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# PARENT HANDBOOK

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## WELCOME

**Dear families,**

Assalamu Alaikum,

On behalf of myself and the staff of Prime Years Academy, welcome to a great year, insha'Allah! We are pleased that you have chosen to enroll at our center.

We look forward to an engaging year together as partners in your child's development and education. We encourage and welcome your participation in the various opportunities available in your child's classroom and in the overall program.

Supported by research findings, we believe that the early years of a child's life are foundational to later success in school and life. PYA strives to give your child a positive and enriched experience within a safe and caring Islamic environment.

We welcome and encourage your feedback as we work together toward common goals of your child's development for life-long joy of learning through hands-on, interactive, and engaging activities.

Please refer to this Parent Handbook throughout the year and feel welcome to stop by the office, call, or email us with your questions or concerns.

Childhood may only last a short while, but we believe that these few years should be the ***Prime Years*** of every child's life.

Sincerely,

Rola Al-Omar, M.S.

Director, Prime Years Academy



## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Prime Years Academy is to provide a quality, nurturing, and stimulating Islamic environment for the “whole child” in the areas of physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual development and to lay the foundation for a life-long love of learning.

## OUR PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy of Prime Years Academy is based on the following principles:

**We believe that the early years are the “Prime Years” of learning.** Research states that while learning continues throughout the life cycle, the early years are the prime years for optimal development. During this period, brain cells make connections that lay the foundation for all future learning.

**We believe that each child is a unique individual** and that children grow physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually at their own optimal rate. Our program provides a variety of developmentally appropriate and culturally diverse activities to support the process of learning and to help children feel successful in all areas of their development.

**We believe that play is the most positive way for children to learn.** Through play, children explore, experiment, and acquire new skills. It is a natural process through which a child discovers, develops, and builds upon an understanding of the world.

**We believe that children are natural imitators.** Islamic values, at this tender age, are best acquired through modeling. Our teachers and staff model Islamic character and behavior in their daily interactions with the children.

**We believe that parents are the most important people in a child’s life.** Our program seeks to establish a respectful, culturally responsive partnership between teachers and parents for the optimum benefits to the child.

**We believe that caring adults play a key role in the lives of young children.** Through affectionate interactions, our staff build relationships of trust and love with young children and provide them with a warm and nurturing environment away from home.

## ELIGIBILITY & REGISTRATION

- Prime Years Academy is open to all who desire an **Islamic** preschool education for their children. There is no discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, language, religion, or national origin. Every family in our community is welcome. Notwithstanding, Prime Years Academy reserves the right to offer enrollment according to the best interest of the center, based on the availability, needs, and match with this program, and subject to prior circumstances such as unpaid past balance.
- The child must be 3 years old and toilet trained to be eligible for enrollment.
- Registration is accepted on a first-come, first-served basis subject to availability. Prime Years Academy maintains a waiting list from which next availabilities are filled.
- All paperwork included in the enrollment packet must be completed and returned to the office **PRIOR** to child's attendance at the school.
- Prior to attendance, the parent/guardian must provide the school with proof of current, updated immunization as required by the Health Department and the State of California.
- Any parent of a child missing immunization due to medical reasons must provide the school with a written statement from the child's pediatrician stating the reasons.
- Included in the enrollment packet is a Physician's report form, which must be completed by the child's doctor and returned to the office within 30 days of attendance.
- All parents are required to sign and return a "Parent Handbook Receipt and Acknowledgment" Form. The Parent Handbook, along with its financial agreement, shall be considered in force upon orientation and enrollment.
- Parents must complete a "*Special Care Plan*" form to notify us in writing of a child's **required** dietary or other restrictions that have been verified by the child's physician.

## GENERAL CALENDAR INFORMATION

- In our efforts to preserve the unity of the family, Prime Years Academy's Calendar approximates that of the *Corona-Norco Unified School District's* "Traditional" year, observing similar holidays, and winter and spring breaks.
- With respect to the two main Islamic Holidays, Prime Years Academy will be closed for *Eid-ul-Fitr* and *Eid-ul-Adha* Holidays.
- Prime Years Academy operates a total of (180) days over the period of ten months. Tuition fees include specific closed holidays; therefore, there is no change in payment or discount against tuition for the days the school is closed.

## PROGRAMS OFFERED

- Morning Preschool      8:00 am – 11:45 am (Monday – Friday)
- Afternoon Preschool      12:45 pm – 3:45 pm (Only T/W/Th)
- Office Hours      8:30 am – 3:00 pm (M-F)

## BASIC SERVICES

Prime Years Academy will provide the following basic services for your child required by State Licensing:

- Non-medical care and appropriate early childhood education, including posted snacks
- Policies and procedures for the protection of the child while participating in the program
- Appropriate assistance to the child in dressing, grooming, cleanliness, and other personal hygiene activities
- Opportunity for active and quiet activities throughout the day
- All children are taught to urinate sitting down, flush the toilet, and wash their hands after every trip to the restroom
- Children will be assisted with toileting accidents but are never made to feel shamed or embarrassed. Please be sure to send extra clothing, especially during changes in your child's life

## SERVICES NOT PROVIDED

Prime Years Academy shall NOT be responsible for providing the following services:

- Monitoring of food intake sent from home (we cannot require children to eat certain foods before others).
- Alternate food for special dietary requests/allergies (parents may provide).
- Care for children who are recovering from illness or injury (mildly ill).
- Isolated Care – if your child becomes ill or injured, you must have your child picked up within the hour of notification. **(Be sure your contact information is kept current throughout the year).**
- Assistance with medical/dental care of child.
- Transportation between home and center or on field trips.

## ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE

- Children benefit most when attendance is regular. Frequent absences and late arrival make it difficult for the child to adapt to the program and to bond with the teacher and their peer group. We encourage parents to develop consistent routines for bedtime and school
- Parents are requested to notify the school if the child will be absent
- **Tuition credit will not be given for periodic days of illness, or other absence during the year**
- Absence of two consecutive weeks without notification (and non-payment) may result in termination of enrollment unless previous arrangements have been made with the office
- If a family chooses to travel during the school months, a full tuition must be paid in order for their child not to lose their spot.

## ROUTINES AND PROCEDURES

- Dress your child in washable, sturdy, play clothes suitable for the weather. Messy art, interactive, and creative activities are planned every day, and your child will want to participate.
- Thursdays and Fridays are center “spirit days.” We encourage you to purchase this year’s T-shirt (\$15) for your child to wear on those spirit days and on school field trips!
- Choose sturdy, comfortable, enclosed shoes for your child, such as tennis shoes. No sandals or open-toe shoes are permitted.
- All children need an extra set of labeled clothing left in the classroom. Remember to change these clothes as the seasons change, as your child grows, and as they become soiled.
- Each child must bring a labeled water bottle.
- Please **LABEL** all belonging (clothing, lunch box, water bottle, and toys) with your child’s name.
- Each child is assigned a specially marked “cubby” for personal belongings

## SIGN-IN AND OUT

- State Licensing law mandates that each child be brought to and picked up from their classroom.
- A notebook is provided for each classroom for sign-in/out. After a required daily health check by the teacher, the child is to be signed-in on the provided form with:
  - ❖ The child’s first and last name
  - ❖ The parent’s/ guardian’s legal signature
  - ❖ The time of drop-off
  - ❖ The emergency phone number for that day
  - ❖ Identification is required for pick-up; children will only be released to those listed on the Emergency Identification form. **NO EXCEPTIONS**

## RECORD KEEPING

- The state Licensing department of social Services requires complete and current information maintained on each child enrolled.
- Parents are required to notify the school in writing of changes in personal circumstances, i.e., address, phone number, authorized pick-up persons, or allergies. It is your responsibility to provide the center with emergency information where you, or some other person willing to be responsible for your child, can be reached.
- Sign-in/out sheets are kept for three months, and children's files are maintained at the school for three years, as required by Licensing.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY (*Illness*)

- If you have any thought that your child may be ill, please keep your child at home. Your child should be kept home until all signs of illness have been gone for 24 hours, unless a note from a physician is provided. Preschool is often the first group experience for children, and they are very vulnerable. Please call the school office to let us know if your child will be absent, and why.
- Before signing-in each day, a **Daily Health Check** will be performed by the greeting teacher, which is required by State Licensing to protect the health of your child, and to keep all children and staff as healthy as possible. If in the opinion of the teaching staff your child is crying excessively or appears sick, your child will not be admitted for the day
- The following criteria will be considered in determining if your child must be picked up or not admitted for the day:
  - ❖ Fever of 100+
  - ❖ Inflammation of the eyes
  - ❖ Undiagnosed rash
  - ❖ Lethargy/Pain
  - ❖ Excessive nasal discharge
  - ❖ Diarrhea
  - ❖ Frequent or croupy coughing
  - ❖ Vomiting
  - ❖ Communicable disease

## HEALTH AND SAFETY (*Illness*) Cont.

- After your child has been ill, or sent home from school ill, it is important to adhere to these guidelines when determining whether or not your child is ready to return to school:
  - ❖ Mood, appetite, behavior, and activity are again normal
  - ❖ Must be fever free for 24 hours (No exceptions)
  - ❖ Antibiotics (if prescribed) have been used for a full 24-hour
  - ❖ Vomiting and diarrhea have ceased for 24-hours
  - ❖ Frequent coughing or excessive nasal discharge has resolved
  - ❖ Pain (earache, cramping, headache, etc.) has resolved
  - ❖ Lice-free (will be checked for nits)
  
- Communicable and contagious diseases MUST be reported to the school office by the parent/guardian as soon as the illness has been diagnosed. Other parents will be notified of possible exposure, without mentioning the child's name, by posting of a notice. Certain (communicable) diseases must be reported to the Health Department and State Licensing.
- Communicable (infectious) diseases that must be reported to the office include chicken pox, strep, pinworms, head lice, conjunctivitis (pinkeye), impetigo, ringworm, measles, and mumps.
- Please list on appropriate enrollment forms, and alert your child's teacher, of any allergies, sensitivities, dietary restrictions, or special needs with which your child has been assessed or diagnosed. As these conditions are found, please update your child's records. Any notation of allergies must be accompanied by a "Special Care Plan" which includes written instructions for what to look for and what to do, in case of allergic reaction.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY (*Medications*)

- The Center will store and administer **ONLY** prescribed inhalers and epi-pens with parent's consent and physician's instructions. No other prescription medications will be handled by the center. Nonprescription medications may be handled on a case by case basis. Under these circumstances all medications must be in the **original** container and labeled with the following:
  - ❖ The child's name
  - ❖ Date prescribed
  - ❖ Dosage
  - ❖ Doctor's name
  - ❖ Expiration date
- All medications will be stored in a safe locked medicine cabinet inaccessible to children. Please do not send medication, (including cough dopes, sunscreen lotion, lip balm sticks) in lunch boxes nor leave them in cubbies.
- The following forms must be completed before accepting any medications and will be kept in your child's file:
  - A "Special Care Plan" form and a "Permission/Consent to Administer Medication" form must be completed, dated, and signed by the parent and the child's physician, indicating dosage and times to be given and authorizing and instructing PYA staff on how to administer the medication.
  - A "Nebulizer care consent/verification" form (Lic 9166) must be completed by the parent and each staff member authorized to administer the inhaled medication.
  - Instructions on any of the above forms must not conflict with the directions on the nonprescription medication label. If there is a discrepancy between what is stated on the product's label and what the parent had written, *Prime Years Academy* must follow the instructions printed on the product's label.
- Unused medication or lotions will be returned to parent upon completion, expiration, or upon withdrawal from the program. If not picked-up within two weeks of notification, unused items will be discarded as required by Licensing

## HEALTH AND SAFETY (*Safety*)

- State Licensing regulations require that programs notify parents of the safety-seat law. Please note that children younger than six years of age, OR those less than 60 pounds, must be in an appropriate car safety-seat. The car safety-seat notice is posted in the office.
- Kaitlyn's Law requires that children may not be left unattended in a vehicle. For the safety of all children, parents and staff are asked to be vigilant in enforcing this law.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY (*injuries*)

- While precautions are taken to minimize and prevent injuries, they sometimes occur due to developing skills or accidents. Staff members have received basic training in first aid and CPR, and practice universal precautions whenever dealing with body fluids.
- The center has policies in place to ensure immediate and adequate care when necessary. Parents are required to provide the name and address of a physician to call in case of an emergency. The center will not administer emergency medical care to the child unless the parent has filled out a consent form. In case of an accident or an emergency, the child will be taken to the nearest hospital for emergency treatment at the parent's/guardian's expense, and you will be notified immediately.
- An "incident report" will be completed by the teacher observing an incident or accident resulting in minor or major injury. A copy of the report will be given to the injured child's parents. The original incident report will be signed and filed by the center's director.
- Please notify the office immediately if your child requires any professional medical services resulting from an accident that occurred at school, for our follow-up notification to State Licensing.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

- Regular fire, disaster, and earthquake drills are practiced at school. Staff members receive periodic training, and children are taught to listen to the teacher's directions and know how to safely exit the building. Classes assemble, and children are counted.
- If an earthquake or emergency occurs while children are physically in attendance on *Prime Years Academy* grounds, PYA will provide care and responsibility up to 24 hours.
- Children will be released **ONLY** to those listed as authorized on written enrollment forms (LIC 700), and only with valid identification. They will not be sent home with friends or other family members – unless they are listed on your written forms to do so (be sure your forms are current!) **AUTHORIZATION via Telephone calls is NOT ACCEPTABLE.**
- The primary evacuation site has been determined as the basketball court across from the preschool building. A secondary evacuation site will be the main ISCN parking lot.
- In the event of disastrous or hazardous conditions of the preschool building, evacuations off the center site may occur to the Islamic Society of Corona-Norco Multi-Purpose building (ISCN Masjid) or to Graziano's Pizza Restaurant located at 333 Magnolia, Corona CA 92879.

## NUTRITION/ SNACKS AND LUNCHES

- A snack consisting of at least two food groups is provided by *Prime Years Academy* for children attending the morning and afternoon programs.
- Parents are requested to send alternate snacks for dietary allergies and preferences. Please complete a "Special Care Plan" form, which includes providing physician's documentation of any required food restriction or dietary needs.
- The morning program also includes a lunch period with food brought from home. Sharing of lunches is not allowed due to possible food allergies or personal family dietary restriction.

## NUTRITION/ SNACKS AND LUNCHES Cont.

- Please note that State Licensing allows for children to choose which, in whatever order, and how much to eat of foods that are sent in their lunch boxes.
- Parents are encouraged to include all food groups in lunches, focusing on healthy food choices and limiting sugary, junk foods. No sodas, even for parties please. If you choose for your child to eat sweets, we request they be reserved for home whenever possible. Items not eaten by children at lunch will be sent home rather than thrown away so you may ask your child about their likes/dislikes

## WELFARE OF A CHILD/ Mandated Reporting

- The welfare of all children is the concern of all adults at Prime Years Academy. By law, teachers are mandated reporters of suspected child abuse and neglect. All parents are requested to be aware of and need to report to staff any situation and/or conditions that may affect the welfare of any child (please be aware that leaving children unattended in a car, smoking in vehicle with minor present, or riding without a car seat may be reported).
- Under California Law, the Department of Social Services “**Has the right at any time, without notice or prior consent, to privately interview children or staff at the school, to inspect and audit the child’s records, to observe the physical condition of the child, including conditions which could indicate abuse, neglect, or inappropriate placement, and to have a licensed medical professional conduct a physical examination of the child.**”
- When a law enforcement officer reasonably believes there is an immediate threat to a child’s health or safety, the center must release the child to the officer and provide the officer with the address and telephone number of the child’s parent or guardian, so the officer can notify the parents in accordance with the law (Health & Safety Code 1596.876).

## PARENT-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

- Parents are an essential component of Prime Years Academy's successful, quality program. You are welcome to volunteer in the classroom or in other school activities.
- Please note that in compliance with legislation (SB 792), all parents/guardians or volunteers who wish to spend time in their child's classroom MUST first provide the office with a proof of immunization against influenza, pertussis (whooping cough), and measles. This includes parents who wish to celebrate their child's birthday in class and wish to be present during the celebration.
- In addition, all Regular volunteers (spending more than 16 hours/week helping in the classroom) must also have a TB test clearance on file as well as a criminal background and fingerprint clearance.
- Please coordinate volunteer time with your child's teacher. Any parent or other volunteer who helps in the classroom must sign-in at the office each time on campus. This is a fire safety precaution so there is an exact count of on-campus personnel, as well as Licensing issue, so only authorized persons are in classrooms. You will be given a name badge to wear while on campus.

## FIELD TRIPS / TRANSPORTATION

- Field trip days are non-school days. Parents will be notified prior to each off-site outing. If choosing not to send a child on any trip, arrangements must be made to keep the child at home.
- For all off-site field trips, parents will transport the children. Prime Years Academy is neither responsible nor liable for the transportation of any child to and from the field trip destination.
- Teachers will direct appropriate discipline if needed related to children's or adult's behavior while on field trips. First aid kits are readily available and maintained for each group of children and one kit shall be taken on field trips.

## CHILD DISCIPLINE & GUIDANCE APPROACH

- Teaching staff will equitably use positive guidance, redirection, planning ahead to prevent problems, encouragement of appropriate behavior, consistent clear rules/guidelines, and involve children in problem solving to foster the child's own ability to become self-disciplined.
- Teaching staff will guide children to develop self-control and order conduct in relationship to peers and adults. Aggressive physical behavior toward staff or children is unacceptable.
- Staff will intervene immediately if a child becomes physically aggressive to protect all children and to encourage more acceptable behavior.
- Physical punishment will not be inflicted by any adult upon any child. No one may threaten or otherwise coerce or frighten a child in any way.
- Physical restraint will not be used except as necessary to ensure a child's safety or that of others, and then in the form of holding by another person as gently as possible only for as long as is necessary for control of the situation.
- "Time out" generally is not used; however, there may be selective situations in which moving the child to another area of the environment is prudent for the safety of him/herself or others.
- This period will be used to redirect the child to another activity or may be some time just long enough for the child to regain self-control, generally not to exceed one minute per year of age while teachers monitor the activity and effectiveness.
- A parent/guardian may be called anytime the child exhibits uncontrollable, aggressive, or disruptive behavior that cannot be modified by the center staff. That parent may be asked to take the child home immediately. Consistent undesirable behaviors may result in dismissal from the program.

## FINANCIAL POLICIES

- The admission agreement sets the contract for days and hours your child will attend this program, listing corresponding fees according to the current published fee schedule. Changes must be approved in advance by the office based upon availability, with adjustments in tuition accordingly.
- Tuition dollars will not be refundable for holidays, illness, absences, vacations, natural disasters or epidemics, nor can attendance days be switched or substituted for absences.
- Parents may modify their child's schedule anytime during the year, subject to availability.
- All payments must be made by check or cash. A receipt shall be issued for all cash payments. A check receipt will only be issued upon request. Please make all checks payable to Islamic Society of Corona/Norco or ISCN.
- The annual registration fee is non-refundable.
- There is a \$25 tuition discount for the second enrolled child of the same family.
- The tuition payment for every child is due in the office the first day of each month.
- Tuition payments are considered late if not received in the office by the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) calendar day of the month. Late tuition payments will be subject to a late fee of \$10.00 per child/per delinquency.
- Attendance will be suspended until the account is current. It is the parent's responsibility to discuss with the office any potential or temporary delay in payment and make arrangements or adjustments as applicable.
- A \$25 fee will be charged for any check returned by the bank as non-sufficient funds. Following a second NSF check, cash or money order will be required for subsequent payments. NSF checks must be replaced in cash to the school within 24 hours of notification to parent/paying party.

## WITHDRAWAL / DROPPING ENROLLMENT

- Enrollment is for a full school year (August – May). To withdraw a child from enrollment, the parent is required to give two weeks' advanced notice in writing to the office.
- The parent is responsible for tuition charges during the two-week withdrawal period.
- If enrollment is dropped or withdrawn, re-enrollment will be subject to availability and applicable fees, including re-enrollment fee.

## MODIFICATIONS

- This parent handbook summarizes the guidelines for *Prime Years Academy*. It is a guide, and does not represent a contract, but is designed to enhance and facilitate Center operations.
- The right is retained to modify or alter these policies based on professional and business concerns considered in the best interest of all involved, including administration, employees, children, and parents.
- Policies may change with or without notice, although every attempt will be made to keep parents informed in advance of any necessary changes.
- Change in fees shall be in writing with at least thirty (30) days' notice prior to implementing any such fee rate modification.

