

# Excel Jr. Academy



## Parent Handbook

2016-2017

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# **INTRODUCTION**

“Do not train a child to learn by force or harshness; but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius of each.”— [Plato](#)

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The primary purpose of Excel Jr. Academy is to provide a safe, fun, home based learning environment. Students will engage in enrichment opportunities that will allow them to grow and flourish in all aspects of their educational experience.

## ACCREDITATION AND LICENSING

Excel Jr. Academy is a certified, licensed Learning Center through the Department of Family Services and meets ALL statewide requirements.

## COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

If at any time there are concerns involving the welfare of a student please report this to the teacher immediately.

## NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The mission of Excel Jr. Academy is to provide a quality preschool education for 3, 4, and 5 year old children, no matter their social, racial, ethnic, or religious backgrounds.

## MISSION STATEMENT

**Excel Jr. Academy**~ Students of Excel Jr. Academy will engage in a safe, small, home based learning environment, while enrichment and real life opportunities will allow for students to broaden their educational foundations.

## PHILOSOPHY – JENNIFER WISTISEN

I believe that each child is a unique individual who needs a secure, caring, and stimulating atmosphere in which to grow and mature emotionally, intellectually, physically, and socially. It is my desire as the founder, to help students meet their fullest potential in all areas by providing an environment that is safe, supports risk-taking, and invites a sharing of ideas. There are elements that I believe are conducive to establishing such an environment, (1) allowing the child's natural curiosity to direct his/her learning, and (2) promoting respect for all things and all people.

The role of the classroom teacher is to guide, providing access to information rather than acting as the primary source of information, the students' search for knowledge is met as they learn to find answers to their questions. For students to construct knowledge, they need the opportunity to discover for themselves and practice skills in authentic situations. Providing students' access to hands-on activities and allowing adequate time and space to use materials that reinforce the lesson being studied creates an opportunity for individual discovery and construction of knowledge to occur.

Equally important to self-discovery is having the opportunity to study things that are meaningful and relevant to one's life and interests. One way to take learning in a direction relevant to student interest is to invite student dialogue about the lessons and units of study. Given the opportunity for input, students generate ideas and set goals that make for much richer activities than I could have created or imagined myself. When students have ownership in the curriculum, they are motivated to work hard and master the skills necessary to reach their goals. These opportunities will be addressed through enrichment.

When the voice of each student is heard, and environment evolves where students feel free to express themselves. Class meetings are one way to encourage such dialogue. I believe children have greater respect for their teachers, their peers, and the lessons presented when they feel safe and sure of what is expected of them. In setting fair and consistent rules initially and stating the importance of every activity, students are shown respect for their presence and time. In turn they learn to respect themselves, others, and their environment.

For me, teaching provides an opportunity for continual learning and growth. One of my hopes as the founder is to ensure that a love of learning is instilled in all of our students. I feel there is a need for compassionate, strong, and dedicated individuals who are excited about working with children. In our competitive society it is important for students to not only receive a solid education, but to work with someone who is aware of and sensitive to their individual needs.

## **EXCEL Jr. ACADEMY PROGRAM**

### THE CLASSROOM

The classroom provides an environment which stimulates a higher level of learning for all students ages 3, 4, and 5 yrs. of age.

For the 2016-2017 calendar year, Excel Jr. Academy will allow 10 students in the a.m. class and 10 students in the p.m. class.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## OFFICE

Office hours will need to be after the dismissal of students. Evenings or weekends will be available on a case by case basis. There will be NO office hours available during educational instruction or student contact times. Only EMERGENCIES (to be decided by the teacher) will be tended to during educational instruction or student contact times. Voicemails may be left at 307-259-4599 or e-mails may be sent to [jawistisen@excelacademywy.com](mailto:jawistisen@excelacademywy.com).

## STAFF

Excel Jr. Academy has one Educator per 10 students.

### 2017 Staff Members

Jennifer Wistisen      Owner/Founder  
Missi Santistevan      Lead Pre-K Educator  
Heather Warren      Administrative Assistant (offsite)

# OPERATING HOURS

<b>Arrival</b>	<b>Class Instruction</b>	<b>Dismissal</b>
Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m. to 10:50 a.m.	*11:00 a.m. (A.M. Session)
Monday-Friday 8:00a.m.	11:45 a.m. to 2:35 p.m.	*2:45 p.m. (P.M. Session)
Monday-Friday 8:00a.m.	8:00 a.m. to 2:35 p.m.	*2:45 p.m. (ALL DAY Session)

\*Field Trips or enrichment activities may last longer.

Excel Jr. Academy has its own calendar that closely follows the Natrona County School District #1 calendar. In the case of inclement weather and/or poor driving conditions please listen to your radio for school closure announcements. *If Natrona County School District #1 is closed so is Excel Jr. Academy.* Make up Snow Days will be made up in May following that last, regular scheduled academic day.

## ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL

We will begin our day at 8:00 a.m. for the first session and 11:45 a.m. for the second session. It is important for your child to take part in all academic time that has been allotted for success.

If dismissal will be at a later time than the regularly scheduled 11:00 a.m. or 2:45 p.m. Notice will be given prior to pick up.

Pick up at Excel will be done by families lining up in front of the Jr. Academy. Students will be walked/watched by an Excel staff as they get into authorized vehicles. Please line up single file facing south in front of the Academy.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### Blizzard

If a blizzard occurs during school hours, students will be kept indoors. Parents may pick up students when conditions are appropriate. If students are at an enrichment activity or field trip setting, they will remain indoors to ensure safety.

### Earthquake/Tornado or Other Severe Weather and Flood

The Excel Jr. Academy Educator will follow DFS mandated earthquake, tornado, flood, or other severe weather emergency preparedness plan.

### Fire

In the incident of a fire at Excel Jr. Academy, students and staff will follow posted fire evacuation plans. 9-1-1 will be called immediately. Students will remain at designated safe spot either in the front or back yards. Parents will be notified immediately of the current situation.

In the event that school needs to be canceled for the remainder of the day, students will be kept at 2640 S. Harvard. This is the home/structure directly NORTH of Excel Jr. Academy.

### Intruder/dangerous person (LOCKDOWN)

Educator will make sure that they are inside of the building. Doors to the facility will be locked. Windows and window coverings will be closed. Students will be taken to a location away from doors and windows. The Educator will have a cell phone to make sure immediate communication with law enforcement is available.

If the Natrona County School District #1 is in a lockdown, Excel Jr. Academy will also take the same precautions. Should a lockdown be in effect when school hours are over, students will be released on a case by case basis.

Parents WILL NOT be called while the lockdown is active. Calling families would take away from the safety of the students.

## **APPLICATION AND REGISTRATION**

Excel Jr. Academy's admission policies are non-discriminatory and non-sectarian. Due to the limited space in Excel Jr. Academy all families must submit an Intent to Enroll form for their children to attend the school. Applicants are reviewed by a screening committee before acceptance.

Acceptance by the Excel Jr. Academy means that your student is identified as someone who will fit the circumstances and conditions of the academy's environment. Families must also show their willingness to help the Educator to be successful in areas with your student(s).

A letter, email or phone call will be prepared to applicant families to notify if the child(ren) have been accepted.

Students will need to be registered by September 1, 2016 for the first Semester or by December 15, 2016 for second Semester. REGISTRATIONS AFTER SEPTEMBER 1, 2016 will be subject to an additional \$50.00 LATE fee. October 1, 2016 is the LAST available day to register for first Semester with Excel Jr. Academy.

Entering students will need to provide medical and emergency forms and shot records by September 1, 2016, for First Semester. If a student begins at Second Semester, records will need to be submitted no later than December 15, 2016.

### TUITION/COSTS

Excel Jr. Academy will NOT send out bills unless you are more than one month overdue on your tuition fee obligations. Prompt payment of required fees and additional fees provides operational funding for the school and provides accurate records for accounting purposes.

### SIBLING PREFERENCE

Siblings of current Excel Academy and Excel Jr. Academy students have preference over students on the wait list.

### WAIT LIST

Excel Jr. Academy will generate a wait list for new students, when classroom capacity has been reached. Families will have 24 hours to accept or deny any open spot(s) up being contacted. In the event of a declined open spot(s), other candidates on the wait list will be contacted.



(Waitlist will be generated in order of discretion by the staff.)

### PAYMENT OPTIONS

**First student:** \$325.00 a month for 8 months~for a.m. or p.m. session. \$600.00 for FULL DAY option (plus one time, first family registration fee per student). \*September 2016 will be prorated to \$165.00 (1/2 day) and \$300.00 (Full Day), due to a late start.

Under this payment plan the first tuition payment is due by September 15, 2016. The final tuition payment will be May 1, 2017.

**Second Student:** \$300.00 a month for 8 months~for a.m. or p.m. session. \$575.00 for FULL DAY option (plus one time, first family registration fee per student). \*September 2016 will be prorated to \$150.00 (1/2 day) and \$285.00 (Full Day) . Under this payment plan the first tuition payment is due by September 15, 2016. The final tuition payment will be May 1, 2017.

**Prepaid Tuition:** \$2,500.00 (a.m. or p.m. session) or \$4900 (full time) per student for ALL 9 months at one time (plus registration fees). \*This option gives families a discount!

Prepayment of tuition can be made for a discount and must be paid in FULL by the first day of Academic instruction. (This option only applies for students starting in September and going through May.)

### LATE PAYMENT OF TUITION/FEEES

Monthly tuition are due before the fifth of each month. A daily late charge of \$15.00 per day will be added if monthly tuition goes unpaid by expected due date. Delinquent accounts may be assessed interest at the highest rate allowed by law.

Failure to pay tuition in a timely fashion may result in the removal of the child from the program.

### **NOTE:**

If a family decides to withdraw a student from Excel Jr. Academy, a 30 day written notice MUST be submitted to the Educator. Tuition obligations must be paid up until the day that the student withdraws. If a family chose to pay the full 9 months tuition in advance, a refund will be given at the per month rate or \$400.00 per student.

## EDUCATIONAL REGISTRATION FEE

The registration fee secures the place of the child(ren) in Excel Jr. Academy and provides the staff a reliable way of assessing the enrollment so that both the program and budget may be planned accordingly.

**Registration Fee:** A one-time \$50.00 per family, per student.

***Registration fees are NON REFUNDABLE.***

\*The Registration Fee is an additional and separate fee from tuition.

## SUPPLIES/SUPPLY FEE

Students will be given a supply list at least 30 days prior to the first day of instruction. It will be the responsibility of families to purchase/gather materials. Some supplies will be the property of ALL students in the classroom (i.e. tissues, hand soap).

## LATE PICK UP FEES

Students are expected to be picked up by an authorized person by NO later than 10 minutes after dismissal of class. Students will be charged \$2.00 a minute, starting at the 11<sup>th</sup> minute from dismissal. This does NOT apply if you are in line waiting to pick up your student(s).

## **FUNDRAISING/BUY OUT OPTION**

Excel Jr. Academy students and families will be required to participate in at least one fundraiser per Educational year, OR pay a one time 'buy out' fee of \$100.00.

Participation in any fundraising event(s) will help to generate the funds needed to provide enrichment opportunities.

## **PARENT INFORMATION**

### SNACKS/LUNCHES

The daily schedule has a snack time incorporated. Students will work with the teacher each day to prepare a nutritious snack. There will be days when we partake in celebrations or group snacks, these days will be arranged in advance.

Lunch will be the responsibility of each individual family. Due to the hours of our program, lunch WILL NOT be provided.

## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

On your child's birthday please bring the following items:

1. Special snack-Please ensure that there is enough for all students. Please check with teacher for any food restrictions or allergies.
2. Mementos-Item or items that remind student of their past.

## LABELING ITEMS BROUGHT TO THE JR. ACADEMY

ALL ITEMS your child(ren) wear or bring to the school should be labeled. Even though we will be a very small program and should know what items belong to us, labeling will ensure rightful ownership.

## WHEN YOUR CHILDREN ARE SICK OR INJURED

It can be a frustrating experience deciding when a child is too sick to attend their daily school. The following guidelines should help in deciding whether to keep your child home. These guidelines are for the benefit of everyone at the school including your own child(ren).

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in classroom activities.
2. The illness produces a greater care need than the staff can provide without reducing the health and safety of the other children. Keeping sick children home prevents illness from spreading to the staff and other children.

Please note that a child who has been ill cannot return to the school until 24 hours after treatment. Your child is not well enough to attend school if:

1. **TEMPERATURE:** An oral temperature of 101 degrees or an axillary (armpit) temperature of 100 degrees or greater accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
2. **SYMPTOMS** and signs of possible severe illness such as **LETHARGY** uncontrolled **COUGHING**, **IRRITABILITY**, persistent **CRYING**, difficulty **BREATHING**, **WHEEZING**, or other unusual signs.
3. **GREEN OR YELLOW MUCOUS** combined with other symptoms of illness.
4. **DIARRHEA:** Two or more episodes of diarrhea in the previous 24 hours.
5. **VOMITING ILLNESS:** Two or more episodes of vomiting in the previous 24 hours.

**Children will not be allowed in school until 24 hours after treatment of any of the following:**

1. **MOUTH SORES WITH DROOLING** until a health care provider determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease.
2. **RASH WITH FEVER OR BEHAVIOR CHANGE** until a health care provider determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease.
3. **PURULENT CONJUNCTIVITIS** defined as pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow eye discharge until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
4. **SCABIES, HEAD LICE, OR OTHER INFESTATION** until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
5. **IMPETIGO** until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated.
6. **STREP THROAT OR OTHER STREPTOCOCCAL INFECTION** until 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever.
7. **CHICKEN POX** until 6 days after the onset of rash or until all sores have dried and crusted.

Your child will be sent home if any symptoms of illness appear during the day. In such cases your child will immediately be isolated from the other children and you will be contacted and asked to pick the child up within one hour.

**ACCIDENT POLICY**

If your child suffers and injury while at school, the date, time, and all pertinent information about the injury are logged in our "injury book." Appropriate actions will be taken regarding each injury. If it is a severe injury you will be notified immediately. ALL Excel Jr. Academy staff members are First Aid and CPR certified.

**MEDICATION POLICY**

Excel Jr. Academy follows all DFS rules and regulations regarding the administration of medications to children.

**Medication Procedure**

If your child must take medication during the school hours of operation please provide the center with the following:

1. The Medication Form provided at the back of the handbook, completed and signed.
2. The **original** medicine container showing dosage, time of dosage, etc.
3. DO NOT put any medication in your child's backpack. (THIS INCLUDES VITAMINS!) Please hand the medication and Medication Form to the teacher on duty upon arrival. The teacher will bring ALL medication and notes to a designated classroom location where medication will be kept and administered at the proper time.
4. Be sure to remind teacher to retrieve your child's medication from the school upon dismissal.

### DISCIPLINE POLICY

Excel Jr. Academy does not condone any physical discipline which will harm the child nor does the school use rejection, terrorizing, isolating or ignoring any child. The behavior of the child may be ignored, but not the child.

#### Discipline Procedure

Most small indiscretions will be handled by a daily respect session (only as needed). A child who hits or threatens to harm other children is encouraged to talk to the other child about why they were upset with them, stressing the idea that we should work out our problems by talking to one another. Recess roughness may result in children being asked to sit down and watch.

In extreme cases, where children are very uncooperative or aggressive, the parents will be contacted. A meeting will be set up between the teacher, child, and parent. Cooperative goals between the home and school are set up. A follow up meeting is then arranged after the child has been given the chance to change his/her behavior.

Each step outlined represents a more serious response to the child's behavior. Depending on the nature of the problem and the child's history in the school each incremental step decision can vary in order to achieve what is determined to be in the best interest of the child, the rest of the students, and Excel Jr. Academy.

1. The teacher will deal with the misbehavior in the classroom using natural and logical consequences. The parents will be informed that a problem is occurring and what corrective measures are being applied.
2. If the misbehavior continues the teacher will hold a meeting and seek suggestions. The plan developed will be implemented in the classroom.

3. Parents will have knowledge of any behavior plan/modifications being used in the school that pertains to their child. If for some reason the behavior continues, the parents will be called for a conference and informed of the current situation and the corrective steps taken. A plan will be agreed upon for dealing with the continued misbehavior and a timetable set for evaluation of the plan. It is necessary to have the cooperation and support of the parents in developing consistent expectations of behavior.
4. Depending upon the type of misbehavior and its effect on the other children in the class it may be necessary for the child to temporarily remove from the classroom. In this case the parents must agree to pick up the child during the school day.
5. If the misbehavior continues, outside professional help may be recommended. Financial responsibility for outside professional services is the parent's obligation. Excel Jr. Academy does not recommend specific professionals. It is the parent's responsibility to choose the professional, keeping in mind that it is important that the child, family, and school are all able to work with whoever is chosen.
6. In extreme cases, the teacher reserves the right to permanently remove a student from attending Excel Jr. Academy. Parents will be notified via written documentation of this decision. Upon receiving the written documentation, parents will need to make arrangements with the teacher to gather ALL personal belongings and educational materials issued to the student. Excel Jr. Academy will not refund any monies if a dismissal of this fashion is necessary.

#### WEAPONS~HARASSMENT~DRUG POLICY

Additional consequences for certain behaviors may lead to suspension or expulsion from the school. Some specific actions may be severe enough to require immediate dismissal.

#### **Disrespect**

Disrespectful behavior is not acceptable at Excel Jr. Academy. Rude, negative or hurtful comments, damaging or destructive actions, or a disregard for personal or school property are unacceptable.

#### **Assault**

Assault or harassment, whether physical, sexual, or verbal, will not be tolerated. Any form of assault will involve disciplinary action with the possibility of suspension or expulsion.

## **Weapons**

Excel Jr. Academy does not tolerate violent behavior. Any substance or object used with the intent to harm, or possession of any object designed solely as a weapon, will incur disciplinary action with the possibility of expulsion

## **Drugs**

Possession, sale, and/or distribution of drugs or drug paraphernalia, alcohol or other controlled substances is prohibited. Disciplinary action will be initiated for any violation of this policy and may result in expulsion. Excel Jr. Academy considers tobacco a controlled substance.

### WRITTEN COMMUNICATION TO THE JR. ACADEMY IS NEEDED WHEN:

1. The student is participating in an established car-pool schedule. The teacher needs to know who will be driving and when.
2. The car-pool schedule is changed.
3. An unfamiliar person is to pick up your children (give names, make of car, relationship to child etc.)
4. An extended absence is planned. The teacher would like dates your child(ren) will be gone.
5. There is a health problem.
6. Child(ren) need to leave class during regular school hours. Please let the teacher know what time your child(ren) will be picked up and returned.
7. Child(ren) is on medication. There is a special form for this information that must be filled out any time medication is to be given at Excel Jr. Academy. See form at the back of the handbook.
8. There is a separation, divorce, or other serious circumstances in the child's family. This information will be kept confidential. The teacher should be aware of the child's special needs and parent granted custody must inform the teacher regarding the person(s) with whom the child can be released at dismissal times.

### PERSONS ALLOWED INTO THE SCHOOL

To ensure the safety of all Excel Jr. Academy participants ANYONE entering the school MUST have a background check on file with the teacher. Any individual with a felony or child related offense will not be allowed into the school. Background checks will be at the expense of each individual. Failure to comply will result in law enforcement interaction.

Parents or Legal Guardians will be the ONLY person(s) allowed to add individuals to the 'Authorized List'.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

Excel Jr. Academy may need volunteers to ensure the success of the school. It is understood that the majority of parents work outside the home full- or part-time. There are NO required volunteer commitment times, as opportunities arise notes will be sent home.

Volunteer opportunities may include, but are not limited to:

- Driving to and from field trips or enrichment activities
- Gathering supplies for an upcoming activity
- Providing food for an event
- Advertising
- Meetings
- Helping to line up guest speakers or enrichment opportunities

### OBSERVING IN THE SCHOOL

Any person(s) on the 'Authorized List' may observe at any time. When students are required to test at a designated of site location there is NO observation opportunity available.

### CONFERENCES

During the year parents/guardians will have the option to schedule parent/teacher conferences. These conferences are special times when you and the teacher discuss your child(ren's) progress and development.

All conferences, whether regular or special, are for the parents and the teacher privately. Please make arrangements for care of your child(ren) during the conference.

## **NEWSLETTER/E-LETTER**

A newsletter will be sent out via email regularly. These letters will contain important reminders and information. Please make sure that you have a current and correct email on file with your child's teacher to ensure you receive the newsletter.

## **TESTING**

Excel Jr. Academy will not administer any standardized testing to students.



## **ANNUAL EVENTS/CELEBRATIONS**

BACK TO SCHOOL MEET AND GREET: Meet and greet your new classmates, teacher, classroom, and playground area. Don't forget your school supplies and positive attitude!

HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL: Students will have a Halloween or fall festival.

THANKSGIVING FEAST: Students will prepare a Thanksgiving Feast.

CHRISTMAS PARTY: Students will share their heritage and traditions for the holiday season. We will eat foods and learn about different cultures and traditions at this festive time of the year.

VALENTINE'S DAY PARTY: Students may bring in Valentine's to trade. We will learn about the heart on this day.

EASTER EGG HUNT: Students will have the opportunity to have an egg hunt with an educational twist.

OPTIONAL SECOND FUNDRAISER: Should a rare educational opportunity arise, Excel Jr. Academy will consider fundraising options to help defray the costs to make it possible for each student to participate.

\*These are ONLY a few of the wonderful activities Excel Jr. Academy offers. Parents have the opportunity to follow along with ALL scheduled events on a private Google calendar.