



VILLAGE  
EXTENDED DAY SERVICES

# 2021-2022 PARENT HANDBOOK

Village Extended Day Services  
Freedom Crossing Academy

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**OUR PHILOSOPHY:** We believe that we have a tremendous opportunity to impact the lives of children by providing an informal setting for safe, fun, nurturing and enriching after-school experience. We encourage team building, friendship skills, volunteerism, and personal growth all while having fun after-school. Our philosophy is guided by the following principles:

**1.EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY:** Village Extended Day Services is committed to providing the highest quality before and after-school experiences for the children in our care. We have over 40 years of child-care experience and provide excellence through the well-planned and supervised daily activities that allow for learning through play and exploration. We provide high quality professional training for our staff to ensure that our Directors and counselors remain current with evidence-based behavioral management and curricula implementation strategies.

**2.PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS:** We strive to exceed parent expectations in all aspects, especially when it comes to communication. We recognize the importance of family involvement in children’s learning. We keep parents informed on the structure of the program, schedules of the day and daily activities. Our goal is for parents and staff to truly partner together in order to achieve the highest level of success for each child.

**3.STRONG RELATIONSHIPS:** We recognize that non-cognitive skills like attentiveness, motivation, self-confidence, and a positive attitude are equally as important as cognitive skills in children’s future academic success and work-related skills. Healthy development of these and other social and emotional skills is dependent on the quality and reliability of a child’s relationships with family members and other caretakers. Village Extended Day programs are arranged in ways to enhance social development. Our counselors not only model appropriate social interactions but provide opportunities to promote social functioning and directly teach appropriate ways to interact and handle problems with friends as well as provide a mentor relationship with children. We ensure that children know they are safe, secure, and loved regardless of their behavior on a given day. Our counselors strive to promote friendships among children recognizing that social growth and support will provide a strong foundation for children’s character development and future life skills.

**4.MISSION/VISION STATEMENT:** The mission of Village Extended Day Services is to provide your child with a safe, fun, and enriching after-school experience. Through our unique approach, we provide energetic environments that are nurturing and filled with a variety of structured activities that provide opportunities for learning, exercise, social development, and FUN! Parents are assured that children are properly supervised and provided with engaging and stimulating activities and have an appropriate balance between homework, exercise, skill development, and social activities.

**A TYPICAL EXTENDED DAY AFTERNOON** starts with a “round- up”, which is a group

activity filled with fun games and challenges for everyone including staff and students. We then break into age groups that rotate through a series of planned, supervised, fun activities. Daily activities include homework and snack time, science experiments, cooking projects, music and movement, sports & outdoor games/playtime, challenges, and community service projects. Older children also have opportunities to socialize with friends and help with younger children. Parents are ensured that children are properly supervised and provided with an enriching afterschool experience.

## **INTRODUCTION**

We thank you for entrusting your child to the caring, dedicated staff of Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day. We look forward to the opportunity to “team up” with you in caring for your child. This manual is intended to provide you with information about the Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day program and will help us to deliver the best possible experience for your child. Please let us know if you have any questions. We ask that you please read the following information carefully before signing.

### **I. General Information**

#### **A. About Village Extended Day Services, LLC. and Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day program at Freedom Crossing Academy:**

Village Extended Day Services has partnered with St. Johns County schools since 2012 to provide safe, nurturing, and stimulating before and after-school care. We provide a variety of structured activities that provide opportunities for learning, exercise, social development – and fun! Our programs are structured like a mini-summer camp every day. Parents can be assured that their children are properly supervised and provided with stimulating activities along with an appropriate balance of homework time, skill development, and outdoor and social activities. We also provide special events such as themed parties, seasonal celebrations, and guest speakers & entertainers. We have delivered outstanding, child-focused services for over 40 years. We bring that expertise to the design and execution of Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day. Our experience operating schools, summer camps, and other Extended Day programs allows us to bring a unique perspective to the daily life of your child.

It is the policy of Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day program, to admit students without regard to race, culture, color, creed, national and ethnic origin, sex, religion, or disability.

#### **B. Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day Hours:**

On all school days during the school year, Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day is open from 6:30 AM until the time the bell rings each morning and from the end of the school day each afternoon until 6:00 PM. We are open these regular hours for any days your Freedom Crossing Academy is open. Morning care drop-off ends at 7:45 am and After care pick-up begins at 3:20 (2:20 on Wednesdays) due to the buses.

Late pick-up should be avoided. Each day your child should be picked up from our after-school program no later than 6:00 PM. If you are concerned that you will be running late for any reason, please call our cellular phone at **(904)599-9353** to ensure staff is aware your arrival will be delayed. If your child is picked up later than this time, a late fee may be assessed as follows: \$1 per minute for the first 10 minutes and \$2 per minute after that time. If tardiness becomes chronic, we will provide a warning and if the practice continues, your child will be subject to disenrollment.

## II. Tuition and Fees

**A. Registration:** All applicants for Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day will pay a non-refundable registration fee of \$75. For families with more than one child, there is a \$125 maximum registration fee. **Checks should be made payable to Village Extended Day.**

**B. Annual Tuition:** Tuition is due in advance before the first day of the school year and then on or before the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month. If the 1<sup>st</sup> falls on a weekend or school holiday, payment is still due no later than the 1<sup>st</sup> and must be made prior to the school closure. For instance, if the 1<sup>st</sup> falls on a Sunday, payments will be deducted on the Friday prior. There are 180 days of school each year, and each month has a different number of school days. For your convenience, and to simplify the payment process, we have divided the Extended Day fees into 10 equal payments of 18 days each.

- 1) **August 1, 2021** \*Coverage Period: Aug 10 – Sept 2
- 2) **September 1, 2021** \*Coverage Period: Sept 3 – Sept 29
- 3) **October 1, 2021** \*Coverage Period: Sept 30 – Oct 26
- 4) **November 1, 2021** \*Coverage Period: Oct 27 – Nov 22
- 5) **December 1, 2021** \*Coverage Period: Nov 23 – Jan 6
- 6) **January 1, 2022** \*Coverage Period: Jan 7 – Feb 2
- 7) **February 1, 2022** \*Coverage Period: Feb 3 – Mar 2
- 8) **March 1, 2022** \*Coverage Period: Mar 3 – Apr 5
- 9) **April 1, 2022** \*Coverage Period: Apr 6 – May 2
- 10) **May 1, 2022** \*Coverage Period: May 3 – May 26

For a child to be enrolled in our program, it is required (no exceptions) that your debit, credit, or checking/savings information is set up within our automatic payment processing through a third party known as Tuition Express. The Electronic Funds Transfer Authorization form must be returned with your enrollment paperwork. Payments will be withdrawn automatically on the 1<sup>st</sup> of each month (or the last business day prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> if the 1<sup>st</sup> falls on a weekend or school holiday). You may choose to pay tuition using an alternative method prior to the date of the automatic deduction. If the EFT is declined for any reason, payment must be made using a valid card or cash no later than the 2<sup>nd</sup> of the month, for your child's continued enrollment in our program.

State law prohibits attendance if tuition has not been paid. Please help us remain in compliance by keeping your EFT account information current OR by making your tuition

payments before the automatic payment deduction date. A fee of \$40 will be charged for declined EFT transactions. Communicating with our Director is important, and it is imperative that your card on file is kept in good standing to avoid penalties. A \$40 charge will be assessed for checks returned to us by the bank for insufficient funds.

Repeated occurrences may result in a requirement that you pay by cash or money order in the future. Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day will review prices annually and reserves the right to adjust prices for each academic year, or at other times during the year due to unforeseen economic conditions or extraordinary expenses. We will provide at least a two-week notice of any changes. Just as we will provide notice for changes, we ask the same of you. We request a two-week notification of any schedule changes, such as switching from five afternoons to three, mornings only to both mornings and afternoons, etc. The same requirement for withdrawing a student from the program applies. Tuition refunds, if applicable, will be prorated against the two-week notification.

### **III. State of Florida Laws | Program Rules & Expectations**

Our extended day program is licensed by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF). There is an extensive list of rules with which we must conform, and it is important that you be familiar with some of these that may directly impact you.

**A. Child Pick-Up Authorization:** Florida law requires that no child leave our care with anyone who is not named on the child's registration form or in writing. A parent/legal guardian may give separate **written permission with authorized signature** at any time for an individual at least 18 years of age to pick up the child. An email or text copy of your permission and signature is acceptable. Verbal authorization is not permitted. That means there are no circumstances under which you can call us, even in a personal emergency, and provide verbal authorization to release your child to someone not on your designated pick-up list.

You may remove someone from your pickup list at any time. The only exception is that you may not remove a child's parent without providing us with the appropriate court order.

For safety and liability reasons children may at no time be released from the care of Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day to bike or walk home. As stated, an individual at least 18 years of age must be authorized to pick-up children from Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day.

**B. Health & Medication:** Medication should be administered at home or during school hours by the school nurse whenever possible. We will **only** give medicine that is a prescription and is required during the extended day hours, or emergency medicine like an Epi-pen. All medication must be labeled, in its original container and placed in our designated Medicine Bag with a completed medication usage form. We cannot exceed the dosage written on the bottle or box without doctor's written approval. Always give medicine directly to your Director – please do not send it in your child's backpack. We suggest that you apply sunscreen in advance before your child arrives at school. We are not able to apply sunscreen or insect repellent while your child is in our care.

**C. IEP & Behavior Plans:** Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day strives to provide each of its students with the highest quality and safest before and after school experience. Research shows that consistency is pivotal to children's success. To aid in this, it is asked that you provide us with a copy of your student's IEP, 504 Plan, or any other behavior plan that is on file with the school, so that we may implement the same strategies used during the school day.

**D. Abuse:** By Florida law, staff is required to document and report any possible signs of abuse and neglect to the Florida Abuse Hotline without Village Extended Day Services' knowledge or approval. They are mandatory reporters.

**E. Smoking:** Smoking is not permitted on the school grounds or parking lot. Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day is subject to a non-compliance citation by DCF if anyone violates this prohibition.

**F. Fire and Disaster Drills:** DCF requires us to hold monthly Fire and/or Disaster Drills. We try to prepare the children for the experience, so they are comfortable with the procedure. We apologize in advance for any inconvenience this may cause as there will be no one to open the doors at that time. We evacuate to the playground for our drill. Please be patient. Our drills do not usually take very long, and we will be with you as soon as possible.

#### **IV. Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day Policies & Procedures**

**A. Waitlist:** We only start a waitlist when absolutely necessary. Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day enrollment opens in the spring of the prior school year. Enrollment occurs on a first come, first serve basis. Due to the limited space and/or staff available, we have a finite number of spaces. Should a waitlist be required, families will be admitted in the order we receive both their enrollment forms & registration fee. Availability is then based on capacity in your child's grade level group. Placement on the waitlist is not a guarantee of a future space in extended day. Please be assured we make every effort to place as many families as possible as quickly as possible.

**B. Discipline:** It is our policy to treat our children with love and respect. To accomplish this goal, we employ positive reinforcement. Children are curious and it is developmentally appropriate for them to test rules and limits. We believe that catching children when they make good choices by complimenting them and positively reinforcing good behavior is far more effective than disciplining children when they misbehave. We train our staff to talk to children on their own level by making eye contact and validating children's thoughts and feelings. At no time are negative reinforcement techniques requiring the use of physical punishment, or the withholding of food or toileting, acceptable.

**C. Approach to Difficult Behavior & Bullying:** Aggression is unacceptable in any form, including hitting, throwing objects, disrespectful and disruptive behavior, running away from the child's group/counselor, use of inappropriate language or note writing, and verbal threats of intimidation and cruelty. We work as partners with parents on behavioral issues. However, there are very rare times when dangerous aggressive

behavior OR deliberate unkind behavior can lead to suspension or dismissal from our program. Most minor behavioral issues will be handled between the counselor and the child. Other instances will result in a written incident report and parent contact. Repeat occurrences of previously addressed behavior or extreme behavior may result in suspension from the Extended Day Program. Our goal for short term suspension is for parents to work at home with children on strategies to improve and correct behavioral issues. Reoccurrences of the issue following suspension may result in disenrollment from our program.

**D. Termination of Services:** Village Extended Day Services reserves the right to dis-enroll any child for any reason at any time, to include non-payment for services, severe behavioral issues that may affect the safety of other children, teachers, or him/herself, and non-compliance with this Policies and Procedures handbook. The parent will be notified by phone call and/or as part of a parent conference.

**E. Dress Code:** Please refer to Freedom Crossing Academy dress code. Keep in mind your child will participate in potentially messy activities such as art, cooking, shaving cream games, or occasional water play. While we try to use “washable” products, we know that stains do not always wash out. Also, please send your child in weather appropriate clothing, or with a jacket in their backpack as needed. We recommend writing your child’s name on all clothing articles that they might not wear at all times.

**F. Biting Policy:** Biting is not an appropriate behavior for school aged children and in the very rare case that this occurs, the child may be suspended or expelled from Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day program.

**G. Personal Valuables & Electronic Devices:** We do not allow children to bring toys, electronic devices, cash, valuable jewelry, etc. Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day will not be responsible for the loss or damage of such items. Regular use of cellular phones, iPads, etc. is not permitted during the hours your child will be attending Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day. With permission, devices are acceptable as a tool for homework only during designated homework times.

**H. Medical Emergency:** In the event of emergency while your child is in attendance, you grant Village Extended Day Services and Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day permission to administer care as it sees fit for the child’s best interest.

**I. Snacks:** Daily snack is provided. If your child has food allergies and cannot eat some or all of the snacks we provide, for any reason, it is your responsibility as a parent or guardian to ensure the Director is aware and to arrange a plan for your child’s snacks.

**J. Religion:** Village Extended Day Services nor Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day has any affiliation with any religious groups or organizations.

**K. Illness and Contagious Symptoms: (PLEASE SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT COVID19 IN REGARD TO EXTENDED DAY SINCE THIS IS A CHANGING SITUATION-ANY COVID19 REQUIREMENTS AND DOH REQUIREMENTS SUPERCEDE THOSE BELOW)**

We know it is an inconvenience to be called out of your workday to come pick up your

child due to an illness, and while we do sympathize, we also believe that it is important that we work together to minimize the spread of germs. You may be called to pick up your child if he/she develops any of the symptoms listed below:

- a. Severe coughing
- b. Difficult or rapid breathing
- c. Stiff neck (especially if the child cannot lift their head up and down)
- d. Vomiting and/or Diarrhea (2 or more abnormally loose stools within 24 hours) \*
- e. Temperature of 100 °F or higher when in conjunction with other signs of illness\*
- f. Temperature of 101 °F or higher in the absence of symptoms\*
- g. Eyes that are irritated and discharging\*
- h. Exposed, open skin lesions
- i. Green discharge from the nose that lasts more than 2 days\*
- j. Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
- k. Yellowish skin or eyes
- l. Any other unusual signs or symptoms of illness

*\* These items require your child to be symptom-free for 24 hours before returning unless approved by a doctor with a doctor's note.*

*\* If your doctor determines that your child has a contagious disease, such as chicken pox, whooping cough, measles, etc., please notify us immediately so that we can inform the other parents.*

If your child is found to have head lice or nits, they may be asked to leave extended day and may not return until you have treated their hair and pulled the nits. Your child will be checked by our staff, before returning to the program. If live lice or numerous nits are found after initial treatment, we cannot accept your child to return to the program. Please check your child's head nightly and pull any nits you see, so that they may not hatch again.

*\*Note that these policies for illness and symptoms are a combination of our guidelines and also the State of Florida DCF requirements that we must follow.*

## **V. Parent Responsibilities**

The following parent responsibilities outlined in the parent handbook are critical to the success of our partnership:

- **REVIEW THE PARENT HANDBOOK FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION**
- **KEEP CONTACT & PAYMENT INFO CURRENT**
- **PROVIDE THE CENTER WITH MEDICAL UPDATES**
- **BE SURE TO PICK YOUR CHILD UP ON TIME**
- **HELP US MAINTAIN A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUR CHILD BY KEEPING SICK CHILDREN AT HOME**

**A. Parent Signature:** A parent/guardian signature below is required to complete enrollment.

**Thank you for taking the time to read Freedom Crossing Academy Extended Day Handbook. Please sign below to verify you have read and agree to abide by the contents of this handbook.**

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Parent/Guardian Signature	Print Name	Date
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**Child(ren) name(s) (FIRST & LAST)**

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Additional information if needed:**

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