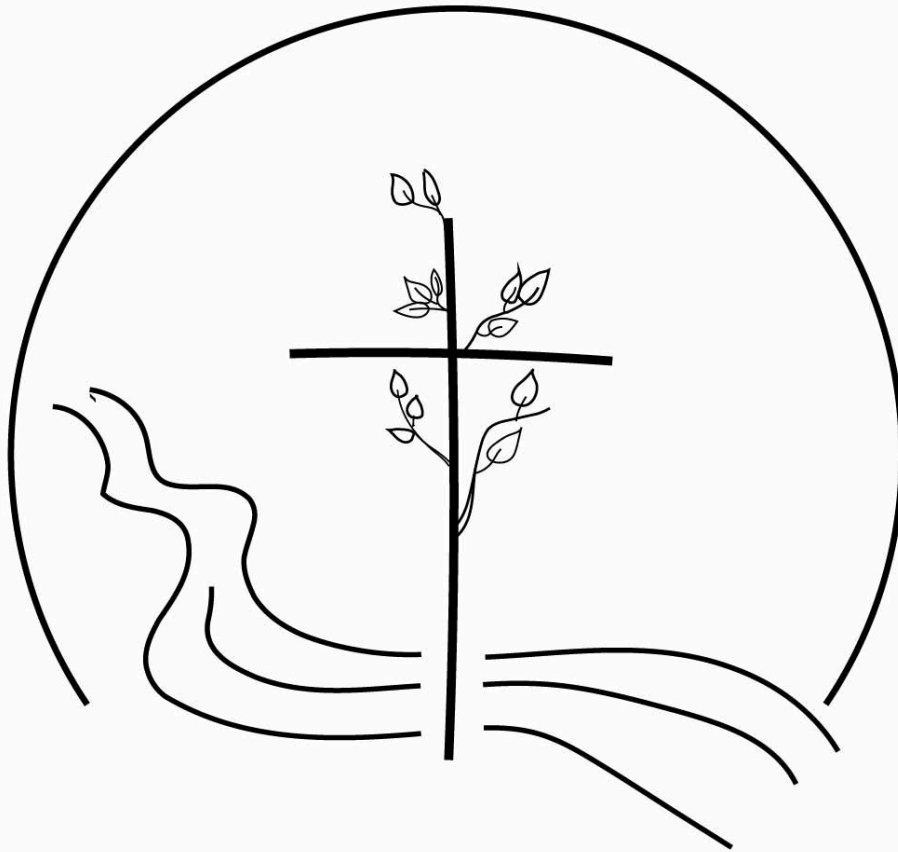


Tree of Life Academy



Program Handbook

2026-2027



Our Mission

The mission of Tree of Life Academy is to provide a Christ-centered, nature rich, and nurturing learning environment that partners with homeschooling families to see children reach their full God-given potential.

Our Educational Approach

We believe that each child was created with unique gifts and talents to be discovered and nurtured. We seek to provide programming that is developmentally appropriate through nature-rich and active learning opportunities in combination with structured and targeted learning times. Our staff will aim to help children develop and build on foundational skills that will serve them as life-long learners and contributors to their families and communities. We aim to help build in each child:

Strong Faith: *We believe that it is important to root children in the love of God as they explore, learn and grow. We also believe that nature naturally inspires wonder and worship, and we seek to honor Jesus with this response of the heart.*

Strong Bodies: *We believe in a holistic approach to learning and faith that encompasses the whole body, soul, and spirit, not separating out one from the other but integrating physical components into all that we do and learn so that children are supported in physical ways (motor skills, regulation skills, etc) that correspondingly support their mental and spiritual growth.*

Strong Minds: *We believe in supporting and challenging children to reach their highest intellectual potential through simultaneously supporting their spiritual and physical growth as we integrate not merely rote academic concepts but create opportunities for continual creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving skills.*

Our Goals

- *We seek to provide a nurturing learning environment where children experience the love of God throughout His creation.*
- *We want to help children develop a strong foundation of skills that will serve them as life-long learners through supporting their development.*
- *Our desire is to allow our students to move, create, build and learn through unstructured play and strategic activities to strengthen underlying skills.*
- *We aim to support families in building a solid foundation for educating their children, and training them in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6).*



FAMILY PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

We are not a traditional school but rather an academy that serves homeschool families. We define homeschool as a means of education by which parents are responsible for and direct their child's education. We offer resources and a framework for education through our courses, programs, and instruction that parents can utilize as tools contributing to their child's education, but expect parents to assume sole responsibility for their child's educational needs and growth. As a key foundation for participating in our program, we require parents to confirm their commitment to overseeing and maintaining responsibility for their child's education.

Additionally, we ask parents to commit to the other key rules and guidelines we have outlined below that are necessary for the success and safety of everyone in our program.

Drop Off/Pick Up & General Safety Protocols

- If students are being dropped off or picked up outside the regular pick up and drop off time, the student must be signed in/out and taken to/picked up from their teacher. They must communicate this to a Director or Program Coordinator for approval.
- If someone besides the parent or regular pick-up person is picking a student up, their name must be written on the sign-in sheet and their ID will be checked.
- An additional childcare fee may be assessed to families if students are not picked up within 10 minutes of the program end time. A \$10 fee per child for the first 10 minutes and accruing in increments of \$10 per 10 minutes.
- Parents are *not allowed to remain on site during the program day* unless they have received prior permission from a Director as it may disrupt programming.
- Students and parents should follow the drop-off and pick-up procedures as directed by the drop off/pick up monitors. Please help your children establish the habit of using the safety precautions demonstrated by Tree of Life staff.
- Students must always remain within the designated property limits of the grounds.
- Absolutely no smoking, vaping, or any recreational drug use on the facility grounds. This includes the parking lot during pick-up and drop-off.

Communication

- Every family is responsible for checking/reading email and messages through our communication app.
- Families are encouraged to communicate via communication app if there are questions/concerns.
- All non-emergency communications and concerns should go through our communication app.
- In an emergency, call 911 immediately.



Lunch & Free Play

Students will eat their lunch (brought from home), with supervised free play and exploration afterwards. We want to nurture each child's development with plenty of sunshine, fresh air, movement, and exploration. A list of student allergies will be provided before the start of the program. Please pack lunches that do not include foods on our allergy list.

Inclement Weather & Make-up Classes

Class cancellations due to inclement weather will be sent via our messaging app by 8am. Most of the time we will follow the cancellation schedule for Raymore public schools. This applies to classes being canceled due to road conditions. Families are always able to make the decision for themselves if they feel uncomfortable driving. Classes will not be cancelled due to low attendance. Every effort will be made to make up the days missed due to inclement weather or other factors according to our schedule.

Weather Guidelines

We will plan to spend time outdoors each day. The amount of time outside will be adjusted depending on severe weather alerts and/or weather conditions such as extreme cold/wind chill, extreme heat. Students must come with appropriate winter weather gear, when applicable, and are strongly encouraged to wear layers or have several layers available: coat, hat, gloves, snow boots, snow suit/pants, extra socks, scarf, etc. All students should keep or bring a full change of clothing each day. **Students without proper weather gear will need to be picked up. Students who get wet/muddy without a change of clothing will need to be picked up.**

Cold Weather Guidelines:

- **13°F or Below (Feels Like/Apparent Temperature or wind chills):** We will move our program inside.
- **13°F - 25°F (Feels Like/Apparent Temperature):** We will go outside for limited times. All students must have coats, gloves, ears covered, and warm/waterproof footwear.
- **26°F – 45°F:** We will be outside. Students must have coats, gloves and hats are recommended, and warm, waterproof footwear required.
- **Mud & Rain:** Our grounds get muddy with rain. Waterproof rain boots, raincoats, and a full change of clothes are required. Students may bring umbrellas.

Hot Weather Guidelines:

- **90°F and Above (Feels Like/Apparent Temperature):** When the temperature is above 90 degrees, extra water will be made available during outside time and drink breaks will be encouraged. When temperatures are above 100 degrees, indoor breaks will be taken as needed, as well as required water breaks every 30 minutes. Students will be allowed to go indoors as needed to cool off and per the teachers discretion, programming moved inside as needed.



Sick Policy

Students may not attend classes if they have a fever, vomiting, diarrhea, rash, or persistent cough with signs of infection. Students should remain at home for a full 24 hours after a fever has broken and symptoms resolve before returning to class. Please consult with your health-care professional if you are unsure if they are still contagious. **Please notify a Program Director if your student will be absent.**

Dress Code

Students need to have proper weather gear for all seasons. Clothing should be modest, comfortable, and good for active play/movement. Examples include: shorts should be no more than 2 inches above the knee, skirts/dresses should have shorts or pants underneath, belts/properly fitting waistbands and shirts should cover midriff. Please refrain from wearing any clothing with rude or inappropriate sayings/images.

No Solicitation

The selling of goods or services is not permitted on our premises or via our communications unless associated with a Tree of Life Academy sponsored function. Exceptions may be given if pre-approved by a Director.

Behavior Expectations & Disciplinary Approach

We value patience, honesty, kindness and respect and want to help our students develop these character traits. It is important that these virtues guide our community culture so that we can foster a low-stress and robust learning experience for our students and teachers.

Discipline by the staff during class will follow these guidelines:

- **For physically unsafe choices**, the student will be given direct and clear instruction to resolve the issue. This includes but is not limited to: hitting, biting, running/wandering away from the class, excessive rough play etc. If the issue persists, a student may need to be picked up from classes for the day, and a plan to return developed with a Program Director and/or Teacher with Parent input.
- **For disruptive choices** impacting the learning experiences of our students, we understand re-direction and options for movement, activities and expression may help to calm and resolve this, especially with our youngest learners. Our program is designed with this in mind. If a student is unable to engage with learning and/or continually disrupts the learning of classmates even after alternative choices have been offered, an accommodation plan may need to be explored.
 - *While we are committed to supporting all of our students at Tree of Life Academy, accommodation plans are best discussed and agreed upon before the enrollment of a child. We do not guarantee that we have the ability or staffing to develop special accommodations for students. Please consider your child's needs carefully and openly communicate them with our team at the time of application, so we can best determine if we have the support and capacity to meet your family's needs.*



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- **For disrespectful or unkind choices** we will seek to mediate the situation through correction, re-direction and prayer. We have the desire to teach students about honesty, respect, kindness and personal responsibility. Our program will not tolerate name-calling or bullying of any kind. If a child persists in disrespectful or unkind behavior towards staff or other students, they may need to be picked up from classes for the day. A plan to return will be developed with a Program Director and/or Teacher with Parent input.

Special Needs Accommodations

We seek to embrace and provide an active, developmentally appropriate educational model that will naturally accommodate a variety of learning differences and sensory needs. We accept enrollment of students with additional or special needs on a case-by-case basis, while we must also ensure that our program and staff are adequately equipped to meet the needs of every student at Tree of Life Academy. If the Program Directors, Teacher(s) and family determine a collaborative and agreeable accommodation plan, the student may enroll. There may be circumstances where enrollment is not possible.

Addressing Concerns

If parents have concerns or disagreements regarding the program or anyone associated with it, they are encouraged to address the issue directly with those involved, making a sincere effort to resolve the matter privately. If this approach does not lead to a satisfactory resolution, parents may escalate the concern to a Director, where all parties will be given the opportunity to express their perspectives. Directors and parents will collaborate to arrange an in-person meeting in a timely manner. In all cases, program leaders will determine an appropriate course of action, which may include suspending or terminating the program's relationship with parents, students, instructors, or other individuals connected to Tree of Life Academy. ***If such a decision is made, tuition and fees will not be refunded. In instances of staff dismissal, compensation will only be provided for sessions already taught.***

Failure to Comply with Participation Agreement or Unacceptable Conduct

If the Program Directors determine that any individual associated with Tree of Life Academy has violated the terms of this Program Handbook, they have the authority to request an in-person meeting to address their concerns. Likewise, if a Director deems any behavior—whether specified in this Program Handbook or not—as unacceptable or detrimental to the academy, they reserve the right to initiate a discussion through an in-person meeting. In either scenario, the required meeting must take place within one week of the initial notice at a time mutually agreed upon by all parties involved. Failure to cooperate in scheduling or attending the meeting may result in the suspension or termination of the individual's or family's affiliation with Tree of Life Academy.

Following the meeting, the Program Directors will assess the situation and determine an appropriate course of action. This may include, but is not limited to, suspension or termination of the individual's or family's affiliation with Tree of Life Academy. ***In the event of suspension or termination, tuition and fees will not be refunded.***



Enrollment/Tuition Payment Commitment

Tree of Life Academy is a supplementary educational program. All students and families must complete a family interview prior to admission. Application fees are non-refundable unless the academy is unable to place a student in a program. Tree of Life Academy reserves the right to deny enrollment to any family.

Our current program serves students ready for a Kindergarten through 2nd Grade education in Language Arts & Math for academic instruction. This is to include students between the ages of 5 and 8 years old. Students who are still 4 or turning 9 years old before August 1st may register with prior approval from the directors.

- An Application Fee is required at the time of applying for the program and will be charged upon a families acceptance to the program.
- A separate application form and fee are required for each student.
- Enrollment is considered a full-year commitment, with tuition payable annually or split into a payment plan.
- Families that default on payments may lose future enrollment eligibility and could be referred to collections.
- Early un-enrollment still requires full tuition payment.

Financial Matters

Enrollment in our programs is per year on dates set on the program calendar. When a family accepts a student's placement and enrolls, tuition is required to be paid in full even if a family un-enrolls before completing the program year.

Tree of Life Academy wants to make its program as accessible as possible while covering the needs of each program. ***Application fees and tuition fees are non-refundable.*** If a student applies for a program and is not placed due to lack of available space, the Application Fee will not be charged or will be refunded. Families will not be reimbursed for missed classes due to student illness, vacation, inclement weather, or other program closings.

Late Fees

NOTICE OF LATE FEES: *A \$15 late fee will be assessed, for late payments.*

Please note that chronic tardiness of payments may result in immediate loss of a student's place in the course/program or the termination of a family's participation at Tree of Life Academy and no refunds will be provided. Students whose payments are more than 30 days late will not be able to attend until their late tuition balance is paid.



Basic Rules Review

To attend Tree of Life Academy, students and parents must understand and agree to follow these rules:

- **Enrollment Commitment:** Enrollment requires a full-year commitment, with payment made either annually or through a monthly plan. Unenrollment does not exempt families from full payment.
- **Supervision & Conduct:** Students must remain with their assigned class and under an instructor's supervision at all times. They are expected to show respect toward Teachers and peers through participation, maintaining a positive learning attitude, and demonstrating kindness and teamwork.
- **Dress Code & Weather Gear:** Attire must be modest and non-distracting. Students must adhere to our Weather Guidelines and arrive with appropriate clothing for the conditions. Those without proper weather gear will need to be picked up.
- **Electronics Policy:** Electronic devices may only be used for learning purposes when permitted by a Teacher. Unauthorized use will result in the device being held by a Director for the remainder of the day. All electronics are brought at the owner's risk, and we encourage students to leave them at home unless specifically requested for class. This includes phones.
- **Lunch & Nutrition:** Lunch is held outdoors in designated areas under adult supervision. When moved inside, students must remain in the designated indoor space. Each student must bring lunch and a full water bottle. Please try to pack healthy foods and drinks.
- **Site Boundaries:** Students must remain within the academy grounds and with an instructor at all times. **If a student leaves or is believed to have left—due to hiding or being unaccounted for—police will be contacted immediately.**
- **Respect & Behavior:** Students must interact respectfully with both peers and adults, using appropriate speech and attitude.

By following these guidelines, students and families contribute to a positive and productive learning environment at Tree of Life Academy.

Please sign and date here to affirm that you have read and will adhere to the Tree of Life Academy Program Handbook:

SIGNATURE OF PARENTS:

_____ DATE: _____

_____ DATE: _____