriateness of dress is final.

## Academics

### **Academic Integrity**

Students at all levels are expected to pursue their studies with integrity and honesty in all school settings. All work that a student submits will be the original and authentic work of the individual student unless otherwise specified in the assignment.

Students have the responsibility to:

- Uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work
- Refuse to participate in or tolerate violations of academic integrity in the school community
- Foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility in the school community

The following examples of academic dishonesty will result in disciplinary action

- Cheating
- Altering or interfering with grading
- Using or consulting any materials or personal electronic devices/wireless communication devices not authorized by the teacher during a test or assignment
- Submitting an assignment purchased or otherwise obtained from a third party
- Plagiarism
- Distributing test questions, homework questions, assignments and other school testing or evaluation materials, or answers in a manner that enables or advances the examples of academic dishonesty.
- Willfully or knowingly taking an online course or examination on behalf of another person, or allowing someone to take an online course or examination for you  
(These are examples for guidance purposes and do not constitute an exhaustive list.)

Consequences may include the following:

- Reduced/no credit on assignment
- Proctored assessments
- Repeated infractions will result in a referral

## **Academic Programs:**

**Preschool** uses *“Teaching Strategies, The Creative Curriculum”* in combination with the Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards: Four Years Old to Kindergarten. Teachers guide activities with ample time for free choice, socialization and play. We meet each child at his or her developmental level and strive to provide a stimulating, creative and discovery-oriented environment where learning is achieved through play. We emphasize the whole child and value each child’s unique traits. On a daily basis, your child will experience language arts, literature, math concepts, creative art projects, dramatic play, as well as gross and fine motor activities.

**K-8** Curriculum consists of math, science, language arts/reading, social studies, physical education, and depending on grade level, art, music or other electives. The Florida A++ Plan will be followed for all middle school students. This plan requires students to earn a passing grade in math, science, language arts and social studies for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades or have to recover any failed subjects before moving ahead to high school. Course recovery is done through Florida Virtual School or Pasco eSchool. 8th grade students who have not earned all required credits will not participate in the graduation ceremony or other graduation activities.

## **Attendance:**

**Regular attendance and punctuality** are vital factors in every student’s success. When a student is absent, the parent should submit an explanation of the reason for the absence on the Academy at the Farm website.

**Preschool:** Days missed may not be made up on non-scheduled days. Students participating in the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) program are scheduled for 540 program hours in 180 days. The VPK hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Absences of 5 consecutive days require documentation to explain the absence. Documentation for planned absences, signed and dated by the legal guardian, must be submitted in advance, explaining the reason for the extended absence. If a child is sick for 5 or more days, a doctor’s note explaining the reason and duration for the absence is required.

**Tardy:** Students who arrive at 8:00 am or later will be escorted to their classroom by the Preschool Principal. The parents must wait in the lobby for the Principal to return with the sign-in book.

**K-8:** Parents, guardians or students may request make-up work following an absence. See the General Grading Policy below for additional details. Students must attend a minimum of a half-day of school to participate in an after school event on the same day (dances, sports, etc.). Students who need to check out during the school day, but plan to return to school will be coded in MyStudent with an LR attendance code (Leaving and Returning). This is a present code and will not count towards a student’s absences that are reported on the report card.

Students who are continually tardy miss a crucial portion of their education. **Students are considered tardy if they are not in their seats ready to work at 8:00.** Any student arriving late **must** be walked in by a parent and report to Student Services for a tardy pass before going to class. Parents may be contacted for a conference if tardiness and/or absences occur repeatedly and are interfering with a student’s education. Students who are habitually absent may be referred to the school nurse, social worker and/or truancy officer for follow up.

## **Grading Policy K-8:**

### **Purpose:**

The Academy at the Farm faculty and administration support a general evaluation and grading policy. Our philosophy is to provide a variety of measurement instruments to evaluate a student's academic ability. These grading criteria will best reflect the student's growth and progress as an individual. Grades also measure a student in terms of his progress as a member of his/her comparable grade/age group.

### **Scope:**

All teachers at the Academy will use the following guidelines. Any significant variation from these guidelines must be approved by the administration. Students/parents must also be informed in writing.

### **General Information for Parents:**

Report cards and progress reports will be accessible on MyStudent. Dates for report cards and progress reports are listed on the master calendar of the Student Handbook. Parents of students in grades 1-8 may also access a student's grades more frequently by going to Schoology, the learning management system that is utilized by Academy at the Farm.

### **General Grading Policy:**

- Teachers must have a minimum of three grading categories for each of their classes. These categories should take into consideration several different evaluation tools/measurements.
- Teachers must have a minimum of three grades in each category when grades are finalized at the end of each grading period.
- Within each category, all grades should either be percentage based or points based.
- Due to accountability to state standards, between 25% and 70% of the quarter grade will be based on formal assessments.
- All assignments should be graded and entered into the gradebook within one week from their due date.
- Middle school students will be given a syllabus by his/her teachers. This school policy, as well as a teacher's syllabus and grading standards, should be posted in their courses on Schoology in a folder labeled: "Grading Policies/Procedures".
- Homework should generally be for weekday assignments and limited on weekends in order to support/encourage family activities.
- Students who are absent will have two days for each day missed to turn in make-up work. If students have extended absences due to illness or other circumstances teachers and/or administration will work out a reasonable schedule of completing missing assignments with students.

The following Grading Scales will be used:

#### **Intermediate/Middle School**

A - 90 - 100

B - 80 - 89

C - 70 - 79

D - 60 - 69

F - 59 and below

#### **Primary**

E - 90 - 100 - Excellent/Exceeding Expectations

S - 75 - 89 - Successful/Meeting Expectations

N - 60 - 74 - Needs Assistance

U - 59 and below - Well Below Expectations

**Specials Considerations:**

Due to the participatory nature of Specials classes, Specials teachers may have less than three categories of grades for their classes and must have a minimum of nine grades when grades are finalized at the end of each grading period.

**Primary Grades:**

The Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring Program is the statewide, standardized program known as Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST) Star Early Literacy implemented in all VPK programs as required by s. 1002.68, F.S., that is used to assess student achievement of the performance standards established in s. 1002.67(1)(a), F.S., in early literacy and mathematics.

The Star Early Literacy Assessment results will be issued within seven days of the student's completion date. A copy will be handed to the parent by the student's teacher.

**Homework K-8:**

The purpose of homework is to reinforce and practice skills introduced in class. Students are responsible for recording assignments in their student planners that need to go home to be reviewed by parents each night. Important classroom and school information can be found on the Schoology website.

**Promotion and Retention K-8:**

A student's progress is based on his/her achievement during the school year. If a child is to be retained, it will be in accordance with Florida law and at the discretion of the Director.

**Reading Counts (Elementary)/DIRT (Middle School):**

READING COUNTS and DIRT (Daily Independent Reading Time) are programs that are used to motivate students to read and ultimately, become stronger readers. All Academy at the Farm students in grades 2-8, are required to participate in one of these programs depending on grade level. Reading teachers will send out more information about these programs at the beginning of the school year.

Students and parents can check to see if a book is part of the Reading Counts program by visiting: [www.src.scholastic.com](http://www.src.scholastic.com).

**Report Cards/Progress Reports/Grades K-8:**

Report card grades will be issued every nine weeks and progress reports will be issued halfway through each nine-week period on the Pasco County School District's MyStudent platform. Dates for report card and progress report distribution are listed on the master calendar of this handbook. Parents must create a parent portal account in MyStudent to access progress reports and report cards. Steps to create an account are located on the Pasco County Schools website and linked in the Parents information page.

Parents may access a student's grades more frequently by going to the electronic grading program, Schoology. Contact your child's teacher for questions about Schoology.

**Testing Preschool:**

The VPK students will be assessed three times during the school year. The first is conducted within the first 30 days of school. The second assessment will be conducted in January. The last assessment will take place within the last 30 days of school. Preschool students will be assessed in October and May.



### **Testing K-8:**

Teachers will determine student progress throughout the school year by analyzing data from unit tests, chapter tests, projects, student reports and numerous other teacher, school, district and/or state designated assessments. Required state standardized tests will be administered according to FLDOE and Pasco County School District timetables. Please see the School Calendar at the back of this handbook for administration windows that have been (tentatively) determined for the school year.

### **Textbooks and Computers K-8:**

Textbooks, classroom computers and library books are the property of the Academy at the Farm. Students/parents are financially responsible for items loaned to them during the school year and will be held responsible for any damage to or loss of this school property. Non-consumable textbooks that are assigned to students for the year must be kept in good condition and returned to the school at the end of the school year.

## **School Communication**

### **Conferences:**

Parents are encouraged to meet with teachers to discuss their child's educational progress. Parents may call or email the teacher(s) to schedule an appointment if a conference is requested. Parents should check in at the office upon arriving at school for a scheduled conference. **Teachers will not hold conferences that have not been pre-arranged, especially when the teacher has the responsibility of direct supervision of students.**

### **Student Planners K-8:**

Students will be provided with a student planner to keep track of daily assignments, progress in school and as another means of communication between home and school. If a planner is lost, a new planner can be purchased from the school for \$5.00 while supplies last.

### **Web Page/Voice Mail/Schoology K-8:**

- The Schoology webpage is the main communication tool between home and school and should be reviewed daily. On Schoology you will find a school calendar and news, access to your child's grades, teacher lesson plans, field trip news, a link to email teachers and other information available 24 hours a day.
- The Academy at the Farm website ([www.academyatthefarm.com](http://www.academyatthefarm.com)) has school lunch menus and information about our clubs and programs and how to volunteer at our school.
- All teachers have been provided with voice mail. Even though teachers will not be answering the phone during class time, they will be able to retrieve messages at other times during the day or after school.
- **myStudent**, Pasco County's learning management system, can be accessed by parents to review student grades (quarterly) and attendance.

## **Health**

### **Preschool:**

**Due to licensing requirements, children must be completely toilet trained to attend any of the Preschool/VPK programs.** If your child is sick, please text or email your child's teacher and let them know he or she will be absent. If we do not receive this information, then you will receive a text or call

from the school. We will call in the event your child is displaying symptoms of a contagious illness.

**Children must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.**

### **Preschool - 8th Grade:**

Children must be kept home for these reasons:

- Fever of 100.0 F without meds or higher during the last 24 hours
- Sick during the night
- Diarrhea or loose, watery stool
- Pink eye or discharge from the eye
- Severe coughing, causing a child to become red or blue in the face or to make a whooping sound
- Difficult or rapid breathing
- Green uncontrolled nasal discharge (if child cannot manage on own)
- Any other communicable disease symptoms

If nasal discharge is from allergies, we may require a note from their doctor stating that they are not contagious. Children should be kept at home if they are unable to participate in any school activities. If your child becomes sick at school, you will be called to pick him/her up immediately. The child must be picked up within the hour. A communicable health form will be given at the time of pick up if your child is sent home.

### **Emergency Information:**

Supplying emergency information is part of the registration process and must be updated yearly. Any health problems such as free bleeding, excessive nose bleeding, febrile convulsions, highly allergic reactions, hearing and/or vision problems, etc. must be reported to the school. This information will make it possible for the school to handle emergency situations adequately as they arise. Please contact the main office if any information changes during the school year so it can be updated in our system.

### **Immunizations:**

**Preschool** - By state law, each child must have a complete and properly executed Florida Certification of Immunization form, or the Religious Exemption from Immunization form, and a Student Health Examination form from the custodial parent or legal guardian. These may be obtained from the local county health department. The physical and immunization form must be current. As a courtesy, parents will receive an email with a reminder of the expiration date from the preschool principal. It is the parent's responsibility to keep them up to date and provide current forms to the school. Expired health records will result in your child's suspension from our program enrollment until the records are up to date.

The child may not remain in the program if records are not submitted within 30 days of enrollment. A child who has not received the age-appropriate immunizations prior to enrollment and who does not have documented medical or religious exemptions from routine childhood immunizations must provide documentation of a scheduled appointment or arrangement to receive immunizations.

**K-8** - All children entering school for the first time, first grade, seventh grade, and transfer students from out of state, must comply with the Florida Compulsory Immunization Law (Florida State FS 323.032). A certificate of immunization, which may be obtained from a physician or the County Health Department, must be presented before the child will be admitted to school.

**Lice:**

If a student is found with head lice, a parent/guardian will be notified and instructions for treatment will be given.

**Medication:****Preschool**

The Department of Children and Families regulations prohibits Academy at the Farm Preschool employees from administering any medicine unless it is in the original container and labeled as follows:

- Student name
- Name of medication
- Directions concerning dosage and time of day to be taken
- Physician's name
- Date prescription was written
- If applicable, a medication oral syringe needs to be provided for proper administering of the medication

Over the counter medication can only be administered with a physician's written authorization. Medications need to be brought to the Preschool Principal by the parent or legal guardian for proper storage. We may not administer medication that needs to be refrigerated. Prescribed EpiPens will be stored in the student's classroom. All students with allergies will need an Emergency Care Plan. The child's parent or physician must include the following in the ECP:

1. Instructions regarding the allergen to which the child is allergic and steps to be taken to avoid that allergen.
  2. A detailed treatment plan to be implemented in the event of an allergic reaction, including the names, doses, and methods of prompt administration of any medications.
  3. Specific symptoms that would indicate the need to administer one or more medications.
- Preschool personnel will contact 911 immediately whenever epinephrine has been administered. The parents will also be notified immediately.

**K-8**

District policy requires that medication be administered to students in the following manner.

1. The medication should be brought to the clinic by the parent.
2. The medication must be in the **original container** and labeled as follows:
  - Student name
  - Name of medication
  - Directions concerning dosage and time of day to be taken
  - Physician's name
  - Date prescription was written
  - Special Instructions
3. No more than a month's supply of medication should be brought to school at one time.
4. An authorization form must be signed by a parent giving permission for any medication to be taken at school.
5. Non-prescription medication can only be administered with a physician's statement.
6. Students may be allowed to carry metered dose asthma inhalers (or EpiPens) with a completed permission form signed by their parent/guardian and physician. See the school nurse for forms.

## School Safety:

A safe school environment can be maintained if everyone does his/her part. **Entrances, exits and hallways have video/audio cameras** to help monitor activity and ensure the safety of the students and staff. Emergency exits are mapped out and posted in each classroom. If the fire or severe weather alarm sounds or there are other emergencies, students must follow fire/severe weather/active threat plan procedures as directed. Policy dictates that drills for these emergencies are conducted on a regular basis. There will be a school safety guard monitoring the premises while school is in session.

**Preschool Emergency Evacuation:** In the case of an emergency evacuation all classroom teachers have emergency contact numbers, and parents will be contacted with the new location. Academy at the Farm follows the Pasco County School District. In the event of an emergency closure by the Pasco County School District, AATF Preschool will also be closed. You will receive notification from the school or your child's teacher.

## Schedules

### Arrival and Dismissal:

#### Preschool

- **Arrival: Full Day Preschool/VPK with Wrap-around Program**

The school's hours of operation is from 7:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. There is a 30-minute arrival window from 7:30 a.m. - 8:00 a.m. Children will not be permitted to enter prior to 7:30 am. **Parents and/or caregivers must sign their children in and out each day with the time of arrival and departure.** This person must be of legal age 18 or over, no exceptions. Children may only be left in the care of a teacher/instructional assistant and never with volunteers or other parents. This is a licensing requirement. Please let your child's teacher know that your child has arrived, and never leave your child without saying goodbye. This is a big step in gaining confidence and independence as your child begins their day. Students attending for the day must arrive prior to 8:00 am.

- **Arrival: VPK Half Day Program**

The school's hours of operations morning VPK program are from 7:55 a.m.– 11:00 a.m. As this is a voluntary pre-k program and is subsidized by the state, students will not be permitted to enter prior to 7:55 a.m. **Parents and/or caregivers must sign their children in and out each day with the time of arrival and departure.** This person must be of legal age 18 or over, no exceptions. Children may only be left in the care of a teacher/instructional assistant and never with volunteers or other parents. This is a licensing requirement. Please let your child's teacher know that your child has arrived, and never leave your child without saying goodbye. This is a big step in gaining confidence and independence as your child begins their day.

- **Dismissal: Full Day Preschool/VPK with Wrap-around Program**

A parent may authorize another person to pick up their child by listing the person on the emergency card. This person must be of legal age 18 or over, no exceptions. It is important that your child be picked up on time, as it is distressing for the child to be left after the other children have been picked up. Students must be picked up prior to 3:30 p.m. A per minute fee (\$1 per minute) will be charged if your

student has not been picked up by 3:30 p.m. If you know that you will be running late, please call the school at 352-588-9737.

- **Dismissal: Half Day VPK Program**

A parent may authorize another person to pick up their child by listing the person on the emergency card. This person must be of legal age 18 or over, no exceptions. It is important that your child be picked up on time, as it is distressing for the child to be left after the other children have been picked up. Students must be picked up at 11:00 a.m. A per minute fee (\$1 per minute) will be charged if your student has not been picked up at 11:00 a.m. If you know that you will be running late, please call the school at 352-588-9737.

**Authorized Persons:**

Only persons of legal age on the emergency card will be allowed to pick up your child. Anyone picking up your child should be prepared to show proper identification including a photo ID before your child is released. If a court-ordered Custody Decree is in place, a copy will need to be provided for the student's file. The Preschool Principal will need to be informed of the person who is not authorized to pick up the child.

**Children left after school hours:** If your child is left at school after school hours, they may not be in their assigned classroom. A predetermined late teacher and classroom will be responsible for any children still here after school hours. Our staff will attempt to contact the parent(s) first, then proceed to emergency contacts. If the child is left for an unreasonable length of time, then we are obligated to call the Florida Department of Children and Families.

**K-8**

- School is in session from 8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Students should arrive no earlier than 7:00 a.m. To ensure a positive beginning to the day, students should plan to be in their classrooms no later than 7:50 a.m.
- **Students are considered tardy if they are not in their seats ready to work at 8:00. For safety purposes, parents must escort their child into school if they arrive after the car line has been closed.**
- A parent must come to the office to check out a student who has to leave before 2:30 p.m. and after 3:00 p.m. Any person picking up a student from school should be listed on the student's emergency card and be prepared to show a Driver's License as proof of his/her identity. **ALL attempts should be made to schedule appointments after school hours as missing school not only affects the student who leaves class but the other students when class is interrupted.**
- Dismissal time is 2:30 p.m. Students must be picked up **no later than 3:00 p.m.** or are subject to becoming **paying** participants in the Extended Day Program. After 3:00, parents should report to the main office to pick up their child. For more information on the extended day program, please contact the front office.

**Preschool Snack and Lunch:**

- AATF Preschool does not provide snacks or lunch. Students in the full day program will need a morning and afternoon snack and a water bottle in addition to their lunch. Half day VPK students will have one snack time. Snacks should be nutritious and child friendly. Ideal snacks include fruit, crackers, cheese, and vegetables such as carrot or celery sticks. Please see our suggested snack list. Due to peanut allergies, we have one designated room that will remain peanut free.

- We are not licensed to prepare lunches for students. Send a cold pack in your child's lunchbox if the food needs to remain cold or a thermos if the food needs to remain hot. We are teaching healthy food habits therefore we ask that you pack well balanced and nutritious foods. All lunches should include a grain, protein, and a combination of fruits and vegetables. Examples of nutritious lunches include: Cold cuts, spaghetti, chicken, apple slices, and baby carrots with dip. Cheese and whole wheat crackers, cucumbers or broccoli with dip, and cut up strawberries. A thermos of pasta (with either cheese or meat), peaches or mandarin oranges (in their own juice), and green beans.
- **Half Day VPK:** Students need to eat breakfast before their arrival. AATF Preschool does not provide snacks or lunch. Each child needs to bring a healthy snack and a water bottle daily. Half day students will not eat lunch at school.

### **K-8 Breakfast and Lunch:**

- Breakfast and lunch are available every day for all students. Breakfast may be picked up from 7:20-7:50 a.m. in the Michael G. Rom Center. Breakfast consists of a variety of items that may be available.
- Lunch consists of an entrée, two sides and a choice of chocolate or low fat milk.
- Parents can enroll their student in **myschoolbucks.com**, an online payment service for student meal accounts to add funds for extra servings and/or snacks for their child. Parents can track their accounts and/or have money automatically placed in the account without worrying about money shortages.
- Students who choose to bring their lunch to school should bring healthy food items.
- Students may not have meals delivered to school via DoorDash or any other delivery service.
- Microwaves are not available for student use.

### **Extended Day Program K- 8:**

- Preschool does not provide an extended day program.
- The Extended Day Program is available Monday-Friday from 2:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. This program is a privilege and students may lose that privilege due to misbehavior or if the designated dismissal time in the afternoon is not adhered to. For further information, visit the [www.academyatthefarm.com](http://www.academyatthefarm.com) or call the school.

### **Preschool Tuition:**

- Registration Fees are payable at time of registration and are nonrefundable. These fees insure your child's placement in the school and are determined according to classroom needs.
- **Tuition is due the first day of each month.** Please visit our website for current tuition rates. Monthly tuition is consistent regardless of holidays, absences, withdrawals, or inclement weather conditions. The dates of school closure (for holidays, etc.) are the same as the dates for Pasco County public school.
- Tuition is paid through the front office. You may pay by leaving payment in the black tuition mailbox located in the main office and the preschool lobby or through electronic payment set up through the Business Manager.
- **Withdraw:** Should it become necessary to withdraw your child from our program, we require a thirty-day advance written notice. This enables us to offer your child's space to parents who are interested.

## Policies/Procedures

### **Access to School Records:**

Parents have the right to inspect and review their children's educational records. Parents who wish to do so should contact the Director to make arrangements.

### **Board of Directors Meetings:**

A Board of Directors determines and sets policies for the Academy at the Farm. The BOD meetings are traditionally conducted at the school on the 3rd Monday of every month at 5:30 p.m. Any alteration of these days or times will be posted on the Academy web site and the master calendar located in the front office. These are public meetings and parents/visitors are encouraged to attend. Notification must be given to the Director one week in advance in order for any agenda item from the public to be discussed at the next meeting. Parents wishing to contact individual board members may do so by contacting the Director's administrative assistant by email or phone at 352-588-9737.

### **Bullying:**

Harassment or bullying of students or staff is an extremely serious violation of the Student Code of Conduct. It can also be a violation of criminal law. Academy at the Farm will not tolerate unlawful bullying and harassment in school, at school-related or school-sponsored events, or through the use of data or computer software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, or computer network of the school. Bullying means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or school employees. It is unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; is carried out repeatedly and is often characterized by an imbalance of power; or unreasonably interferes with the individual's school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to:

- Unwanted teasing or taunting
- Social exclusion
- Threat Intimidation
- Stalking
- Physical violence
- Theft
- Sexual, religious, or racial/ethnic harassment
- Public humiliation
- Destruction of property

Violations of this policy should be immediately reported to the principal or designee as soon as possible after the alleged incident. The principal or designee will promptly investigate reports of bullying. If the investigation finds an instance of bullying, it will result in prompt and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action.

### **Cell Phones/Electronic Devices:**

Students are NOT allowed to have cell phones, Smartwatches or other non-approved electronic devices at school. Due to extracurricular activities or the need to contact parents after school hours, students may bring their cell phones or Smartwatches to the appropriate principal's office to be held until after school is dismissed. Cell phones, Smartwatches or other non-approved electronics will be confiscated if

found in a student's possession at school. All confiscated cell phones, Smartwatches or other non-approved electronics will be made available to parents/legal guardians for pick up from the office. When a student has a legitimate need to make a call during the school day, they may use a school telephone with permission from a staff member. Parents who need to contact their children during the school day should contact the school office who will deliver the message to the child.

This policy applies to the Extended Day Program and on campus after school activities as well. It is the parent's responsibility to monitor their child's texting, social media and other online activities.

### **Code of Student Conduct:**

**Preschool Incident/Accident:** In the event of any significant incident/accident a written report will be sent home with your child. This report will contain specifics about the incident/accident and will be signed by your child's teacher as well as the Principal. You will be asked to sign stating that you received a copy, and a copy will be placed in your child's file.

**Preschool Disciplinary and Expulsion Policy:** Discipline Policy: Our goal is to have a classroom that is a thriving community where children are treated with respect and dignity. Character Traits are at the core of teaching positive appropriate behaviors. The teachers support the children's emotional development by assisting them with various strategies to deal with their feelings and solve social problems. Children must be given the tools they need to live and communicate with the people around them. They do better when they know what is expected of them. It is important for parents and teachers to communicate and work together.

If a child has a difficult time with their emotions, they may need to sit next to the teacher. The teacher will guide them from their emotional state of mind to their executive state. Teachers help by modeling and instructing children in appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

**K-8:** Each staff member at AATF accepts responsibility for maintaining discipline and promoting the overall development of the whole child. A student's behavior should conform to acceptable standards of conduct as established by the Director and staff members. This includes all students following the six character traits which are posted in every classroom and are continuously reinforced at all grade levels: Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Honesty, Caring and Citizenship. The Pasco County Code of Student Conduct (PCCSC) provides the framework for any course of action relating to discipline.

Through contractual agreement, the Academy at the Farm will adhere to this code. Student's rights and responsibilities are outlined and defined in the PCCSC which is available online by linking onto the Pasco County Schools website and selecting *Code of Conduct* from the menu.

### **Extended Learning Policy:**

The Academy at the Farm is a charter school which is a school of choice in Pasco County. Students enrolled here are considered full time students. Students who want to enroll in off campus or virtual classes can do so for accelerated or remedial/recovery purposes with the approval of Administration. All courses that are offered by the Academy must be taken on our campus under the direction of our staff.

### **Field Trips:**

Students may be involved in educational field trips from time to time throughout the school year. Field trips are an integral part of the curriculum and students are expected to attend unless excused by the Director. Financial arrangements will be made for those students who might need assistance. Students who do not attend school related field trips may be given alternative assignments at the teacher's discretion.

Attendance on end of year trips must be earned through the behavior management system utilized at



each grade level and are subject to final determination by Administration.

Approved Academy at the Farm uniforms must be worn by students on all field trips.

Parents or others who act as guests, if needed, on any field trip **must** be registered as approved volunteers through the Pasco County School District and follow the Field Trip Guest Guidelines that can be found on pg. 19 of this handbook.

### **Lost and Found:**

Lost/found items will be collected on the board under the covered area. Unclaimed clothing will be donated after two weeks. **Please have all jackets, lunch boxes or other valuable items marked with the student's name.** Jewelry and eyeglasses will be kept in Student Services until claimed.

### **Registration:**

**Preschool** Children must have the following forms on file before they may attend our program. Forms are to be updated each year.

1. Record of current physical examination (date valid for 2 years).
2. Certificate of immunization (current and updated)
3. Emergency Card (completely filled out front and back, signed).
4. Handbook Acknowledgment Form (signed)
5. Admission Agreement (signed)
6. Notarized copy of the shared parental responsibility of the Final Judgment of the Dissolution of Marriage (If Applicable)
7. Publication Release Form
8. Permission for food related activities and special occasion food consumption form
9. Two wallet size pictures of your child
10. VPK Certificate (VPK students only)
11. VPK Attendance Agreement

**K-8:** By Florida law, the following information is required before entering a Florida school:

- Current physical examination
- Florida Certificate of Immunization
- The **original** certified birth certificate (to be photocopied and returned to you)
- Proof of residency

While providing a student's Social Security number is not mandated by law, it is recommended by Data Entry.

### **School Fees:**

**Preschool:** Registration Fees are payable at time of registration and are nonrefundable. These fees ensure your child's placement in the school and are determined according to classroom needs.

**K-8:** School fees are requested at the time of registration and are a part of the registration packet. Fees are used for workbooks, planners, classroom supplies and incentives, periodicals, K-8 Science Lab supplies, supplemental software, special reading materials, Art and Music supplies, etc.

### **School Supplies:**

**Preschool:** Your child will need:

- **One inch** thick vinyl, washable resting mat.
- Labeled backpack and lunchbox
- Extra set of clothing in a labeled gal. sized storage bag (uniform shirt, pants/shorts/skort, underwear, socks)
- 2 Wallet-sized pictures of your child

Licensing requires that all children staying more than four hours have a rest time. There will be a rest time each afternoon for all children. Children are expected to rest quietly on their mat or engage in quiet activities. This allows those who need to sleep, the opportunity to do so. It is recommended to buy two mats in the event their mat becomes torn or ripped. A torn or ripped mat is not allowed in school per licensing requirements. The student may bring a small blanket that fits in their backpack.

**K-8:** Students are expected to bring necessary materials needed for daily work at all grade levels. A supply list will be available at the beginning of the year to purchase items that are necessary for a student's classes and/or a supply fee will be charged for the school to get needed supplies.

### **Socials:**

Class or school socials are kept to a minimum. All social refreshments sent to school must be **store purchased**. In the case of a child's birthday, parents should notify the teacher to inquire about their procedure for handling birthdays. **In order to minimize class disruptions, all gifts delivered to the school for students will be held in the front office until the end of the school day.**

### **Student Drop Off and Pick Up K-8:**

Please follow the guidelines below when transporting students to and from school. The following rules apply to everyone who transports a student:

#### **Car Line Drop Off**

- **Drive Thru Lanes** are for "driving thru", **NOT** for parking, leaving the car running or getting out of the vehicle for **ANY** amount of time. In consideration of others in the car line, **never** get out of your car or leave it if you are in the drive through lanes to deliver your child. Please park in the parking lot if you need to get out of your car.
- **PLEASE** continue to pull forward in the **Drive Thru Lanes** as far toward the front of the line as possible before stopping and letting out a child.

#### **Car Line Pick Up**

- Academy at the Farm will utilize a digital platform called SchoolPass for dismissal. It is imperative that parents register all possible vehicles that may be used to pick their child up on this platform. More information about the procedures will be sent out at the beginning of the school year.
- Students will be dismissed from their last period class when a parent/guardian arrives on campus.
- Utilize **both** car lanes for student pick up.
- Do not stop your forward progress because you see your child. Keep pulling forward until there is no space between you and the car in front of you and your child will come to you.
- **Never** get out of your car or leave it if you are in the drive through lanes to pick up your child.
- **Parents should stay in their cars and not park and walk up to pick up their child.**
- Handicapped parking spaces should not be used for pick up and drop off.
- Please refrain from having teacher/parent conferences in the car line.
- The crosswalk **must** be used by students and adults who wish to cross the street.
- Please share these instructions with relatives and/or friends that may drop off or pick up your

child.

**The safety of our students is our number one priority; therefore, it is imperative that everyone follows the above guidelines.**

### **Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect:**

By law, Academy at the Farm Preschool administration and staff must and will advise all appropriate local and state agencies of any suspected child abuse or neglect of any child attending our school.

### **Telephone Messages:**

Telephone messages for students will be taken by office personnel and delivered to the student. Parents can call the office with any such messages, as teachers do not answer their phone during class time. With a teacher's permission, students may use the phone in the office to contact parents.

### **Visitors/Security/Safety:**

Parents are welcome to visit the school. Visits for conferences or to observe in a classroom must be prearranged. For the safety of our students, all parents and visitors must come to the office with a photo ID to receive a visitor's badge to wear while on campus. Volunteers in the classroom must be pre-approved by the system set up by the Pasco County School Board and AATF. We encourage parent-teacher conferences; however, **teachers will not disrupt classroom instruction time to hold conferences. It is not necessary for parents to walk their students into the classroom in the morning as there is ample supervision if students need assistance.**

### **Volunteers/Chaperones:**

**Preschool:** A Volunteer Acknowledgement For Child Care Program form is required by The Department of Children and Families. All preschool volunteers must have this completed and signed before spending time in a classroom.

Parents that arrive on campus any time during the school day with the intention of working with students **must be an approved volunteer** and must sign-in and sign-out at the office and list the area or teacher where they will be volunteering. They must bring a picture ID to receive a name tag through our tracking system.

**K-8** - Academy at the Farm encourages family involvement and we welcome the opportunity to partner with each family and the community to strengthen learning experiences through our volunteer program.

- Anyone who wants to volunteer at the school should check the Academy at the Farm website for more information.
- The volunteer coordinator and/or classroom teacher will contact approved volunteers to help with special events/projects, field trips, classroom tasks, tutoring, etc.
- Parents that arrive on campus any time during the school day with the intention of working with students **must be an approved volunteer** and must sign-in and sign-out at the office and list the area or teacher where they will be volunteering. They must bring a picture ID to receive a name tag through our tracking system.

### **Withdrawal of Students:**

Parents need to contact the school several days prior to a student's withdrawal date to complete appropriate paperwork. All school materials must be turned in before the student leaves and all debts paid.

## **Academy at the Farm Communication Policy**

Academy at the Farm uses a communication procedure to help facilitate parental involvement. This procedure is to provide guidance for parents and others with questions about their children or the school.

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### **The Communication Procedure is as follows:**

#### **First Resource- Teacher**

- Contact the student’s teacher to discuss any concerns you may have regarding your child. If the teacher is involved, you are encouraged to contact the next resource.

#### **Second Resource- Learning Community Principal**

- If your concern remains unresolved after meeting with the teacher or the teacher is involved, then contact the Principal. If the Principal is involved, then you are encouraged to contact the next resource.

#### **Third Resource- Director**

- If your concern remains unresolved after meeting with the Principal or the Principal is involved, then contact the Director. If the Director is involved, you are encouraged to contact the next resource.

#### **Fourth Resource- Board of Directors Chairperson**

- If your concern remains unresolved after meeting with the Director or the Director is involved, you are encouraged to contact the parent liaison representative on the Board of Directors. Contact information for the Board Chair may be obtained by contacting the Assistant to the Director at 352-588-9737.
- In order that the Chairperson knows your concern, you must contact the Assistant to the Director at the school which will provide you with a form that must be completed prior to scheduling the meeting. You may receive a call from the Chairperson to clarify information prior to the meeting.

The purpose of this procedure is to bring suggestions, observations, or concerns regarding Academy at the Farm to the person that can best resolve these issues.

This procedure will foster an environment that welcomes early identification of suggestions or concerns with mutual resolution. Open communication is important to meeting the needs of everyone at the Academy at the Farm and ensuring the school continues to **“Do What’s Best for Kids!”**

## Academy at the Farm Respect and Civility Policy Statement

### Purpose:

Academy at the Farm believes that a safe, secure, nurturing and **civil environment** is essential to accomplishing its mission to **create a community** which works together so that all Academy at the Farm students will reach their highest potential.

### Scope:

This policy promotes mutual respect, civility and orderly conduct among all school employees, students, parents and the general public. The policy is not intended to deprive any person of his or her right to freedom of expression. Rather, it is intended to maintain, and to the extent that is possible and reasonable, a safe, harassment-free workplace for students, families, and staff, that is free of disruptive, demeaning, intimidating, threatening or aggressive behaviors.

### Policy:

1. AATF staff will treat students, parents, fellow staff members and members of the public with respect and will expect the same in return.
2. AATF staff will not conduct business with those who use obscenities or otherwise communicate in a demanding, insulting or threatening manner.
3. From time to time, AATF may identify topics not amenable to student discussion outside of a particular classroom or class subject matter, because of reasonably held, evidence based concerns that the safe, secure, nurturing and civil learning environment will be disrupted. Examples of topics may include, but are not limited to, sexual relations, incidents of war, brutality or violence occurring outside of school, and heated political contests. Sex and reproduction may be an appropriate topic for discussion within a class on biology, whereas other topics may be appropriate for discussion in classes on history or government. AATF will give all school employees, students and parents notice of any topical limitations when the need for the same arises.

Academy at the Farm students' rights and responsibilities are further defined within the Code of Student Conduct.

## Requirements for participation in the Academy at the Farm FFA or 4H and Using the School Agriculture Facilities

**Grades:** All students who keep an animal at school must maintain grades of 'C' or better in all classes. This rule is in place to ensure that students are spending the appropriate amount of time on studying and maintaining passing grades in their classes. Grade Guidelines:

- 1) Students who do not maintain 'C' grades in all classes will not be eligible to keep an animal at school. **When a student's grade falls below a 'C' they must contact Mrs. Carter immediately.** They will be given an academic warning and must have a 'C' by the next progress report or report card to continue to keep their animal at the AATF facility.
- 2) Any student who has a 'U/F' in a class will not be able to use the AATF agriculture facility until that grade is increased to a 'D' and the grade **MUST** be a 'C' by the next progress report or report card in order to be able to continue to use the facility. If the grade is a 'U/F' for longer than 2 weeks, the student is no longer eligible to use the AATF barn facility. In the case of the student being unable to keep the animal at the facility, students will have 5 days to remove their animal. Any animal owned or leased by Academy at the Farm will become the sole responsibility of Academy at the Farm and can be reassigned to another participant. Students will not be refunded any money paid for animal feed or facility use.
- 3) Students are permitted to hold a meeting with Mrs. Carter, their parents, an administrator, and their teachers to confer about grades in the event that the above standards are not met. It is our goal to work with students and use their project as a way to motivate and encourage the best grades possible.
- 4) All members of Academy at the Farm FFA must maintain a 2.0 GPA at all times regardless of where their animals are located. Students who do not have a 2.0 GPA are not eligible for FFA.

**Attendance:** In order to properly raise an agriculture animal at school, a student must have good attendance in school. Students who are not present at school are not permitted to be at the barn after school. If you are absent or out of town and unable to care for your animal, you must text Tim Carter, the barn manager, at 813-997-0610 and Robin Carter, the ag teacher, at 813-713-0161 to let them know you will not be at the barn so feeding arrangements can be made. If you have already made feeding arrangements, you must still text the Carters to let them know the plan.

**Behavior:** Students who participate in our agriculture programs are required to maintain appropriate behavior at all times (during school and after school). **Any child who does not demonstrate an understanding of the AATF character traits will be unable to participate in FFA or 4H.** Anyone who fails to follow the rules of the Academy at the Farm agriculture facility will receive a warning and then be unable to use the facility if the behavior continues. In the case of a student being unable to keep their animal at the facility, the student will have 5 days to remove their animal. Any animal owned or leased by Academy at the Farm will become the sole responsibility of Academy at the Farm and can be reassigned to another participant.

**Barn Hours:** Barn hours are from 2:30-4:30 each day. Extended barn hours after school must be approved by Robin or Tim Carter in advance. All morning feedings should be done by students or parents from 7:00-7:45 in the morning OR you can speak with the Carters about feeding for you. The barn will be open from 7:30-9:30 and from 3:30-6:30 on Saturdays and from 3:30-6:30 on Sunday. Please contact Tim Carter at 813-997-0610 if you need extended weekend hours or animals fed.

**Authorized Participants:** Only people with a signed release form should be in the barn area. Anyone who does not have a signed release form should not be in the agriculture area. It is the responsibility of each member who uses the barn to make sure that the guests that are brought to the barn have a signed release form. Any adult who is at the barn should have a volunteer application on file with the Pasco County School District. A link to the necessary form can be found at: [academyatthefarm.com](http://academyatthefarm.com).

Academy at the Farm  
National Junior Honor Society  
Selection Process

The National Junior Honor Society chapter of Academy at the Farm is a duly chartered and affiliated chapter of this prestigious national organization. Membership is open to those students who meet the required standards in five areas of evaluation: scholarship, leadership, service, citizenship and character. Standards for selection are established by the national office of NJHS and have been revised to meet our local chapter needs. Students are selected to be members by a 5-member Faculty Council, approved by the Director, which bestows this honor upon qualified students on behalf of the faculty of our school each year.

Students in grades seven and eight are eligible for membership. For the scholarship criterion, a student must have a cumulative GPA of 3.5 or better on a 4.0 scale. Those students who meet this criterion are invited to complete a Candidate Form that provides the Faculty Council with information regarding the candidate's leadership and service. A history of leadership experiences and participation in school or community service is also required.

To evaluate a candidate's character, the Faculty Council uses two forms of input. First, school disciplinary records are reviewed. Second, candidates must submit a letter of recommendation from an adult not affiliated with the school that attests to their good character. This information and the Candidate Form are carefully reviewed by the Faculty Council to determine membership. A majority vote of the Council is necessary for selection. Candidates are notified regarding selection or non-selection according to a predetermined schedule.

Following notification, a formal induction ceremony is held to recognize all newly selected members. Once inducted, new members are required to maintain the same level of performance (or better) in all five criteria that led to their selection. This obligation includes regular attendance at chapter meetings during the school year, participation in chapter service activities and documentation of a minimum of ten hours of school/community service that must be submitted each year. Students or parents who have questions regarding the selection process or membership obligations can contact the chapter advisor.

## FIELD TRIP GUEST GUIDELINES

### **Purpose:**

This policy intends to provide guidelines for guests that may accompany students on a school sponsored field trip.

### **Scope:**

Academy at the Farm is asking for guests to adhere to the following guidelines to provide a safe experience to all students participating in the field trip.

### **Policy Statement:**

Thank you for your interest in joining our upcoming field trip. We wanted you to be aware of the guidelines that all field trip guests must adhere to in order to provide a safe experience off campus.

- Academy at the Farm staff are responsible for supervising all students during the field trip. You will be joining your student's group as a guest to assist teachers' needs.
- All guests must be Pasco County School Board District approved volunteers prior to joining the trip.
- Field Trip Guests will provide their own transportation to and from the field trip site. Guests are not able to ride on the bus.
- All students must ride the bus with their class and AATF staff to the field trip. You may check your child out after the trip and drive them home separately, i.e. prior arrangements must be made with the teacher.
- Field Trip Guests are limited to adults only. Siblings are not permitted to attend.
- Purchasing food items for children other than your own is not permitted. This is a safety issue in regards to food allergies.
- Field Trip Guests are only able to attend day trips when needed. Overnight trips are limited to staff and students only.
- Failure to adhere to these guidelines could affect your ability to participate in future field trips.



**Student/Teacher 2023-2024**  
**SCHOOL YEAR CALENDAR**  
 All dates and events are subject to change

Teacher Planning Days	August 3-9, 2023
AATF Back to School Registration	August 8, 2023
First Day of School for Students	August 10, 2023
Pictures - PreK & 6-8 Grade	August 16, 2023
Pictures - KG - 5 Grade	August 17, 2023
Back to School Splash and Picnic	August 19, 2023
Open House	August 22, 2023
VPK Assessment 1	August 28-September 8, 2023
Holiday for Students and Teachers /Labor Day	September 4, 2023
Take-Home Dinner	TBA
Progress Reports	September 15, 2023
End of First Quarter	October 13, 2023
Picture Retake & Class Groups	October 19, 2023
Teacher Planning Day/No School for Students	October 16, 2023
Elementary & Secondary Report Cards	October 24, 2023
Progress Reports	November 10, 2023
Mustang Ball Fundraiser	November 17, 2023
Holiday for Students and Teachers/Thanksgiving Break	November 20-24, 2023*
End of Second Quarter/Semester 1	December 22, 2023
No School - Winter Break	Dec. 25, 2023-Jan.5, 2024
Teacher Planning Day/No School for Students	January 8, 2024
Holiday for Students and Teachers/Martin Luther King Day	January 15, 2024
Elementary & Secondary Report Cards	January 16, 2024
VPK Assessment 2	January 16-26, 2024
Pictures - Cap & Gown, PreK + 8th	February 1, 2024
Progress Reports	February 9, 2024
Holiday for Students and Teachers/President's Day	February 19, 2024
Pictures - Spring PreK, 6-8 Grade	February 29, 2024
Pictures - KG - 5 Grade	March 1, 2024
End of Third Quarter	March 7, 2024
Teacher Planning Day/No School for Students	March 8, 2024
Elementary & Secondary Report Cards	March 15, 2024
Spring Break/No School for Students and Teachers	March 25-29, 2024
Clay Shoot Fundraiser	April 6, 2024
Book Fair	April 15-19, 2024
Progress Reports	April 19, 2024
No School for Teachers and Students	April 26, 2024
Teacher Appreciation Week	May 6 - 10, 2024
Golf Tournament Fundraiser	May 7, 2024
VPK Assessment 3	May 6-17, 2024
Last Day of School for Students	May 24, 2024
Teacher Planning Days	May 28-29, 2024
Final Report Cards available on MyStudent	TBD

**\*NOTE: Possible hurricane makeup days are November 20th & 21st**