

Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District

**Miraleste**  
**Early Learning**  
**Academy**  
**MELA**



**Parent Handbook**



The Miraleste Early Learning Academy provides full and part time preschool days to children between the ages of 2 and 5. MELA provides equal access to public accommodations. Applications for enrollment are acted upon without regard to race, color, creed, cultural heritage, sex, religion, marital status, age, national origin or ancestry, political beliefs, disability or special needs, medical condition, sexual orientation, or any other consideration made unlawful by federal, state or local laws. All such discrimination is unlawful.

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**TO  
MIRALESTE  
EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY**

Our preschool has been carefully planned to provide quality preschool education for students in the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District. District educators came together with a shared philosophy for a child-centered educational program.

Please read this handbook carefully. It should answer most of your questions about the operation of the preschool. We hope that you will bring any questions, comments, and concerns to the administrative team without hesitation.

We hope that each of you feels like an important member of the Miraleste Early Learning Academy. You are always welcome to visit; just check-in with the office first. We welcome parent involvement as volunteers.

We have many new and exciting experiences planned for your child. We feel confident that this will be a fun and rewarding year for all of us. Thank you for selecting Miraleste Early Learning Academy, for your child's early learning experience.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen Haworth  
Preschool Director

**WE BUILD LIFE LONG  
LEARNERS IN PARTNERSHIP  
WITH FAMILIES**

**Vision**

◆ ***A safe, secure and stimulating environment***

At Miraleste Early Learning Academy, we dedicate ourselves to the students in our care. We strive to provide a nurturing and emotionally secure environment to help the children develop to their full potential. Emphasis will be placed on social, emotional, physical, creative, and cognitive development. It is our goal to teach each child in an orderly environment, those skills that will enable them to grow.

◆ ***An educated community in partnership to provide for a child's first school experience***

We believe that adults play an important role in the development of children. Parents are the child's first and most important teachers. Our staff is here to partner with parents in facilitating learning and care for our children. Parent volunteers will play a vital role in our preschool program. We offer support to parents in nurturing their children and learning new skills needed to cope with each new stage of their child's development. Our dedicated preschool staff has many years of teaching experience working in the field of early childhood education.

**Goals**

- Promote a child-centered environment in which a child can function confidently.
- Assist each child in learning to play and share with others.
- Assist each child to observe, investigate, and acquire those skills necessary for critical thinking and language skills.
  
- Strengthen emotional control and seek acceptable means for expressing feelings.
- Encourage each student to like himself or herself as a person.
- Foster language and pre-literacy skills.
- Provide a balanced program for physical play and quiet activities that will foster good health, physical growth and

motor coordination.

- Work closely with all preschool families.



# ABOUT THE MIRALESTE EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY



## Hours of Operation

MELA is open from 7am-6pm. Monday-Friday.

## Days of Operation

The program's school year is concurrent with the PVPUSD school calendar. We will offer a summer school program for June & July. This will require advance sign-up and payment in the spring preceding our summer school dates. All fees are non refundable.

## Organization of the Academy

MELA is licensed for 190 preschool students. **Children MUST be 2 years old at the time they begin at Miraleste Early Learning Academy. Children 3 years old and above must be toilet trained at the time they begin MELA.** MELA adheres to a ratio of: 1 teaching adult to every 8 children during the pre-academic program for preschoolers and a ratio of: 1 teaching adult to every 6 children in our toddler program.

## Program Components

MELA classrooms are organized by developmentally appropriate centers. Each classroom has the following centers: Art, Reading, Writing, Math, Science, Dramatic Play, and Blocks. These centers will be incorporated into your child's individual classroom. Emphasis will be placed on your child's social, emotional, and cognitive development.

Our 2 year old program covers an opportunity for 2 year olds to explore through their own natural curiosity while addressing the following foundations for learning; social-emotional development, cooperative play, playful exploration and experimentation, language development, and motor development.

We take pride in offering three year olds a "hands-on" learning experience. Each classroom follows weekly themes woven into the classroom curriculum. Students will be encouraged to explore and learn from the exciting opportunities in the student directed and adult directed *centered environment*. Children will develop important requisite skills for literacy and math including print awareness, story comprehension and one to one correspondence.

The four year old classrooms will be focusing on the skills necessary for kindergarten readiness. We cover letter recognition, pre-writing skills, phonemic awareness, reading comprehension, number recognition, sorting, categorizing, sequencing, science experiences, cooking experiences, self-help skills, and conflict resolution. Each classroom follows a weekly theme that is woven throughout the classroom curriculum.



Monthly calendars and weekly newsletters are given out to inform you of what is going on in the classroom. We have a wonderful parent volunteer program. We use parents both in and outside the classroom for support.

## **Enrichment Program/Creative Play**

MELA offers a variety of enrichment programs. The enrichment sessions will be 30-45 minutes long and will start at 12:30pm. After your child has participated in the enrichment activity, they will be participating in free choice center time, story time, and outside play. The following are examples of some of the enrichments offered:

1. Sports
2. Music
3. Cooking
4. Art
5. Gymnastics



\*\*Fees for enrichment programs are a separate tuition. All interested students must sign-up. Additional enrichment activities may be included or rotated into the above experiences. If you are interested in gymnastics, art, music, sports or cooking you will be required to pay a separate tuition fee for that enrichment activity.

## **Field Trips**

As part of our program, there may be times that we take preschool children on field trips. Prior to any event off site parents are notified of the field trip location and schedule. The field trip permission slip is sent out prior to the field trip. In the event of an excursion which involves travel in excess of 35 miles (one-way), a separate authorization sheet will be sent to parents/guardians for their approval.

## **Parking**

Please park in designated parent spots only. For the safety of the children, please adhere to the posted speed limits. Do not leave other children in the car while you drop off and pick up. Parking in the red zones is a violation of city law and may result in a ticket by the police officers who regularly patrol the Miraleste campus.

All parents, families and visitors must enter and exit through the gate opening into the grass play yard or the gate opening into the asphalt courtyard.

## **Holiday Celebrations**

MELA is enriched by the diversity that exists between its families and faculty. We encourage families to work in conjunction with their child's teacher to share their own special celebrations, traditions and heritage. Our approach is to recognize and celebrate holidays, as appropriate, but not to let them consume program curriculum. We are sensitive to the fact that some families celebrate a wide variety of holidays, and that others do not. Special holiday celebrations within MELA are announced in advance to afford parents the opportunity to choose whether or not their family would like to participate. Teachers at MELA strive to respect diversity and the differences among the children in their programs and plan events accordingly.

## **Faculty**

MELA faculty is highly qualified and dedicated early childhood professionals. Employees are selected to teach at MELA because of their knowledge, training, and experience in the field of early childhood education. MELA is committed to on-going in-service training for all of its staff members. The staff participates in professional development opportunities which include, but are not limited to, staff meetings, national and area conferences, higher education courses, first aid training, CPR, and seminars in child development and early childhood education.

## **Babysitting by MELA Faculty**

In an effort to maintain the professional status of MELA faculty and to prevent any potential conflict of interest, **babysitting by MELA faculty is strongly discouraged**. However, should staff members baby-sit, services must be outside the Academy premises and with the understanding that such an arrangement and payment for services is solely between the faculty member and the child's family. The arrangements are not sanctioned by MELA or by The Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District.

## **TUITION**

Tuition is due to MELA on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month. Tuition rates are set annually based on contracted hours. Tuition is not based on attendance. There is no tuition credit for vacation or absence due to illness. Please refer to tuition schedule for current rates. Any change in tuition will be accompanied by 30 days written notice.

MELA does offer a 10% discount on tuition rates for siblings of current students who enroll in our program. The 10% applies to the second family member's tuition rate. There is a tuition discount available to PVPUSD staff. Discount information is available in the office.

Payments by check may be left in the tuition box in the preschool office or P4 tuition box. Payment can be made by cash, check, or money order. Make your checks payable to MELA.

**Registration Fees:** A \$75 registration fee must be paid to place your child on the wait list. A re-registration fee of \$50.00 will be required to save your child's spot for the next academic year. A tuition deposit will also be required to guarantee's your child's enrollment for the next academic year. Please refer to the wait list policy and procedures for additional information.

**All fees are non refundable, including the summer program. Checks made payable to MELA.**

**Pick-Up Late Fee:** A penalty fee of \$1.00 per child is payable for the first five minutes the child is in the preschool beyond their contracted hours. After the first five minutes, the late fee for any child at the preschool beyond their contracted hours is \$1.00 per minute per child. This will offset the staffing cost and will hopefully serve to encourage parents to come on time. This fee is due at pick-up. Children will only be allowed to return to the Academy when this fee is paid. If a family continues to have their child at the Academy beyond their contracted hours, Miraleste Early Learning Academy will automatically adjust their contracted hours to the next program with longer hours.

**Late Tuition Payment Fee:** Tuition is paid on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month. Tuition received after this date will be assessed a \$5.00 per day late fee. If tuition payment is delinquent as of the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month, your child will be dis-enrolled.

**Insufficient Funds Fee:** A \$15 fee will be charged for a check returned for insufficient funds. If this occurs, MELA will then have the option to refuse any future checks and require payment by money order.

## **ENROLLMENT**



### **Eligibility**

Children with parents or legal guardians who are **residents of Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District and/or full-time or part-time employees of PVPUSD are eligible for enrollment** within MELA. Children with parents or legal guardians **who live outside the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District will be offered enrollment if space is available.**

### **Wait List and Registration Policies and Procedures**

Space can be secured on the "Wait List" by submitting a Request for Enrollment form and the non-refundable \$75 registration fee to MELA, 6245 Via Canada, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90275. Payments by check may also be left with MELA administration in the preschool office. Payment is by check or money order only. No cash please. Make your checks payable to MELA.

As each form and "Wait List" fee is received the date is noted and the child is then placed on the "Wait List" according to that date. Notification of the date of receipt is sent to each family.

**Filling out a Request for Enrollment form does not guarantee there will be a space in MELA at the desired time of enrollment.** Space only becomes available when a vacancy occurs. As spaces become available, enrollment offers are made to families whose children are 2 years old or older. Priority status will go to those families requesting full time care 5 days a week. Partial week hours are offered if space and staff are available.

### **Wait List Priority (within each category the priority is by date of request)**

- 1 PV residents and employees requesting the full-time program/ and siblings of MELA students
- 2 Out-of-district families requesting full-time program
- 3 PV residents and employees requesting 6 hour program
- 4 Out-of-district families requesting 6 hour program
- 5 PV residents and employees requesting 3 hour program
- 6 Out-of-district families requesting 3 hour program
- 7 PV residents and employees requesting 3 hour 3 day program
- 8 Out-of district families requesting 3 hour 3 day program
- 9 PV residents and employees requesting 3 hour 2 day program
- 10 Out-of-district families requesting 3 hour 2 day program
- 11 Any other requests



### **Accepting, Declining or Changing Enrollment**

When a space opens an offer is made to the first person on the list requesting full time hours, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. This person has 3 business days from the day of the conversation to decide if they want to accept or decline the offer. If the person does not answer, we will consider *no response* a decline and move to the next person on the list requesting a full time space. If those people all decline, we will begin to offer the spot to the next group of people requesting 5 days a week. This will continue down the list and eventually the people requesting partial week hours will then be offered the space.

If you decline a space, you forfeit your position on the "Wait List" and will have to fill out another Request for Enrollment form if you decide at a later date that you wish to be put back on the wait list. This will also require paying the \$75 "Wait List" fee again. A child's start date is within 30 days from offer.

Upon accepting an offer the family will submit one-month's tuition. Receipt of this money confirms enrollment at MELA.

### **Enrollment Procedures**

All families entering the program will meet with the Director, tour the facility, and receive all necessary enrollment forms. All necessary enrollment forms must be handed in to the Director or Office Manager prior to the child attending MELA.

## **Contracted Hours**

Tuition rates vary according to length of day. In order to provide appropriate supervision for children and to appropriately schedule faculty, families are asked to follow the schedule they set for their child. If a family is consistently late in picking up their child, *MELA will automatically adjust their contracted hours to reflect the trend, and begin billing them appropriately.*

Families may only extend or change hours with 4 weeks advance written notice to MELA. Even a five or ten minute late pick-up or early drop-off can greatly impact staffing needs and proper ratio coverage. If you have an unexpected emergency and need to alter your schedule, you must contact the Director and your child's teacher.

## **Withdrawal from MELA**

Families are required to give MELA a minimum of 30 days written notice before withdrawing their child(ren) from MELA. Parents are responsible for payment of tuition for the entire thirty-day notice period. Should parents fail to give proper notice, they will be accountable for 30 days of tuition from the day they do notify MELA of withdrawal.

## **Disenrollment Procedure**

Our child-centered approach seeks to accommodate a wide range of individual differences. It is only on rare occasions that a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable placement for care. Some examples of such instances:

- A child appears to be a danger to him/herself, other children attending the Miraleste Early Learning Academy, MELA employees or anyone else at the Miraleste Early Learning Academy.
- Medical, psychological, or social service personnel working with the preschool determine that continued care at the preschool could be harmful to, or not in the best interest of the child.
- Any other situation in which the accommodations required for the child's success and participation place an undue burden on preschool resources and finances and removal is in the best interest of the child or MELA.

Our programs are based on developing partnerships with parents/guardians and supporting families. It is only on rare occasions that a parent/guardian's actions/requests may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for themselves and their child. Some examples of such instances:

- The parent/guardian fails to abide by MELA policies or those requirements imposed by the appropriate licensing agency.
- A parent/guardian demands special services which are not provided to other children and which cannot reasonably be delivered by the program (including requests that are outside the philosophy of the program).
- A parent or guardian is physically or verbally abusive to the staff, children, or anyone else at MELA.

### **Grievance Procedures for Parents**

To resolve a grievance, parents are urged to follow these steps:

1. Speak directly to the other party with whom you have a grievance.
2. If Step 1 does not solve the problem or if the parent is not comfortable speaking to the parties involved, the *parent should speak to the Director, who will attempt to resolve the problem.* If the problem is not resolved, go to Step 3.
3. Address the problem, in writing, to Ms. Mary Ellen Haworth, Site Supervisor  
6245 Via Canada, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA. 90275



### **CHILDREN'S RECORDS**

#### **Confidentiality and Distribution of Records**

The information in your child's record is considered privileged and confidential. No one who is not directly related to the care of your child, or administration team, or the state licensing agency, will have access to the record without parental/guardian written permission. As a parent/guardian, you may have access to your child's record within two days of your request to view the record. Upon withdrawal of your child from MELA, files will be retained for three years.



#### **State Regulatory Agency**

A state regulatory agency may review your child's record in order to ensure that MELA has followed its requirements in maintaining the necessary information. All information in the record is kept confidential. MELA is required to have a copy of all state regulations available to parents/guardians. Inspection reports are available upon request from the Director. Miraleste Early Learning Academy is licensed and regulated by Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division, Los Angeles Northwest Child Care Regional Office, 6167 Bristol Parkway, Suite 400, Culver City, CA 90230. The phone Number is 310-337-4336.

## **Observation of Children**

As part of MELA's activities, children may be observed in their classrooms by childcare professionals not employed by PVPUSD. In all cases, families will be notified and the confidentiality of information related to the children will be maintained. The site administrator will accompany any visitor conducting an observation.

## **Class Lists**

Each classroom teacher will provide the families in their individual room with a list of classmates and parent information, including cell phone numbers and emails.

If you do not wish to be included, please indicate "NO" on the Parent Handbook Sheet provided in your enrollment packet.

The class directory is for the exclusive use of MELA families and may not be used by other organizations, agencies, or businesses for mailing list or solicitation purposes.

## **CLASSROOM POLICIES**

### **Drop-Off and Pick-Up**

To ensure that each child is safe and supervised at all times, and to foster daily communication between families and faculty, a parent or authorized guardian is required by law to accompany each child in to the classroom and ensure that the children are under supervision before leaving the premises. Parents/Guardians are responsible for signing their child in and out each day on our electronic sign in and sign out sheet. All parents and caregivers will receive a pin number prior to the first day of school. The pin and your full signature will be required when signing in and signing out your child to MELA.

Please notify the office by 9:30am if your child will be absent for the day. The office will, then, notify the teacher in the classroom. Please notify the office if your child will be arriving late to school. All children must arrive to class by 10:30 am or they will be turned away and consider absent for the day. If your child is signed out at any time for any reason during the day, they may not return to school on the same calendar day.

For children contracted from 9am-12:30pm daily, please note; the earliest you may drop off your child to the classroom is 8:45am. If you need to drop off prior to 8:45am, please make arrangements with the office at least 24 hours in advance.



You may wish to car pool for your convenience. Some children may enjoy having a friend for the trip to and from school. MELA will not be able to arrange car pools, but classroom directories are available from the Director. You must notify MELA in writing in advance if your child is going to ride with another parent. We ask that car-pooling parents take responsibility for passing on written or posted information from school to the other families. ***The car pool parent(s) must be listed in your child's emergency card and the car pool parent must sign all children in the car pool "in" and "out" of the appropriate classroom.***

### **Child Release Policy**

Children will be released only to a parent, legal guardian, or caregiver whose names are listed on the Emergency Card and have a PIN number. Families should advise the administration and teachers in advance, in writing, if an alternate or person not listed on the original form is to pick up their child. For the safety of each child, photographic identification will be requested of all authorized persons picking up children. If an emergency situation requires that you must phone the school with this authorization, expect us to call back to check the validity of the arrangement.

MELA cannot legally deny access to a parent or guardian unless there is an active restraining order on file or a specific schedule of court ordered visitation rights. We will act in a way that insures the safety of all children and faculty.

Parents and other authorized persons are responsible for transporting their child to and from MELA in an appropriate child restraint system. If someone other than yourself will be picking your child up from the preschool, please make sure you leave your child's car seat or the individual has an appropriate car seat for your child.



### **Toys from Home**

We discourage children from bringing toys from home-except for specific program purposes such as a share day. Home toys cause conflict, and MELA cannot be responsible for their safekeeping. Sometimes preschool children bring a special sleeping toy in for rest time. If your child finds this to be a comfort, he or she may bring in an item that will remain on their cot or in their cubby to be used at rest time. At any time a child may bring in a book to share with the class. Your child's teacher may share additional room specific guidelines about this practice.

## Birthdays

A wonderful way for you as parents to celebrate your child's birthday is to donate a book honoring your child's special day. This will be kept in your child's classroom library, to share with the other students. Please gift wrap the book and include a picture of your child to be placed inside of it. This will give us a chance to cherish the memories long after your child has left MELA.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation and hope that you will join the birthday campaign in allowing your child to open up the special wrapped book on his/her birthday. If you would like to bring a special snack for the children, please notify your classroom teacher to discuss what foods are appropriate to bring.

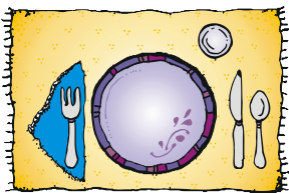
Birthday celebrations validate the uniqueness of each child and contribute to the development of a strong sense of self-esteem!

We request, and even insist, that birthday invitations or party bags are not to be brought to school. Thank you for your cooperation.

## MEALTIMES AND FOOD

### Lunch

The children must bring their lunch to school. Please note the following information below.



1. Lunches must be brought to school in a lunch box.
2. Include juice box or water (No sippy cups or thermoses)
3. Warm-ups will be warmed in the microwaves located in each classroom.
4. Please include healthy and nutritious lunch items.
5. If you have any questions regarding what foods to pack inside your child's lunch box, see the Academy's Director for suggestions.

### Snack

Snack menus are posted on your classroom parent board. Snack will be provided in the morning and afternoon, please see your child's room schedule for times. Snack will emphasize foods that are nutrient-dense and low in salt, sugar, fat, and processing. We will offer a variety of foods according to the licensing requirement of balanced meals. Children will be encouraged to try foods but never forced to eat anything. Servings will be kept small to be non-threatening to timid eaters and to avoid ruining appetites for lunch. **PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ANY FOOD ALLERGIES.**

## Food

On occasion a room might host a family event where parents are asked to bring a dish of food to share with other families. In these cases, parents are asked to have the food approved by a teacher and the Director to ensure that allergies are considered. Also if you wish to bring a special snack to share with the children in a room, be sure to first check with the teacher in the room.

## BEDDING & NAP TIME

MELA uses the Tot Cot system for our napping students. **The Tot Cot is an all-in- one sleeping unit, it includes a pillow, sheet and blanket. Each student is required to purchase a Tot Cot from MELA. The cost is \$35.00 per Tot Cot.** No sleeping bags, huge blankets or pillows. Please make sure that you bring your **Tot Cot on Monday morning** to your child's individual classroom. The Tot Cot will be kept on your child's cot, until nap time!

Children are assigned to a cot and area of the room where they will rest every day. A rest time is scheduled for all children in the 11 hour program. Children are encouraged to close their eyes and sleep. Teachers play soft music and pat children's backs to create a soothing atmosphere. If a child cannot sleep after a period of time they will be given a quiet activity to do on their cot.

## CHILDREN'S CLOTHING

### Backpack Policy

The following items must be placed in a plastic bag and will be kept in your child's cubby.

1. 2 pairs of shorts or pants
2. 2 pairs of underwear
3. 2 t-shirts
4. 2 pairs of socks
5. 1 pair extra shoes
6. sweatshirt/jacket



Please note: It is your responsibility to include your child's name on his/her items. Your child is responsible for keeping up with their individual backpacks and taking them home daily. If your child brings home wet clothing, please replace it with new washed clothing. It is your responsibility to make sure that your child has all of the above items included, in his/her cubby daily. Please help your child remember to bring HIS/HER backpack to school each day. Your cooperation is appreciated in advance.

### Clothing Reminders

Please remember to send your child in tennis shoes. Sandals, flip-flops, "party shoes", or cowboy boots do not allow the children to play freely inside or outside

the classroom. We also ask that you not send your child to school with necklaces or bracelets, these accessories may get caught on play equipment inside and outside the classroom. It is our duty as early childhood educators to keep your children safe, while in our care. These simple rules will allow your child to play freely while here at MELA.

## **TRANSITIONS**

### **1<sup>st</sup> Day Transition**

We are aware that the first day of school might be a bit hectic, but in a couple of days our routine will be consistent. Your child may express some feelings of separation anxiety as they adjust to their new environment. Don't be alarmed if they cry! The staff has many years of teaching experience dealing with children and separation anxiety. We ask that you bring your children to his/her classroom and leave them in the capable hands of our caring staff. Please limit your stay to 10-15 minutes. This will make it easier for your child to adjust to their new environment. Please feel free to call your child's classroom and check on their progress. You are also encouraged to discuss with the Director the communication methods that work best for you.

## **EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

### **Preschool Assessment & Parent Conference**

All 3 and 4 year old children will receive two written assessments from their teachers each year. In addition, parents of children who are in the pre-kindergarten classes will have the opportunity of individual parent/teacher conferences in January and if needed a second conference will be scheduled for May. A sign-up sheet for these conferences is provided two weeks in advance.

### **Daily Schedule**

Please see your child's classroom parent handbook or parent board for individual classroom schedules.



# BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

## Philosophy

For children to grow and prosper both socially and emotionally, they need the support of a warm, nurturing environment where adults make them feel secure and appreciated. They need to be encouraged to grow toward self-guidance as they participate in setting limits and claiming ownership of those limits.

MELA staff believes discipline to be a means of guiding children toward self-control so they will be able to understand logical consequences and make choices about their own behavior. Through this process, they will ultimately be able to incorporate values and standards into their lives in order to interact respectfully and responsibly with others in predictable, mutually satisfying ways.

The teacher will share specific school/program rules and behavior consequences with parents. Corporal punishment will never be used. Parents of a child who displays consistently inappropriate behaviors, identified by the teacher, will be called to cooperatively (with the teacher) devise a plan to modify the inappropriate behavior.



## **Behavior Management Plan**

MELA assumes responsibility for providing a safe environment for all children. When a child is not functioning appropriately within the group setting, the following procedures will occur.

1. A verbal warning is given by the teacher to the child to stop the behavior.
2. The child is removed from one activity and asked to choose another one.
3. A place is found for the child to sit quietly within full view of the teacher.
4. The teacher will talk with the child until an understanding is reached between the teacher and the child.
5. If the child continues to display the same disruptive behavior, she or he will be removed from the classroom and taken to the Director's office.
6. The Director will talk with the child and notify the child's parents.
7. A conference will be arranged between the Director and the parents to discuss the child's behavior. This will help to establish workable solutions for the child.
8. If the child's behavior continues to be disruptive, he or she will be dismissed from MELA.
9. CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS NEVER USED AT ANY TIME.

We will not tolerate students causing physical harm to themselves or others or abuse the property of MELA.

### **INSIDE CLASSROOM RULES ARE . . . ARE . . .**

1. Keep your hands and feet to your own body.
2. Use quiet voices.
3. Be a good listener.
4. Respect others.
5. Share with friends.

### **OUTSIDE PLAYGROUND RULES**

1. Walk on the sidewalk.
2. Slide down the slide on bottom.
3. Sand stays in the sandbox.
4. Be a good listener.
5. Always ask to go to the restroom.
6. Respect others.

## **Handling of Confidential Information in Incidences of Children's Aggressive Behavior**

In a social setting where young children are just beginning to explore and experiment with ways of interacting effectively with their peers, it is not unusual for incidences of aggression to occur. When incidences of aggression do occur, parents/guardians of the children involved are informed of the incident and of any specific information pertinent to an understanding of the situation. The information shared typically includes the details of the incident itself (e.g., the time and the place, the preceding and subsequent events, the steps taken specifically to comfort the child who was hurt, and more generally to handle the situation etc.) The plans that are put into place to teach more appropriate interactions and to prevent the reoccurrence of the aggressive behavior are also shared with parents/guardians. However, the identity of the child who engaged in aggressive behavior is NOT REVEALED.

### **Biting**

Biting is a normal stage of development, commonly seen among infants and toddlers, but sometimes even among preschoolers. It is something that almost all children will try at least once. Brief episodes of biting do not mean that a child is having a social or emotional problem. Nor does it mean that you are a bad parent. It does mean that your child is going through that particular stage in his or her development and like all stages children go through, biting soon ends.

When biting happens, our response will be to care for and help the child who was bitten, to help the child who bit learn other behavior, and to examine our program to maintain an environment that is consistent with children's needs. Our focus will not be on punishment for biting, but on effective techniques that address the specific reason for biting. The child does not understand a delayed punishment at home. A First Aid Notice will be written for the child who was bitten and who bit. The name of the child who bit will remain confidential.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**



### **Facility Safety**

To ensure that parents and children feel safe and comfortable at all times, parents/guardians of enrolled children are welcome to visit at any time during the day. In addition to security measures promoting indoor and outdoor safety on MELA grounds, the Academy has a secured access, ensuring that access is available only to parents/guardians and authorized personnel.

## **Reporting Abuse and Neglect**

Individuals working with children are mandated reporters and are required by law to report cases to the appropriate state authorities if they have reasonable cause to believe or suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect or is in danger of abuse or neglect. The appropriate child protective service agency will determine appropriate action and may conduct an investigation. It then becomes the role of the agency to determine if the report of abuse or neglect is substantiated and to work with the family to insure the child's needs are met. MELA will cooperate fully with any investigation and will maintain confidentiality concerning any report of child abuse or neglect. Our concern is always the protection of the child.

## **Parent Safety Policy**

If MELA has reasonable cause to suspect that any person picking a child up is under the influence, or in any way is physically or emotionally impaired, and may endanger your child, we may refuse to release your child. If so, we will request that another adult (parent/guardian or someone listed on the Child Release Form) pick up your child or call the police to prevent potential harm to your child. This will be done for the protection of your child.

## **Medical Records**

In order to ensure and protect the health of all children, and to satisfy child care regulations, we need current medical information on each child prior to enrollment. We will provide you with the specific form required. You must have your doctor update this form annually. Your child will not be able to attend MELA without a California approved current medical form on file.

## **Medical Policies**

It is common for preschoolers to have up to 8 illnesses a year. While this is frustrating, everyone shares a concern for the child's well being. Upon enrollment you will be provided with your signed copy of the medical policies. At MELA we will all work to prevent the spread of illness by maintaining a clean environment and providing substitutes for staff members with any contagious illness.

We also need your cooperation. Please keep your child home under any of the following circumstances:

- When a fever is present or when your child had a fever the night before (fevers tend to rise as the day progresses).
- At least the first three days of a cold or until mucus is colorless.
- When your child has diarrhea, vomiting, or stomach complaints.
- When your child has any symptoms of unknown origin such as a rash.
- When your child has a contagious illness.



Your child must be fever free for 24 hours without the aid of medication before returning to school. This is for everyone's benefit. Recovering children are more likely to pick up a new illness. If your child will miss school, please call before the school day begins to let us know.

If your child becomes sick at school, we will do our best to remove your child from the group although staffing ratios may not allow this. Because of this we will ask that you make every effort to quickly pick your child up from MELA within 1 hour of when you are called. This will protect other students from possible exposure. We will first call the parents to pick up their child. If we are unable to reach either parent, we will call people listed on the child's emergency form.

### Allergies

Parents are expected to notify MELA regarding children's food or environmental allergies. A list of children's allergies is posted in the child's room and staff is trained to familiarize themselves with the allergy lists.



### Child Absence

Please call MELA if your child is going to be absent or arriving after 9 a.m. If we do not hear from you, we will be concerned about your child. If your child has a contagious illness, please let MELA know so that other parents can be alerted to look for symptoms in their children. There is no tuition credit given for absences.

### Child's Daily Health Check

If a child appears to be ill when brought to MELA and the child cannot be made comfortable, you will be asked to take the child home. Should we feel that the child can be admitted but may be becoming ill, we will monitor the child and update you as necessary.



### Accidents, Injury Prevention and Emergencies

Teachers are responsible for daily safety inspections of their rooms and the playground. They remove defective equipment or send it for repair as soon as possible to prevent injury. In the event a child does sustain an injury, you will receive an **Accident Report** outlining the incident and course of action taken by the staff. Each report must be signed by the parent and given to the teacher or Director; the reports are kept on file. You will be contacted immediately if the injury produces swelling or needs medical attention. For more serious injuries, you will be contacted by telephone as soon as possible. MELA staff will continue to call you or your emergency contacts until someone is reached. However, whether or not you are contacted, the child will still be taken to the hospital by ambulance in the event of a serious medical emergency.

## **Reportable Communicable Diseases**

Please notify us immediately if your child has a communicable disease. If children are exposed to a contagious illness, notices will be sent out to all families. When MELA is notified that a child enrolled in MELA or an employee has a suspected reportable disease, it is our legal responsibility to notify the local Board of Health or Department of Public Health. Authorities may require further information, testing, or preventative measures.

## **Medication Policies**

If your child requires medication or ointment to be given at school, a parent or guardian must fill out a Request for Medication Form and a physician must sign it. All medicines must be in the original container. Only prescription medicine with the child's name on it can be given. Over the counter medications can be given to a child by a MELA staff member if the same procedure is followed.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

### **Communication**

MELA is committed to creating a strong home and school connection by developing a system for open, honest communication with you regarding your child's development and experience at MELA. This includes a continual exchange of information between you and MELA teachers and administration team. Due to the limitations on conversation during arrival and departure times, phone calls and conferences will be used.

We ask parents to keep staff notified of significant events and changes in the children's lives; visitors, moving, new babies, illness, divorce, and deaths. All of these affect children's lives at home and at school. If you are aware of an unexplained change in your child's behavior, please discuss it with the teacher. She may have some insights to share with you.

### **Parent Boards**

These are located inside or outside your child's classroom and on the bulletin boards in the main hall way of MELA. Please check them daily for information on daily events, curriculum calendars, news, closure dates, snack menus, monthly & weekly newsletters, and other information.

### **Mailboxes and other communications**

When the administration, PVPUSD or teachers have information to share, it will be sent through AERIES communications via Signal Kit or via messages through our Kinderline app.

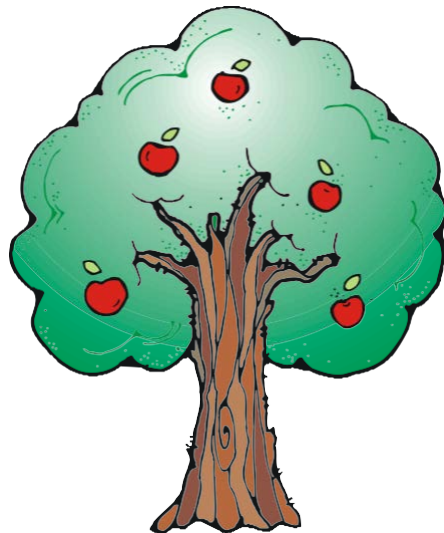
All parent/child boxes will be located in your child's classroom on top of their cubbies. They will be labeled with your name or your child's name. Please check your mailbox daily. All art projects and your child's completed work will be placed in your mailbox. We feel communication is key to the success of your child's time here at MELA.

## **Parent Volunteers**

We are excited to have parent volunteers participate in our classrooms. Please fill out the Parent Volunteer Packet in your enrollment packet. All information regarding this program is included in the Parent Volunteer Packet. When you are volunteering or attending classroom events, please remember that we cannot have siblings (including infants) participate in classroom activities. We ask that you find alternative care during your volunteer times and attendance at events. **Parent volunteers are required by Health and Safety Code 1596.7995 to provide documentation of the following immunizations: influenza, pertussis, and measles. Each employee and volunteer shall receive an influenza vaccine between August 1<sup>st</sup> and December 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. We also require a TB test or Adult TB Risk Assessment Questionnaire to be completed and brought to the office to be kept on file. (Questionnaire is included in the registration packet)**

## **INSURANCE**

MELA and the Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District offer optional student accident insurance. Please see the Director for more information.



## PARENT HANDBOOK RECEIPT

I have thoroughly read this handbook and I agree to abide by all these policies and procedures while my child is enrolled at MELA.

I understand that these policies and operating procedures are not intended to take the place of more detailed documents that are in use at MELA. MELA may, at any time, without having to consult anyone and without anyone's agreement, change, suspend, or discontinue any or all such handbook policies, or operating procedures, in whole or in part, with or without notice, and shall make all final decisions as to their meaning and application.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_