



Family Handbook 2026-2027

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General Information

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School Overview

Community Leadership Academy was established in March 2009 by Peter and Kensy Boulware, Founders.

School Staff

Peter Boulware:	Founder/Executive Director
Kensy Boulware:	Founder/Executive Director
Tina Hinton:	Principal
Eric Rodriguez:	Upper School Administrator
Ryan Capas:	High School Guidance Counselor
Sandy Hall:	Elementary School Administrator
Stephanie Wnuk:	Early Childhood Administrator (K2-K5)
Amy Lewis:	Chief Financial Officer/Business Administrator
Maelese Rodriguez:	Registrar
Tammi Lau:	Accounts Receivable/Scholarship Coordinator
Jaime Simmons:	High School Athletic Director
Sarah Wnuk	Lower and Middle School Athletic Director
Molly Simon	Community Development, Fundraising, and Marketing Director

Organizational Structure

Peter Boulware > CLA Advisory Board > Administrators > Teachers > Families

Our Vision

To develop the next generation of godly leaders.

Our Mission

Our mission is to focus on four areas of development: Moral Excellence, Academic Excellence, Community and Leadership. This is accomplished through knowledge and understanding of the Word of God, as we partner with parents to train, teach and grow families through a spirit of excellence and godliness.

Our Educational Philosophy

Our educational philosophy is founded on the strength of the primary assumptions:

There is ultimately no knowledge that is incompatible with the Christian faith, and a sound education is based on the principles of truth given in the Bible.

Family engagement in the educational process makes a critical difference in the efficacy of a student's education. Students learn best when there is a partnership between teachers and parents.

Ethics and leadership training, in the context of a reciprocal partnership between teachers and parents, provides the moral foundation necessary for superior scholarship.

The best learning environment is inquiry-based, promotes critical thinking, fosters a respect for diverse points of view and is committed to the pursuit of truth.

For Christians, the goal of education is to train students for ministry, regardless of the vocation they choose.

Students learn best when they love to learn, and excitement and joy in learning should be nurtured by parents and teachers.

Hands-on projects and teaching to every learning style is important for maximizing learning and understanding.

Students learn best when there are high standards and the belief that every child is able to succeed, and learning should be differentiated as necessary to challenge each student appropriately.

It is important to teach children how to think, not just what to think. Developing metacognitive and higher order thinking skills is crucial for a student's long-term success and well-being.

An Academy of Academic Excellence

We intend to provide an education of value and use to each student that exceeds the requirements of local, state and federal agencies. Our teachers are professional Christian educators who are qualified to teach their subject and grade level. We believe academic excellence is achievable in our academy through an education based on a biblical view and by providing classrooms with fewer students. This allows for a more personal assessment of each student's strengths and weaknesses.

An Academy of Moral Excellence

While it is understood that moral character training is a fundamental responsibility of parents, we believe it is our duty as an academy to support and enhance what the parents are doing at home. Students will experience the concept of iron sharpening iron, rather than bad morals corrupting good values.

Moral Innocence

We believe that Community Leadership Academy should aid in protecting the moral innocence of its student body. When we speak of innocence, we refer to a worldly naiveté, a lack of experience with that which is unholy (the world), or lack of exposure to defilement. We believe children should be allowed to remain children as long as they can.

Therefore, the academy focuses on age-appropriate instruction that nurtures students' moral, emotional, and academic development. Mature matters such as human sexuality or related health topics are considered the responsibility of parents. We believe parents are best positioned and equipped to guide their child in understanding personal values and self-control, and to determine their child's readiness for such discussions. Students who have been introduced to certain sensitive topics at home are expected to exercise discretion by refraining from discussing those subjects with other children. This practice helps preserve an environment that respects each family's role in determining the appropriate timing and manner for such conversations.

The academy affirms that its overall character reflects the collective character and convictions of its families. A shared commitment to biblical truth, mutual respect, and discernment strengthens the integrity and unity of the school community.

"How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word." (Psalm 119:9)

". . . Be wise in what is good and innocent to what is evil." (Romans 16:19b)

"Bad company corrupts good morals." (1 Corinthians 15:33)

An Academy That Emphasizes Parental Involvement

Parents at Community Leadership Academy are dedicated to taking responsibility for the moral and academic training of their children. Parents are also committed to a high level of involvement in their educational instruction by being co-instructors with the teachers, as well as volunteering their time regularly in the classroom and for other academy-related tasks. Both full-time enrollment options, hybrid (4 days of onsite instruction each week) and traditional (5 days of onsite instruction each week), allow parents to play a significant role in their student's education. Our full-time hybrid program combines the best of classroom and at-home learning. Parents can be committed to teaching their children at home with the resources that are provided and value the input of trained Christian educators who provide parents with an academic framework to teach by. Parents are also encouraged to enhance and individualize their at-home learning program beyond the teacher-assigned work. The full-time traditional option was added in 2015 to offer onsite teacher guided learning five days a week for students in both Lower and Upper School programs in order to meet the needs of families while committing to preserve the culture and parental involvement, which are distinctives of Community Leadership Academy.

An Academy That Is *Others* Oriented

We believe that an orientation towards loving and serving others is not only a command of scripture: *Love your neighbor as yourself*, but an overflow of salvation: *He, who is forgiven much, loves much*. Therefore, the academy will further reinforce the preciousness of those outside of self and enhance a sense of unity among the community: *how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell*

together in unity. The Community Leadership Academy setting will provide children with opportunities to put others' needs before their own, living out a manner that reflects Christ in them.

Let each of you regard one another as more important than himself. (Philippians 2:3b)

An Academy With Teachers and Coaches as Mentors

We intend our teachers and coaches to serve as mentors with exemplary, godly character, demonstrating excellence in their subject area or grade level taught. Community Leadership Academy has a distinctive trust relationship between the school teachers, coaches, and parents. Parents trust that the teachers and coaches continue to hold their children to the same biblical moral standard parents are teaching at home. The teachers and coaches trust that parents will promptly address any behavioral concerns that occur at school or school events.

Mentoring Concept

Community Leadership Academy returns to two essential elements necessary for excellence in education:

- The mentoring relationship between teacher and student.
- The essential role of a like-minded community in the education process.

The dictionary defines a mentor as: *A wise and trusted teacher.* The role of teacher as mentor arose out of the desire to place teachers that model biblical character in a position that would influence the minds of our children for Christ. Godly character is taught, encouraged, exhorted, and exemplified by the teachers, administration, and community. The character of Christ in His people stands firm on principle in any circumstance and is faithful, steadfast, diligent, cheerful, loving, and caring. The Holy Spirit governed character is the spiritual container for achievement in any calling.

He who walks with wise men will be wise. (Proverbs 13:20a)

Statement of Faith

God has given to parents the mandate of His Divine Word to teach, instruct, and train their children in the way they should go; and it is upon this foundation that we base our organization.

God exists eternally in three Persons as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, and there is no other true God.

God is the absolute and sole Creator of the universe, and creation was by divine act, not through the evolutionary process.

Jesus Christ is God the Son, and is both God and Man. He was born of a virgin, lived a perfect, sinless life, was crucified and died as penalty for our sins, raised

bodily from the dead on the third day, appeared to His disciples and as many as 500 at one time, ascended to the Father's right hand, and is personally, bodily, visibly coming again to earth.

The Holy Spirit is a person, is God, and possesses all the divine attributes.

Man is a sinner and totally depraved, void of any righteousness, without God; and the whole human race has fallen into the sin of Adam, bringing personally upon each one physical, spiritual, and eternal death, unless one is saved.

Jesus Christ provides the only way to salvation through His substitute death, and the shed blood on the cross, and salvation is entirely apart from good works, baptism, church membership, or any of man's efforts, and is of pure grace.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Community Leadership Academy admits students of any race, color, or national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the academy. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other academy-administered programs.

Licensure

Community Leadership Academy is certified by the International League of Christian Schools. CLA is a child care facility operating under an exemption pursuant to the laws of the State of Florida and is not subject to licensure or regulation by the Department of Children and Families.

Admissions

(Students enrolled in VPK should see the VPK Family Handbook Appendix for additional information on admissions.)

Community Leadership Academy welcomes Christian families who are committed to pursuing moral and spiritual excellence for their children through a shared reliance on Christ's transforming power and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. Indifference to moral formation or acceptance of mediocrity would conflict with the purpose and vision behind our community. The administration serves as an advocate for our families and is deeply committed to protecting and nurturing the Christ-centered character of the academy.

We believe that moral innocence is of greater value than worldly sophistication. Our desire is for students to grow in discernment and to understand the world without becoming shaped by it. While we do not expect perfection, we do seek evidence of growth and a steady progression of heart, mind, and character

shaped by the grace of God and the faithful efforts of parents guided by His Spirit.

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:2

Applications - Submitting an application for admission to CLA does not guarantee acceptance into the program.

Foster/Adopted Children – We ask that children be in your home at least six months before enrolling at Community Leadership Academy.

Moral Interview

Each family desiring to enter the CLA program will be expected to participate in a moral interview. This interview will involve both parents, the student(s) wishing to enter the academy (students are usually interviewed during their entrance test) and a member of the academy administration. This meeting will help both parties determine if this academy is the right fit. Standard VPK families are not required to participate in a moral interview unless they are enrolling another student in a different CLA program simultaneously. Families enrolling students in the VPK full day program are expected to participate in the moral interview.

Background Checks, Abuse Awareness Training, and Presenting ID

We require all parents who will be volunteering on campus, eating lunch with their student, visiting a classroom, participating in field trips or other such activities to successfully complete the required sexual abuse awareness training and have a current background check on file, and present ID upon arrival each visit. Existing background/fingerprinting results are non-transferrable from other entities and cannot be used at CLA. *Parents are responsible to pay the fee for this service at our designated provider.* Adult volunteers need to get fingerprints electronically scanned every five years. You will be provided with the school's VECHS number and background check information upon acceptance. In addition to the background check, please sign and return the VECHS waiver and FBI Privacy Policy to CLA. Our mailing address is: Community Leadership Academy, 3611 Austin Davis Ave., Tallahassee, FL 32308. You are required to report any arrests to school administration within 48 hours.

Standard VPK parents are not required to volunteer in the classroom. If they desire to volunteer, attend a field trip, visit the classroom, or eat lunch with their student, they must obtain a background check and complete the sexual abuse awareness training as described above.

Records

Please update your information in Veracross with any change of address, telephone number, and place of employment for both parents and guardians. We

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also require the name, phone numbers and address of the person to be called in case of an emergency and an up to date list of all persons authorized to pick up students. To update any personal information in Veracross, log into your parent portal and click on the red button that says “Update Family Profile.” From there you can update personal information.

A current Florida Shot Record (Form 680) (or religious/medical exemption form, if applicable), current School Entry Health Exam, and a copy of the student’s birth certificate must be submitted immediately following acceptance. **If these documents are not submitted prior to the first day of school, your student(s) will not be allowed on campus to start school until forms are submitted.** Additionally, if shot or health records expire during the school year, students may be temporarily prohibited from attending school until they are in compliance with this requirement.

Any family applying to Community Leadership Academy who may have previously attended the academy, but are not currently enrolled in the academy, will be required to meet the same admissions criteria as new families. Additionally, once a family leaves the academy, there is no guarantee that there will be a space available for them should they decide to return. It is the responsibility of the family to pursue a position in the academy. The academy reserves the right to dismiss or refuse to re-enroll a child.

In the event of the permanent closure of Community Leadership Academy all permanent student records will be sent to the Leon County Public School District. VPK student records will be sent to the Early Learning Coalition.

Application / Enrollment Fees

An application and testing fee is due at the time that you apply for admission to Community Leadership Academy. This fee is non-refundable. Please also note that submitting an application for admission to the Academy does not guarantee acceptance into the program. If accepted, all enrollment documentation and a non-refundable enrollment fee is required to be submitted by the designated deadline in order to secure your seat at CLA. There is no application or enrollment fee for the standard VPK program; however, application and enrollment fees are applicable for students enrolling in the VPK full day program or if attending on Thursdays and/or Fridays.

All students enrolled in the VPK program, whether or not they attend full day or full week programs, must have a VPK voucher from the Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend on file with CLA. Vouchers are due to the admissions office by July 1st. Students may not attend VPK at CLA without a voucher on file and will not be allowed to attend until one is received.

Testing

Each new incoming student in VPK - 12th grade will be tested prior to determining acceptance.

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fee amounts are listed on the CLA Website.

Tuition and supply fees include the cost of textbooks and most consumable materials for all grades. It is expected that these books will be taken care of to the best of the student's ability. Families will be charged a fee for any books that are lost or damaged beyond normal wear. Families may still be asked to make a few small purchases throughout the year for books such as novels or classroom specific materials. Families will be notified by the child's teacher of any such required purchases. Certain middle or high school courses may require lab/equipment fees. Families are also expected to have general school supplies for use at home. (Does not apply to VPK students who are not enrolled in full day).

Tuition and fee payments are due on the 1st or 7th of each month, whichever you chose at the time of enrollment/re-enrollment. A late fee of \$50 will be assessed after the 7th of each month. Any account balance more than 30 days past due may result in the student(s) being required to stay home until the balance is paid or a financial agreement has been made with administration.

Participation fees, such as fees for sports, clubs, etc. must be paid by the due dates provided by the school or students will not be allowed to participate in any way until the fees are paid. Sports fees are also subject to a \$50 late fee.

Payments must be made online through Veracross with autopay. Returned payments will incur a \$25 returned payment fee and \$50 late fee. After 3 returned payments during a school year, the school may require all future payments in cash or by money order or cashier's check.

If your child has been awarded a scholarship by any organization, scholarship award ID numbers MUST be submitted to tlau@clatallahassee.org by July 10, 2026 and approved by the parent in SUFS no later than July 15, 2026 in order for the award to be applied starting with August tuition. Any award ID numbers provided after July 10, 2026 will cause your first month's tuition to be billed at full price. Scholarship billing for students admitted after July 10, 2026 will vary based on time of acceptance.

If a child has been awarded a scholarship by any organization and the scholarship does not pay for any reason at all, the parent is responsible for any tuition and fees left unpaid. This includes, but is not limited to, the following most common situations.

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- For full-time hybrid students on the FTC-PEP scholarship, parents must pay the student's monthly tuition & fees as billed.
 - If families intend to use the EMA marketplace to pay any tuition, their auto-pay must be set to the 7th of the month, not the 1st.
 - If the student's PEP educational savings account has sufficient funds to pay the entire month's tuition and fees at the time the payment is due, they may pay through the EMA marketplace by the 1st of the month. Please note that funds for the new school year are available as released by FLDOE and Step Up, and will likely not be available until mid-August for renewal PEP students and mid-September for new PEP students. As a result, families should be prepared to pay tuition out-of-pocket until funds are available from Step Up. If sufficient funds are available through Step Up later in the year, they may choose to seek reimbursement through Step Up.
 - If the account does not have sufficient funds to cover the entire tuition & fees payment, parents must pay CLA out-of-pocket using their saved auto-pay method by the 7th of the month; they will receive an invoice that they could submit to Step Up for reimbursement if/when more funds are available in their account.
- For full-time traditional students on the FTC/FES-EO or FES-UA scholarship, parents must approve Step Up For Students (SUFS) invoices within 7 days of receiving the email request, otherwise a late fee of \$50 will be applied to their Veracross account.
Note: If your child receives the FES-UA scholarship and an invoice is declined because of insufficient funds in your FES-UA account, the parent will be responsible to pay the amount due directly to CLA and will be issued an invoice accordingly. The school will not reissue a new invoice to FES-UA for a different amount.
- For students taking a la carte classes who have an FES-UA or FTC-PEP scholarship, Service Offerings in EMA will be made available to choose from in order to submit payments directly to CLA.
- For students who are withdrawing from CLA and who will owe tuition amounts according to the early withdrawal policy, parents should understand that they will be responsible for any amounts no longer paid by scholarship organizations after withdrawal.

It is imperative that our families make consistent tuition payments each month to enable the academy to fulfill its financial operating expenses. It is not possible for families to carry over balances of any kind from a previous year. Tuition, fees, and any other account balance (ex: yearbook, prom payments, etc) must be paid in full by July 7 in order for students to begin school the following school year. Students whose accounts have not been paid in full by July 7 will be withdrawn and placed on the waitlist for their grade level. Once the account balance and any applicable late fees are paid in full, a reactivation fee of \$100 is required to reconsider the student for re-enrollment, if there is space available. Any

alteration to this obligation is at the discretion of the administration and board. No one board member can forgive a tuition obligation by implication or direct statement. Families with extraordinary circumstances requiring a review of their financial obligation are encouraged to submit a written appeal to the academy directors directly and immediately.

Some field trips require CLA to pay the establishment ahead of the field trip day. Therefore, if a student is signed up for a field trip and is unable to attend for any reason, CLA may not be able to reimburse part or all of the field trip fee.

If a student is absent, CLA is unable to refund any catered lunches purchased for that day.

No academy records/transcripts will be transferred unless all accounts are paid in full.

Early Withdrawal

Early Withdrawal is defined as the withdrawal of a student from enrollment for any reason (including dismissal) at any time after the enrollment contract has been executed and before the conclusion of the school year covered by that contract.

CLA believes that the enrollment contract is an important agreement that both parties rely on to provide the best possible education experience for our students. Enrollment represents a year-long, binding financial commitment. However, we understand that sometimes unforeseen circumstances arise that will result in early withdrawal. To support families in such situations the following provisions are in place.

1. Graduated Tuition/Fees Obligation: The chart below indicates the amounts owed in the event of an early withdrawal, depending on the date of withdrawal. Before the contracted school year begins, the date of withdrawal is defined as the date the CLA registrar receives a written notification of intent to withdraw. Once the school year begins, parents must still notify the school, in writing, of the intent to withdraw, but the date of withdrawal is defined as the last day attended by the student. All withdrawal notifications must be submitted in writing to the registrar. In the event of an early withdrawal, parents will still owe the following:

If the date of withdrawal is . . .	The parent is obligated to (all obligations are per student)
After committing to enrollment but before April 1	\$1500 flat fee or 25% of total annual tuition and fees, whichever is less
April 1 – August 31	25% of total annual tuition and fees

September 1 – December 31	75% of total remaining tuition and fees owed
On or after January 1	100% of total remaining tuition and fees owed

Please note:

- Parents are responsible for any tuition and fees that may no longer be paid by scholarship organizations.
 - All fees and obligations are per student.
 - Tuition and fees are listed in the enrollment contract.
 - All other fees that are not listed on the enrollment contract, but contribute to an account balance must still be paid in full (ex: late fees, tardy fees, sports fees, event fees, activity fees, etc.)
2. Tuition Insurance: CLA has partnered with Dewar to provide parents the option of purchasing tuition insurance. This insurance is designed to help protect families from significant financial impact of an early withdrawal due to qualifying events once the school year begins. While participation is not required, we strongly encourage families to carefully consider this option as part of their enrollment decision, as it provides an added layer of security and peace of mind. In the event that tuition insurance does not cover a tuition balance for any reason, parents are still responsible for the entire amount owed, according to the chart above, regardless of the reason for withdrawal. Policy information is available during enrollment for review. It is the parent's responsibility to fully review the policy to understand all coverage and exclusions.

If there are extenuating circumstances, the Community Leadership Academy Board reserves the right to review situations on a case-by-case basis, upon written request. Any alteration to this obligation is at the discretion of the board. No one board member can forgive a tuition obligation by implication or direct statement. Families with extraordinary circumstances requiring a review of their financial obligation are encouraged to submit a written appeal to the academy board directly and immediately. Application, testing, and enrollment fees are non-refundable.

No tuition credit will be given for missed classes for any reason including withdrawal, sickness, suspension, or expulsion.

Dismissals

There are several levels of dismissal from Community Leadership Academy. Although this is not a pleasant topic, it is important that the parameters are clearly defined. See also, Violations and Procedures in this manual.

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A student may be dismissed from their enrollment on academic or disciplinary grounds, or at the discretion of the administration when it is apparent that this academy is not a good fit for the student, the family structure, or in cases of extreme financial irresponsibility.

Disciplinary Dismissal

A student may be dismissed from the academy due to a major disciplinary problem and/or an accumulation of disciplinary problems that may include, but are not limited to chronic absences, tardies, or disobedience.

Discretionary Dismissal

A student or family may be dismissed from the academy at any time at the discretion of the administration. There are times that it becomes apparent that the student's or the family's needs are not being best served by the Community Leadership Academy program, or that the family is not able to adequately support the student in this academic model. This could be due to a number of issues, including but not limited to insufficient supervision of at-home learning days or inadequate at-home assignment completion, learning disabilities that cannot be accommodated in the classroom, the student's inability to manage his/her own behavior in a group setting, or a lack of commitment and/or participation in the academy agenda on the part of the parents.

Suspension

A student may be suspended for an offense deemed serious enough to warrant such action by the teaching staff and/or administration. Suspension is off campus and results in the student missing a certain number of classes. Any work that is missed due to suspension is expected to be completed. Suspended students are prohibited from participating in academy activities including field trips, performances, social events, class parties, sports practices and competitions/events, etc. A student's enrollment is not terminated during a suspension. See the Violations and Procedures section in this handbook and in the Upper School Handbook.

Expulsion

Expulsion is the immediate removal of a student from the academy usually due to a serious breach of policy or safety by either the student OR the parent(s). A student that has been expelled has their enrollment terminated. Tuition is still due to be paid throughout the year in accordance with the Early Withdrawal policy in this handbook.

Daily Academy Activities

Academy Day Schedule

CLA is unique because it is designed to offer both a classroom setting and at-home learning option. The academy campus schedule is as follows:

Academy Hours: Campus hours are published each year by the academy. Doors will be open 10 minutes before the start of the academy for middle and high school students, and 25 minutes before the start of day for lower school students. Students should not be dropped off earlier.

Campus Days: PK2-K4 grade students are required to attend on-campus classes conducted by a qualified teacher Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Kindergarten-12th grade students are required to attend Monday through Thursday. Students in PK2 - 12th grade may attend classes on campus Monday - Friday if parents choose that option. Each academy day will begin with prayer. Prayer is the foundation for CLA and is an important part of every academy day. Prayer throughout the day is encouraged whenever needed.

Program Options

Full-Time Hybrid Program: Students enrolled in the full-time hybrid program attend classes both on campus and at home throughout the week. Kindergarten through twelfth grade students enrolled in this program will learn at home on Fridays. Using teacher-prepared lesson plans, parents teach and supervise lessons to guide students toward mastery and provide age-appropriate accountability on at-home learning days. Please keep a consistent and organized daily at-home learning schedule. This will ensure a smoother teaching process for you. If it becomes apparent that work is not being completed at home on Fridays or that this model is not successful for a student, the student may be placed on academic probation, required to switch to the full-time traditional program and attend all five days on campus, or may be dismissed from the academy, depending on the circumstances.

Full-Time Traditional Program: Students enrolled in the full-time traditional program attend classes onsite 5 days a week. However, students will still be required to complete certain sections of Bible assignments at home with parents. Parents should also expect to assist with/oversee other various assignments that will need to be completed at home such as projects, studying for tests, nightly reading/typing requirements, etc.

After School Program

CLA Lions after school program is a faith-based after school enrichment program designed to meet the academic, physical, social, and spiritual needs of children in K3 (must be fully potty trained) through 8th grade. A typical day in afterschool includes, but is not limited to, a daily devotion, recreation, homework assistance, theme based enrichment activities, and a snack.

Our after school program meets Monday through Friday 3:15 -6:00. The afterschool staff picks up the students from their classrooms during afternoon pick up time. Students in the afterschool program must be picked up by 6:00pm at the latest. Starting at 6:01, a late fee of \$10 will be charged and beginning at 6:02 an additional \$1 per minute will also be added. This fee will be charged per student.

Morning Assembly in Lower School (PK2 - 5th Grade)

Each morning begins with prayer, worship, the Pledge of Allegiance, and on alternating days the CLA Creed and Leadership Creed are recited.

Community Leadership Academy seeks to cultivate gratitude for the blessings of our nation while maintaining a clear recognition that our ultimate allegiance belongs to God. As part of our daily routine, the Pledge of Allegiance is recited to acknowledge the freedoms and responsibilities we enjoy as citizens.

We also recognize that sincere believers may hold differing convictions regarding participation in the pledge. Some families choose to participate as an expression of respect and thankfulness for God's provision through our nation's institutions. Others, guided by conscience, refrain from reciting the pledge out of a desire to reserve their full allegiance for Christ alone.

Both positions can reflect deep faith and integrity. Therefore, students are expected to show mutual respect and understanding toward one another, remembering that unity in Christ transcends all earthly differences.

"But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." Philippians 3:20

Attendance Policies

Regular attendance of the classroom days at CLA is critical due to the limited time our teachers have to share new academic concepts with the students. Therefore, we strongly encourage parents not to schedule medical, dental or any other appointments during these days. Students with excessive absences will be placed on academic probation. Students who are on academic probation risk not being asked to return for the next school year. Students should be on time each morning so they have time to prepare and organize their belongings for the academy day.

All VPK parents must verify student attendance each month on the OEL Short Forms prescribed by the Office of Early Learning.

Late Arrival/Early Pick-Up

All late arriving students must be signed in at the front desk. Also, if you must take your child out of school early, you are required to sign them out at the front desk. If they return to school following an appointment they must be signed in again at the front desk.

Students will not be released for early pick-up during the 30 minute period immediately preceding regular dismissal. During these designated times, faculty and staff are preparing students for dismissal and completing required end-of-day responsibilities and are not available to leave their assigned duties to retrieve individual students. Parents/guardians should plan student appointments and early departure outside of these designated times whenever possible. This procedure is intended to support the safety of students and staff. Exceptions may be made when an emergency or extenuating circumstance exists, though that should be rare. The school administration or designated office personnel will determine whether an exception is appropriate.

Early pick-up requests will not be processed during the following times:

- Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 2:45 - 3:15
- Wednesdays from 2:05 - 2:35
- Early Release Days from 12:00 - 12:30

Absences

Unplanned Absences

Please call the office as early as possible to make us aware of an unplanned absence. Please also coordinate as soon as possible with necessary teacher(s) to ensure that you obtain the necessary make-up work in a timely manner. Students who are absent from school may not participate in sports or activities after school.

If your child is absent because of a contagious disease, please notify the office immediately. Please be responsible to pick-up and complete any academic work missed. If a student is ill on a Friday, please utilize the hybrid lesson plans posted to Veracross to complete work before returning to school.

Students have 2 days to make up work from an unplanned one-day absence, i.e. due to sickness or a family emergency. Students have up to 5 school days to make up work that is missed due to a more than a one-day unplanned excused absence. For an absence to be excused in lower school the parent must email the teacher to let the teacher know of the absence and approved reason, i.e. sickness or family emergency. In upper school, parents must use the Veracross portal on the day of the absence to submit an "Attendance Change Request" indicating the approved reasons, i.e. sickness or family emergency. Upper school parents and/or students must still communicate directly with teachers regarding

make-up work. Once the date of the unplanned absence has passed, parents must email the Upper School Administrator to request an absence be excused.

Upon the sixth unplanned absence per class in a nine-week grading period, absences may require, at the discretion of the administrator, a doctor's note or other proof of extenuating circumstances in order to be excused.

Planned Absences

Any absence that can be anticipated should be communicated in writing in advance by submitting an "Attendance Change Request" through the Veracross parent portal. Students should be prepared to turn in work and make up tests the day upon their return from their planned absence.

For a planned absence to be excused, parents must submit a signed email in advance to all teachers and the appropriate administrator indicating the length of and reason for the planned absence. CLA does not guarantee that a pre-planned absence will be approved. As CLA transitions to a new online student information system, new procedures may be identified and shared with parents at orientation for the current school year.

Excessive Unexcused Absences

If a student has had at least five unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a calendar month or 10 unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a 90-calendar-day period the student's primary teacher shall report to the administrator or school principal that the student may be exhibiting a pattern of nonattendance. The principal or administrator shall, unless there is clear evidence that the absences are not a pattern of nonattendance, make effort to contact the parents to discuss the reasons for the absences, and identify potential remedies. If the administrator or principal is unsuccessful in contacting the parents after multiple attempts through phone, text, and/or email, the student may be withdrawn from the academy and the parents will be notified in writing. All tuition obligations will remain in place in accordance with tuition policies regarding early withdrawal. The administrator and school principal will also determine if there is any need to report truancy to any authorities.

Illness

We ask that you please refrain from sending your child to the academy campus when they are ill. We all need to be careful about spreading germs. Students attending school should be well enough to participate in regular classroom activities.

Students are NOT allowed to attend school if there are signs of any of the following:

- Runny nose with yellow or green discharge

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- Fever in the past 24 hours (100.4 and above if taken by ear or 100 and above if taken orally). Students must be fever free, without fever reducing medications for 24 hours before returning to school.
- Diarrhea
- Unknown rash
- Pink eye - students may return to school *with a doctor's note* once on antibiotic eye drops for 24 hours if bacterial; if viral, after symptoms are gone.
- Vomiting in the past 24 hours
- Chicken pox
- Influenza or other contagious condition
- COVID-19
- Hand, foot, and mouth disease - students may return to school after all blisters heal.
- Impetigo - students may return to school after being on antibiotics for 24 hours, with a doctor's note if on antibiotics.

Students MAY attend school if:

- Runny nose with clear discharge, as in allergies
- Occasional cough only, NO other symptoms
- The child has been sick but has been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours and meets other criteria above regarding fever and vomiting, etc.
- Child has been free of fever (without medication), signs, and symptoms for at least 24 hours

These guidelines have been carefully researched, and if we all respect them, we will have a healthier year.

If your child becomes ill during an academy day, you will be contacted to come pick them up. If you cannot be reached, we will notify the person listed on your child's emergency form.

It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school office of any allergies, limitations in activities, or health conditions of your child. In the case of unusual health problems, the academy must have a letter releasing the academy of responsibility.

Medication

Our policy is to have written parental permission before medication can be given to a student. Parents must fill out a Medication Authorization Form with the exact time and amount to be given, and **bring the medication to the front desk** . Medication must be in the original container and must be administered by school personnel. If your child has an injury or condition for which they are taking medication (such as Advil or Tylenol) and they will need the medicine during the day, send the medication to the academy with the Medication Authorization Form advising how (with water or food), how much, and when to administer.

Asthmatic Students: Possession of Inhalers – Florida Statute 1002.20(3)(h)

Florida law states that an asthmatic student may carry a prescribed metered dose inhaler on his/her person while in school with approval from his/her parent **and** physician. A medical form still needs to be completed stating the student can carry and self administer, before a student may carry and self-administer his/her metered dose inhaler.

Students with Epinephrine Auto-Injectors

In accordance with **Florida Statute 1002.20 (3)(i)(1)**, students may carry and self-administer epinephrine by auto-injector while in school with approval from his/her parent **and** physician. A medical form still needs to be completed stating the student can carry and self administer, before a student may carry and self-administer. In such cases, students are expected to know how to safely handle and use the auto-injector. Any misuse or abuse of the auto-injector that causes a safety risk to self or others could be cause for reconsideration of permission to carry and self-administer and/or such behaviors could be subject to disciplinary action. CLA, its employees, and volunteers shall be indemnified by the parent of a student authorized to carry an epinephrine auto-injector for any and all liability with respect to the student's use of an epinephrine auto-injector pursuant to this paragraph.

Religious/Medical Exemption from Vaccines

Required documentation for enrollment in CLA after acceptance includes (but is not limited to) a certified 680 Florida Shot Record and current School Entry Health Exam. A religious/medical exemption may be substituted for the 680 Florida Shot Record. If a communicable disease for which immunization is required becomes present on campus, students who have not been immunized against that disease may be temporarily prohibited from attending classes on campus pursuant to Florida Statute 1003.22. This applies whether or not the student has a current religious/medical exemption form on file at the school.

TardinessLower School (K2 - 5th Grade)

Tardiness occurs when a student is not in their classroom and prepared for the day by no later than 8:30am. Joining the class at morning assembly does *not* constitute being on time for class. It is important that your child be at the academy on time. Each child is allowed up to 3 tardies per quarter. **On the fourth unexcused tardy and beyond, the family is fined \$10 per child per tardy.** Doctor and dentist appointments are excused if a note from the clinician is provided. All late arriving students must be signed in at the front desk.

Upper School (6th-12th Grade)

Tardiness occurs when a student is not in their classroom and prepared for the day by no later than 8:15 am. It is important that your child be at the academy on time. Each child is allowed up to 3 tardies per quarter. **On the fourth unexcused**

tardy and beyond, the family is fined \$10 per child per tardy. Doctor and dentist appointments are excused if a note from the clinician is provided. All late arriving students must be signed in at the front desk. For student drivers, this policy may apply for tardies to their first class of the day, even if it is not first period.

Student Drop-Off and Pick-Up

Your children are to report to their classroom prior to the start of the school day. When the academy begins the doors will be locked and students must come through the reception area.

Parents may not drop off any student prior to 8:05 am as supervision is not available before this time. Students should stay in their vehicles prior to 8:05.

Students are to be picked up no later than fifteen minutes after dismissal. Dismissal is at 3:15 on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Any student still on campus after 3:30 pm (once the car line is cleared) will report to the receptionist. This will be counted as a late pick up and a fee of \$10 will be charged AND beginning at 3:31 (or once the car line is cleared), an additional fee of \$1.00 per minute will also be added. This fee will be charged per student. On Wednesdays, dismissal is at 2:35. Any student still on campus after 2:50 (once the car line is cleared) will report to the receptionist. This will be counted as a late pick up and a fee of \$10 will be charged AND beginning at 2:51 (or once the car line is cleared), an additional fee of \$1.00 per minute will also be added. This fee will be charged per student. The same 15 minute grace policy and fee penalty applies on special early release days with different release times (ex: days with dismissal at 12:30).

Students in the afterschool program must be picked up by 6:00pm at the latest. Starting at 6:01, a late fee of \$10 will be charged and beginning at 6:02 an additional \$1 per minute will also be added. This fee will be charged per student.

Parents picking up in the car line or walking up to the designated doors must have a car tag to pick up their children. Anyone without a car tag may be asked to pull out of line and enter the building to present ID. This is an important safety procedure since not all parents are known to all staff who might be working in the car line each day.

If someone other than a parent, guardian, or other authorized adult designated in Veracross by the parent is picking up your child, a note must be sent in with the child that day listing the name of the person picking up, or you must notify the office in writing no later than 30 minutes prior to dismissal (2:00 on Wednesdays and 2:45 every other school day except for special early release days). This allows the school to get the information to the appropriate staff in time for dismissal. To notify the office in writing, please send an email to:

frontdesk@clatallahassee.org. Any person picking up children must be prepared to show a photo ID, particularly if that person is not the parent.

All students in K2 - 8th grade must wait for parents in the designated car line area. Middle school students in grades 6 - 8 with a "Consent to Release at Dismissal" permission form on file in the office may be released from the car line to meet their parents in the parking lot. High school students may leave at dismissal or may wait in the designated car line area for their parents.

Any student, age 16 or older, may pick up a sibling from school at dismissal time provided that the sibling being picked up is enrolled in first grade or higher AND a signed consent form is on file with the school. This policy only applies to picking up siblings at dismissal. Students age 16 or older are not allowed to sign out younger siblings from school early unless a parent specifically gives permission in writing for a particular date and reason AND a signed consent form is on file. This should be a rare exception used for extenuating circumstances. Specific written permission must be given for each date. Preschool and kindergarten students must be picked up by an authorized adult as designated in Veracross by the parents. Students younger than 16 may not pick up younger siblings at any time.

Students will not be released for early pick-up during the 30 minute period immediately preceding regular dismissal. During these designated times, faculty and staff are preparing students for dismissal and completing required end-of-day responsibilities and are not available to leave their assigned duties to retrieve individual students. Parents/guardians should plan student appointments and early departure outside of these designated times whenever possible. This procedure is intended to support the safety of students and staff. Exceptions may be made when an emergency or extenuating circumstance exists, though that should be rare. The school administration or designated office personnel will determine whether an exception is appropriate.

Early pick-up requests will not be processed during the following times:

- Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 2:45 - 3:15
- Wednesdays from 2:05 - 2:35
- Early Release Days from 12:00 - 12:30

Lunch/Recess Policies & Procedures

Snacks

We ask that you send only healthy snacks for your children. The best type of snack is fruit, cheese, crackers or a healthy alternative. Please do not send chips, cookies, snack cakes or candy as a snack. Parents of younger students

should label students' snacks. Please follow your teacher's policy related to snacks.

Lower School Recess

Every class spends at least 30 minutes outside each day, if the weather permits.

Lower School Playground Rules

- No running to or from the playground.
- Students are never to be left alone. Visual supervision is required at all times.
- Return any play equipment borrowed, at the end of the recess time.
- Do not play with objects or items other than playground equipment.
- No rough play. This includes pushing, tackling, hitting, etc.
- If equipment falls outside of the fenced area, an adult must retrieve it.
- Keep gates closed and locked at all times on the preschool playground. On the elementary playground, the gate should be closed, but not locked while students are on the playground. The lock must be on the latch to appear locked. Please lock the gate when your class leaves the area.
- Students should not play on the playground unsupervised at any time, including before or after school.
- Regardless of age, students are not permitted to return to the building without staff supervision. They must remain on the playground with the teacher until everyone returns to the building or a staff member must accompany them back to the building.

Lunch

CLA may offer catered lunches that parents can purchase ahead of time for their students. Parents who choose to utilize this option must be responsible to place orders by the established deadlines.

On days your child brings lunch, please include a drink, napkins, and utensils if needed. CLA does not provide such items. **Soft drinks, coffee, or energy drinks are not permitted during the school day for students under the age of 15.** Refrigerators and microwaves are not available. If you desire to pack a hot lunch, please use a thermos or hot pack or an ice pack to keep items cool. If you bring lunch for your child from a restaurant or purchase a pre-packaged lunch (such as a Lunchable) please purchase a beverage other than soda.

Food Deliveries

During lunch our staff is assigned to facilitate catered lunches and manage lunch schedules with students. We are not staffed to receive and distribute food deliveries from restaurants and services such as DoorDash and GrubHub. Therefore, a service fee of \$5 per student will be charged to your account for each delivery. Also, if you have multiple students, each student's lunch must be bagged/packaged separately and clearly marked with each student's name. We will not separate orders for siblings. Parents of lower school students are welcome to bring food or a forgotten lunchbox to their child as long as they follow

the sign-in procedures as established by administration and deliver the food themselves outside of the classroom door. Parents need to meet all requirements for entering the building as established by administration. If a staff member has to deliver the food to any student for any reason a service fee of \$5 will be charged to your account for each delivery/student.

Lunch Rules for Lower School Lunch

- You may talk quietly with friends at your table once the silent lunch is finished. Silent lunch is about 10 minutes to allow students to focus on eating first.
- Have a seat and do not get up without permission.
- If you need anything, you must raise your hand and get permission.
- Do not touch your neighbor or their food.
- No trading of food.
- If you drop or spill anything, please clean it up.

We encourage you to join your child for lunch any day. (Background check and sexual abuse awareness training required.)

Gum is *not* allowed on CLA campus.

Academic Policies & Procedures

Student Binders

Every lower school student in Kindergarten-5th grade will have a Student Binder (or folder in K4). It will be our primary means of communication. This binder will transport any notices from the teacher, all completed work to be sent home, lesson plans, calendars, etc. Academy notices will be placed in the inside front pocket. All completed work from the academy will have some type of grade or check mark to show it has been recorded with the teacher. The binder is to travel back and forth from home to the academy each day. It is important that this binder **NOT** become a storage place for completed work. Please remove any completed work daily. Note: We will rely on the Veracross parent portal system for most lesson plan distribution and other communication. Parents should also regularly check email for communication from teachers and staff.

Electives

See the classroom schedule to determine what electives are taught.

Student Curriculum

The school will provide textbooks and consumables for all grades. It is expected that these books will be taken care of to the best of the student's ability. Families will be charged a fee for any books that are lost or damaged beyond normal wear. Families may still be asked to make a few small book purchases throughout the year for books such as novels. (Does not apply to VPK students not enrolled in the full day program).

Lesson Plans / At-Home Assignments

Lesson plans for the current week will be posted for students and families to access by Friday evening of the previous school week. At-home assignments are due every Monday. In Lower School, a check mark and parent initials show that the parent was involved with the at-home school work and that it was completed and corrected. If at-home work for Fridays is not turned in, those days are considered an unexcused absence. Work submitted late will be subject to grading penalties according to the late work policy.

Parents, please review lesson plans prior to at-home learning days and ask teachers any questions you may have ahead of time. A hybrid helpline will be available on Fridays for more urgent assistance. Please refer to the CLA Hybrid Program Handbook for full details on seeking assistance on at-home learning days.

Late Work

Late is defined as school work not turned in at the beginning of the class period on the day it is due. If classwork or homework is turned in one day late, it will receive a maximum of 75%. If it is 2 days late, the student will receive a maximum of 50%. If an assignment is more than 2 days late, students should check the class policy as to whether or not credit may still be earned for the assignment at all. All class policies will be approved by an administrator. Even if no credit is received the student will be responsible for knowing any material covered in that assignment for class tests. If tests or projects are late, ten percentage points will be deducted for every day the test or project is late.

Grades and Reports

Grading Scale in first grade and older

A	90 – 100	D	60 - 69
B	80 – 89	F	0 - 59
C	70 - 79		

Grades

The grading system will vary depending on the class and teacher and will be a combination of tests, quizzes/projects, and daily work/homework.

Incomplete class work will be sent home as homework. If your child is absent, please see the policy on absences related to make-up work.

All Lower School at-home learning assignments should be completed, corrected, and turned in with a check and parent initials confirming that work has been corrected. Graded tests and quizzes will be sent home regularly for your review.

Progress Reports

Progress Reports will be issued in between report cards in grades 1 - 12. We will use the same grading system as used with the report cards. These should be reviewed. If any tests or assignments are missed, a "0" will be entered into the gradebook until they are completed and/or until the student's absence is excused.

Report Cards

Report card conferences will be held on an as-needed basis. Either parents or the teacher can request a conference. If you would like a conference, please notify the teacher.

Report Cards will be issued at the end of each quarter. Parents must confirm receipt of report cards each quarter.

First grade and up will use a % grade and a letter grade. Ex: 94/A.

VPK/K4 and kindergarten will receive report cards indicating mastery of specific skills. The grading key for these report cards is as follows.

M = Mastered

I = Intermediate

N= Needs Prompting

DNK = Does Not Know

NYI = Not Yet Introduced

Certain classes such as elective classes in preschool and kindergarten or Bible in preschool and elementary school will use the following reporting system:

E = Excellent **S** = Satisfactory **N** = Needs Improvement **U** = Unsatisfactory

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences can take place anytime during the academy year. Either the parent or the teacher can request a conference to discuss the child's progress. Parents may request a conference with the teacher at any time. Only one parent needs to attend, unless both are specifically requested. Parents are required to attend all conferences or guidance meetings requested by the child's teacher, administrator, or guidance counselor.

Academic Probation in Lower School

Students must maintain a 2.5 cumulative grade point average at the time of each quarterly grading time in order to remain in good academic standing with Community Leadership Academy.

ACADEMIC PROBATION IN LOWER SCHOOL CAN OCCUR WHEN: A student earns less than a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 at the quarterly grading time, when he/she earns two D's or lower as final semester grades in their classes, or if at-home learning assignments are repeatedly unfinished or late. Once on academic probation, a student's contract at Community Leadership Academy may be in jeopardy of re-enrollment for the next academic year. This student will not be eligible to compete in CLA sports until their grades are brought up. If your student is struggling with a core subject, Math, English, Science or History, it is in their best interest to incorporate tutoring into their schedule as soon as possible.

Upper School students should refer to the Upper School Handbook for details regarding academic probation policies.

FLORIDA VIRTUAL SCHOOL (FLVS)

www.FLVS.NET

With support from the Florida Department of Education, Florida Virtual School was established in 1997 to create and make available a quality online middle and high school curriculum, including honors and Advanced Placement courses. Florida Virtual School can be a great resource for students. CLA must pre-approve and will only allow for FLVS courses if we do not offer the class on campus, or if the class is taken and completed over the summer.

***Please Note:** Parents of students who are on a state scholarship program may be invoiced by FLVS for the cost of the class. In specific situations only, CLA may be able to cover the cost for this class if:

- It was part of the academic programming planned by administration for your student during regular school hours, i.e. a 10th-grade FLVS Study Hall period, AND
- It is a core course or an elective that is required for high school graduation requirements.

Generally speaking, CLA will not be able to pay for classes that:

- are taken outside of regular school hours or the regular school schedule, i.e. an 8th class during the school year or a class taken over the summer break,
- classes that are or will be available on our campus that the student can take as a part of their regular class progression and schedule.

If you received an email requesting pre-authorization of payment and you believe the class falls in a category that CLA would cover, please forward this to

the appropriate administrator for review. You will be notified if payment has been authorized.

Dress Code

Community Leadership Academy's prescribed dress and personal appearance is meant to promote modesty, respect and cleanliness, be appropriate, and reflect a standard of excellence.

Dress Code Regulations

Students are required to wear the designated uniform for lower and middle school. Please refer to the uniform dress code policy on the CLA web page for complete details, regulations, and ordering information. Students only enrolled in the standard VPK program and not in the VPK full day program should refer to the VPK Appendix regarding dress code. High school students should refer to the Upper School Handbook and/or the CLA web page for details on the high school dress code.

Dress Down Day Regulations

For any dress down days that are not spirit days please refer to the high school dress code located on the CLA website for guidelines on what is acceptable. Students must still wear closed-toe shoes on dress down days for safety reasons. Please read the Dress Code for PK - 8th grade for more information on uniform requirements and Spirit Dress Down days. It is located at the end of this handbook and is on the CLA website for your convenience.

Dress Code Violations

If a student is not in compliance with the CLA dress code, the following consequences may be enforced. A Uniform Alert will be sent home.

- First time dress code violators will simply be given the dress code alert with no further consequence. It is expected that the issue will be resolved.
- Second offense will include a phone call, email, or text to the parent. Parents must bring appropriate clothing to school.
- After the third notice for the same violation, the student may not return to school until the problem is resolved (socks/shoes appropriate, etc.). In Upper School the third dress code alert for any reason results in a Level 1 infraction and a detention will be served. See the Upper School Handbook for the full disciplinary policy.

Behavior and Consequences

Behavior Principles

Community Leadership Academy endeavors to follow the principles listed below. Please help your children become familiar with them.

- **1st time Obedience:** Follow directions the first time they are given. Respond to authority immediately, completely, without challenge or complaint.
- **Interrupt Rule:** Quietly place your hand on the teacher's arm or stand quietly at the teacher's side until you get their attention.
- **Appeal Process:** Ability to give additional information to authority by verbally requesting an appeal. May I appeal?
- **Self Control:** Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself. This discipline influences kindness, gentleness, and many other biblical behaviors.
- **Restroom:** Use the nearest age-appropriate restroom, take the shortest path & get back ASAP.
- **Respect for Others:** Be kind, prepared, and on time.

Student Conduct

The character of Christ in His people stands firm on principle in any circumstance and is faithful, steadfast, diligent, cheerful, loving, and caring. Holy Spirit-governed character is the spiritual container for achievement in any calling. The following principles and guidelines are a reminder of the basic aspects of Christian conduct, which should govern every child and family of Community Leadership Academy. To clarify the principles, a few examples are addressed. Where no rules are mentioned, parents, teachers and the administration are left to their own conscience to consider the context of the moment to make judgments on appropriate conduct and behavior.

- **Respect for Authority:** In addition to the authority of the teachers and administration, parents need to remind their children that they must be respectful of other authorities at Community Leadership Academy. This includes but is not limited to parent partners, School Resource Officer, and visitors.
- **Respect for Parents:** The academy can easily be perceived by the children as the child's own "turf." The parent is not always familiar with the boundaries, rules, and relationships that have been established. As a result, parents should be cautious, but not afraid to guide or restrain their children while on campus. Remember, you, as the parent, are responsible for your own child's actions and behaviors.

- **Respect for Age:** The attitudes and actions towards those who are older are critical to school life and to those adults who volunteer or visit Community Leadership Academy. Children should be trained to demonstrate respect toward their older peers and adults.
- **Respect for Peers:** Children should be characterized as being others-oriented. The fruit of the Spirit, which are Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control, should all be evident in the child's behavior and attitude.
- **Respect for Property:** Respect for property includes academy property, as well as the property of others. Not only should children be trained not to damage property, but more importantly, to use initiative in caring for the academy property and the property of others. Please help us keep our academy and grounds looking nice. If you see trash on the ground, please pick it up and put it in a trashcan.
- **Respect for Nature:** The academy has been blessed with beautiful grounds for everyone to enjoy. Our children need to be reminded of the privilege and responsibility they have to care for the plants, trees and other living things so everyone may enjoy them.
- **Respect for Our Nation:** Community Leadership Academy acknowledges with gratitude that every nation exists under the sovereignty of God and endures by His mercy. We recognize the blessings we enjoy in the United States and seek to steward them faithfully for His purposes. As Scripture reminds us, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face..." (2 Chronicles 7:14), God's people are called to intercede for their nation with humility and hope.

As a school community, we seek to cultivate a spirit of reverence, gratitude, and prayer. At times, we may include opportunities to express respect for our country such as standing during the national anthem, honoring veterans, or praying for public officials. Participation in such expressions is encouraged as a gesture of respect. We desire that all members of our community demonstrate grace, humility, and mutual respect in these moments.

Discipline Policy

Upper School

Please see the Upper School Handbook for discipline policies in upper school.

Lower School - Violations and Procedures

Teachers will be watching for: first time obedience, following classroom rules, having respect for authority, others and property, being prepared, following directions, working diligently, and being courteous.

Level I Violations relating to character and attitude: poor attitude, lack of self-control or irresponsibility. These can include but are not limited to: arguing, teasing, and lack of courtesy, rowdy behavior, handling other people's possessions without permission, gossiping, sloppy or careless work, littering, and talking without permission. Level 1 offenses will be communicated to parents by the teacher. Repeated Level 1 offenses may result in a parent/teacher conference and may result in a Level 2 violation.

Level II Major Violations including but not limited to: direct disobedience - refusing to comply with a direct order from school personnel, gross disrespect, cursing, inappropriate comments or gestures, lying, stealing or physical aggression, or significant repeated Level 1 offenses.

1st Offense: Teacher/Student/Administrator conference. Parents are called to come pick the student up from the academy. CLA expects the parents to handle the discipline at home. If the offense happens late in the day or if the first offense is severe enough the student may be asked not to come to school the next day. Early Childhood K2-K5 students will be sent home on the 2nd offense. 1st offense conversation with student and parents.

If there is a 2nd offense of the same nature during the academy year, a suspension with home study and parental corrective action will be in order. A student/parent/administrative conference will occur. The duration of the suspension will be determined by administration.

Level III Major Violations warranting immediate action, including but not limited to: vandalism, immoral conduct, cheating, possession of a weapon, violence toward self or others, and repeated level 2 offenses.

Any student cheating will receive a zero for the related work.

Note: 1st graders will not be included in this system for cheating until after the mid-year holidays when they are more familiar with this offense.

First offense consequences: One-week to one-month suspension with home study and parent corrective action. Tuition payments are still expected and missed work is required to be made up. Suspended students are prohibited from participating in academy activities including field trips, performances, class parties, sports practices and competitions/events, etc. Under some circumstances, a first offense may result in expulsion from the academy at the discretion of the administration.

Second offense consequences may include expulsion from the academy. Tuition is due for the remainder of the school year.

PK2 - Kindergarten: Moral standards and behaviors are being trained during the first part of the year. If necessary, these students will have notes sent home. If the behavior is repeated during the day, or is of a violent or aggressive nature, parents may be called to pick up the child.

Student Health and Safety

Building Rules

- Children should never be left unattended by staff or parents.
- Running is not permitted in the building.
- Parents should keep children with them at all times (including during sporting events).
- No one is allowed in classrooms outside of class times unless a teacher is present.

All adults entering any CLA building during academy hours must check in at the reception area and wear a visitor badge. Please check out at the front desk as you leave. In buildings where afterschool is located, Academy hours are until 6:00 pm since the afterschool program is active until that time.

We ask that everyone be responsible to help us keep our facility neat and clean. This includes: putting away chairs, tables, taking trash to the dumpster, keeping desks in order, whiteboards clean, room vacuumed, etc.

Locked Doors

Exterior and classroom doors are always locked to maintain security and safety for our students. In case of emergency, students may exit for safety purposes.

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No one may enter the building except through the designated front desk area. For security reasons, we encourage teachers and volunteers to question any person who is not wearing a CLA nametag or is unknown to them.

Fire Drills / Emergency Evacuation

Diagrams are located in each class and each main area as to the evacuation routes to be used during an emergency. Please make yourself familiar with them.

Students will quickly and quietly walk out of the classroom in the order predetermined by the teacher. Students are to remain silent the entire time.

Students will walk to their designated safe area and form an orderly line away from the academy building.

Teachers are to have a class attendance list and call roll.

Students will wait for the all-clear signal, and then return quietly to their rooms. A teacher will announce the all-clear sign.

Lockdown Policies

Teachers and staff are trained in safety procedures in the event that a lockdown should take place. CLA partners with local law enforcement to ensure student safety. Drills are practiced with the students appropriately.

Substances Not Allowed on Campus

Alcohol, tobacco products, vaping, and/or any illegal substances are not allowed on campus at any time by any person. This includes sporting events.

Weather Emergency and Academy Closings

While we will often follow the Leon County School closure decisions, CLA will make decisions on school closures independently. Parents will be notified of any school closures via email. The school may also send these messages out via text alerts, GroupMe messages, and social media posts.

Special Events

Morning Assembly in Lower School

A morning meeting will be held every day from approximately 8:32am-8:45am. Students will participate in group worship and reciting the CLA creeds and pledge of allegiance. Students learn leadership skills as they assume some responsibility for the presentations. Morning assembly speakers are teachers and administration. It is a time of building unity in the academy as well as corporate worship of the Lord. Parents are welcome to attend the morning assembly after they have signed in at the front desk as a visitor. No eating or drinking is allowed during morning assembly.

Field Trips

Each class will schedule appropriate field trips throughout the academy year. Field trips will normally be held on regular academy days. You will be notified in advance when, where, and if any cost is involved. When you receive a permission slip, please return it to the teacher by the due date. Please note: No parent or guardian will be allowed to attend a field trip without successful completion of the required sexual abuse awareness training and a current background check on file with CLA. Parent(s) or guardian(s) attending field trip must also read, sign, and abide by policies in the CLA Chaperone Guidelines and Expectations. Siblings are not allowed to attend field trips.

Parents must abide by all field trip deadlines set by teachers or staff. At no time should a parent contact a field trip location directly for any reason, including inquiring about space availability or submitting a request to be added to a field trip. This reflects poorly on the professionalism of CLA and creates extra work for our staff and/or the staff at the venue. We ask that all parents respect this boundary.

Students will wear their red CLA polo or red CLA t-shirt on field trips as determined by the teacher. Students enrolled in standard VPK and not in the VPK full day program should wear any red shirt.

Field Trip Safety Precautions

Make sure all students have working seat belts and that they are properly buckled in at all times while in the vehicle.

CLA Lower School students should never sit in the front seat of the vehicle.

Parents/chaperones may not consume alcohol of any kind at any time during field trips, including evenings or in hotel rooms on overnight trips. Please also refrain from tobacco products, vaping, and/or any illegal substances. Refer to the Chaperone Guidelines and Expectations for full guidelines for chaperones.

Students are not permitted to have or play on any kind of phone, smart watch, or other electronic device on a field trip. Also, please do not allow students to watch movies or play on an iPad or other device in your car or in hotel rooms. This policy includes all field trips, whether short trips, long drives, or overnight trips. We want to encourage students to interact with each other and enjoy their time together without electronic devices. This policy also helps avoid exposing students to various entertainment options that some parents may allow and other parents may not. We appreciate your understanding when it comes to this policy and your help in enforcing this policy.

In the event of bad weather, you will be made aware of an optional plan or students will return to the academy.

Remember, you are setting an example for our academy while out in public. Let's show them that we are a school of excellence! Please also comply with all laws and speed limits when driving for a field trip. Failure to do so may prevent the driver from being allowed to chaperone in the future.

Holiday Traditions

We at Community Leadership Academy feel that it is the parent's decision how their family celebrates the holidays. We do not want to impose or judge any traditions that your family may have. Because we are a community of many different churches and beliefs on this topic, we have decided that our academy will focus on celebrating the holidays with the remembrance of Jesus Christ and what he has done for us. We will not talk about, celebrate, or decorate for Halloween and/or promote secular characters such as Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny. We hope you can understand our position on this issue.

Academy Parties

Designated parties may be organized periodically throughout the year with the help of the parents. Students may celebrate their birthdays by bringing cupcakes, cookies etc. for snack or lunch. Please ask your child's teacher about the best time of the day to do this.

Please assist in the clean up after academy parties.

On Valentine's Day children in 5th Grade and below are welcome to bring Valentine cards, but must remember to bring one for each child in the classroom.

In-academy distribution of personal party invitations (such as birthday party invitations) is not allowed. These must be mailed to the students' homes or sent digitally. We encourage students and parents to be sensitive to the feelings of others when planning off-campus parties that might not include all members of a class.

Parent Responsibilities

With the understanding that we are brothers and sisters in Christ, parents and guardians must treat all CLA teachers, staff members, and students with honor and respect. This includes verbal and or physical assault of any staff member on campus or at any school event. Verbal or physical assault, threats, or any form of aggression toward school personnel will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary actions, including removal from school property and legal consequences.

All parents are expected to provide age-appropriate academic support and accountability at home as students complete homework and projects and study for tests.

It is important for parents of students in the full-time hybrid program to work closely enough with the teachers to understand and be able to faithfully administer the provided lesson plans on the at-home learning days.

Parents are expected to support the spiritual input and growth of their child by praying daily with their children and regularly attending a local church. Please keep our academy and our community of families in your prayers.

Parents are required to volunteer on campus on a regular basis. We call this parent partnering. See the Parent Partner (Volunteer) Responsibilities below.

Parents are required to attend Orientation. Orientation is held the week before the academy begins.

Parents are required to attend Parent Fellowships, mandatory meetings, and any school-wide fundraising events. We will have the opportunity to share any upcoming business at the parent fellowships. We request that both parents attend Parent Fellowships and fundraising events, but it is mandatory that at least one parent attend. VPK-only parents should refer to the VPK appendix for further information.

Lower school parents are also responsible for checking their child's at-home assignments for accuracy and ensuring it has been completed properly by checking and initialing it. Upper school parents should encourage students to produce quality work and are responsible for ensuring their child's work meets the requirements for completion and are asked to check for accuracy when answer keys are provided.

Parents are responsible to participate in fundraising activities. CLA expects all families to do their part as a means to raise money for necessities in our school. CLA has annual fundraising events which require family participation. VPK parents should refer to the VPK appendix for further information on this topic.

Being a part of Community Leadership Academy will take a lot of hard work, dedication and willingness to really sharpen up your use of time, but the rewards will be eternal.

Parent Partner (Volunteer) Responsibilities

Community Leadership Academy is set up in such a way that families will be asked to volunteer at the campus to assist where needed.

Every family at CLA, regardless of student(s) age(s)/grade(s), is required to volunteer 20 hours over the course of the school year following the policies below.

- At least 10 hours must be complete and reported by December 20 or a fee of \$50 per missing volunteer hour will be billed to your account in January.
- The remaining 10 hours must be complete and reported by April 20, or a fee of \$50 per missing volunteer hour will be billed to your account in May.
- Hours served over the summer can count toward the following school year.
- Any parent volunteer hours completed with the sports program that are in excess of the number of hours required for team participation may be applied to parent partner hour requirements listed above.
- Serving as a room parent satisfies all required parent partner hours for the year.
- Families with students enrolled in the standard VPK program who are not participating in any full day or Thursday/Friday programs and whose families have no other students at CLA should refer to the VPK appendix for further information on parent volunteer requirements.

A student's mother, father, or other adult family member can fulfill the volunteer hour requirement, with the parent's written permission. Anyone fulfilling this requirement must successfully complete the required sexual abuse awareness training and have a current background screening on file with CLA at their expense. It is the parents' responsibility to make the teacher aware if you will not be available on a day that you have previously signed up for. **Chaperoning field trips can account for up to 2 parent partner hours per field trip, unless otherwise specifically stated.** The intent of the parent partner policy, particularly in lower school, is to have parents volunteer on campus. CLA cannot guarantee that any family will be able to fulfill volunteer hours with jobs that can be taken home. Standard VPK parents should refer to the VPK appendix for further information on parent volunteer requirements.

Parent partner hours MUST be completed and reported to the front desk at frontdesk@clatallahassee.org by the December 20 and April 20 due dates or charges will be applied to the parent account. Hours reported after the due date will not reverse charges applied to the account.

Please arrange for siblings or other children in your care to be cared for off campus on your partnering days.

Parents should dress modestly and appropriately on parent partner days. Please see the high school dress code on our CLA website for recommended guidelines.

On the days you partner, please sign in and wait to be issued a visitor pass at the reception area about **15 minutes before** time to begin to allow time to be checked in at the front desk and arrive at the classroom on time. The classroom teacher will set the schedule for the parent partner.

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While on campus, we ask that you assist the teacher in maintaining order in the classroom, lunchroom, elective classes and recess along with any other assistance the teacher may need. However, please allow a staff member to handle any discipline issues.

Volunteering on the CLA campus or at CLA events is both a responsibility and a privilege. CLA reserves the right to suspend parent partner privileges at any time to any parent for any reason. In such situations the administration may also choose to waive any requirements for parent partner hours.

Other Volunteer Needs at CLA

Your participation is requested to assist in meeting needs around the school. We ask that each parent serve Community Leadership Academy in an area where you feel you can be most effective. Needs may change year to year. Committee leaders will contact you, as your services are needed.

Fundraising: We are looking for parents who are willing to call or visit local vendors for donations. We will need additional parents to help plan and prepare fundraising projects for the year.

Scholarships: We would like to offer programs to those who need assistance, but we can't help until we have something to offer. Do you know of anyone who would like to contribute to the Community Leadership Academy scholarship fund?

Financial Aid/Tuition Exchange: CLA offers financial assistance on a case-by-case basis. Financial aid information may be found on the website. Families are encouraged to apply for available state scholarships prior to requesting direct financial aid from the school.

Miscellaneous

Photographs and Videos

With the signature of this handbook parents agree to allow their child to appear in photographs and videos that may be used for marketing purposes. Parents who wish to revoke this particular permission must notify the registrar in writing.

Visitors

Any classroom visits or conferences should be pre-arranged so that teachers are prepared and not interrupted or distracted from their work with the students. Please do not visit teachers, especially in the mornings, unless prior arrangements have been made. This is a critical time for a teacher. Much of the daily preparation goes on during this time.

No parent is to enter any CLA building without checking in at the front desk. All visitors, parents, and volunteers must check in at the reception area to receive a visitor's badge which is to be worn while on campus. Please remember to check out at the reception desk when you leave. For security reasons, we have encouraged teachers and staff to question any person or visitor who is unknown to them, particularly if they are not wearing the appropriate visitor badge. Parents who have completed the sexual abuse awareness training and have a current background check on file are welcome to visit their child's classroom but must schedule the visit ahead of time with the teacher.

Please do not bring pets and animals inside the building except at the request of a teacher for an educational lesson. You will be asked to leave the building if you bring an unauthorized animal.

After Academy Hours

If you are on campus after classes are finished, you must keep your children with you or arrange for childcare. (You may consider hiring an older student to assist you.) **Children are never allowed in a classroom without a teacher present and should not be on the playground, in the gym, or in any area on the CLA campus unattended by an adult.**

Articles Prohibited at the Academy

Lower and Middle School students are not allowed to have cell phones or other personal devices on academy grounds before, during, or after school unless approved as a part of a special accommodation in an official Personal Learning Plan. This includes Apple and Android watches, Gizmos, Fitbits, etc. Watches that allow students to see and send text messages are distracting throughout the school day. Additionally, many of these watches have calculators that are not allowed in class or on tests. To call home, students should go to the reception area for assistance. High school students will be required to stow phones during the school day and should refer to the Upper School Handbook for guidelines regarding cell phone usage. Students should also not bring trading cards, electronic devices/games, ear buds, magazines, or gum, etc. These are not allowed on campus during *or after* the academy hours. Personal property should be kept to a minimum. If the academy suspects the student possesses an unapproved item, a search may be conducted without the student's or the parent's permission. Registration of the child constitutes parental consent to such searches. Items that may be searched include backpacks, automobiles, lockers, purses, etc.

Authority in the Class

We believe that through much prayer, God has put the exact teachers in place that are needed for this time and season. Your child has been blessed to sit under one of those teachers. When you drop off your children at CLA you are placing them under the authority of one of those teachers while on campus.

The teachers determine the class lessons and at-home lesson plans for your children, and we ask that you commit yourself to set an example by being positive and compliant in attitude about what is set before you.

If you have a legitimate classroom concern, we ask that you **first speak to the teacher**. If you have already spoken to the teacher and there is still a legitimate problem that the teacher does not deal with, then you may approach the appropriate administrator about it.

Lost Items

Please label your child's clothing, books, backpacks, and lunch boxes. The academy cannot be responsible for lost or misplaced items. Please place or look for any lost items in the lost and found areas by the welcome desk or in the gym. Unclaimed items will periodically be donated to a worthy cause. We will notify the academy community before we do this. Any books that are lost or damaged must be replaced as soon as possible; your account will be charged for the replacement.

Personal Items

Backpacks, lunch boxes, and other personal items may be any color and have a pattern or geometric design that is **NOT CHARACTER BRANDED** (including Disney, Marvel, Harry Potter, Pokemon, etc) other than a sports logo or design. Patterns which are acceptable include floral, smiley faces, crosses, plaid, generic animals, etc

Parental Involvement

Our children are experiencing a wonderful time in their lives. They are growing and learning and making friends they will remember forever. As an administration, we prayerfully consider the families that join our academy. However, the academy can never replace parental supervision. Please get to know your children's friends and their families. Visit with one another off campus and become friends, getting to know the families that live in your area or are in class with your children. Within the Christian community, whether at home, the academy, or church, family standards vary from household to household. Please communicate well with each other in regards to your family standards before allowing your child in another home.

K3/VPK Potty Trained Policy

Children enrolled in PK3 and PK4/VPK at CLA must be potty trained before attending preschool. For K3 students, children must be wearing underwear with very few accidents. A child having accidents daily would not be considered potty trained. Please note that wearing pull-ups isn't considered being potty trained. However, K3 students are allowed to wear pull-ups during nap time.

We do understand that even potty-trained children will occasionally have toileting accidents. By definition, "accidents" are unusual incidents and should happen

infrequently. In these instances, the teachers will help K3 students to change their clothes, encouraging independence as much as possible. However, K4/VPK students will need to be able to change clothing on their own.

A potty - trained child is a child who can do the following:

1. Communicate to the teachers that he/she needs to go to the restroom before it becomes an emergency.
2. Alert him/herself to stop what he/she is doing, to go and use the bathroom.
3. Pull down his/her clothes and get them back up without assistance.
4. Wipe him/herself after using the toilet. (Teachers may assist 3 year-olds.)
5. Get on/off the toilet by him/herself.
6. Wash and dry hands.
7. Postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are away from the classroom.

Teachers in our K3 class will ask your child throughout the day and always before nap time if they need to use the bathroom. A teacher will assist children as needed, but children should be able to complete toileting activities independently. It is not uncommon for a child who is fully toilet trained to have a setback when he/she is in a new environment. Our Early Childhood Staff are aware of this. Please send a complete change of clothes appropriate for the season. These will be left at school in case of accidents and returned at the end of the school year. Parents will be notified if a child has a toileting accident.

If your student is not completely potty trained by the start of the school year, they will need to wait to enroll until at such time they are ready to use the bathroom independently. If your child has begun school and shows signs of not being potty trained he/she will need to stay home/withdraw until they are successful in that area.

Community Leadership Academy

Handbook Agreement 2026-2027

We have **read, understand** and **agree to abide by** the Family Handbook. We will do everything in our power to help our family follow the rules and policies set forth in this handbook. We understand if we have an upper school student enrolled at CLA, it is also our responsibility to familiarize ourselves with and abide by the additional upper school policies found in CLA's Upper School Handbook.

Father's Name Printed: _____

Father's Signature: _____ date: _____

Mother's Name Printed: _____

Mother's Signature: _____ date: _____

Community Leadership Academy Family Handbook

VPK Appendix 2026-2027

VPK Hours

VPK hours are Monday - Wednesday, from 8:30 - 1:45. Additional K4 full day and full week program options are also available for additional tuition and fees.

Admissions

The VPK program at Community Leadership Academy is open to all families.

Priority for admission to the K4/VPK class will be given to students in the following order:

- students currently enrolled at CLA
- siblings of students currently enrolled at CLA
- students who are enrolling in the VPK with full day program

Acceptance into the VPK program does not guarantee acceptance into other CLA programs, including kindergarten. Families must complete the new family application process to enroll in kindergarten if they have participated in standard VPK or do not have other siblings already enrolled in the program.

Following the VPK program, priority for admission into the kindergarten program at CLA will be given to students in the following order:

- students currently enrolled in the VPK with full day program
- students currently enrolled in the VPK program who are siblings of students currently enrolled at CLA
- students currently enrolled in the standard VPK program (without full day)
- siblings of current CLA students who were not enrolled in VPK at CLA

VPK Voucher

All students enrolled in the VPK program, whether or not they attend full day or full week programs, must have a VPK voucher from the Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend on file with CLA. Vouchers are due to the admissions office by July 1st. Students may not attend VPK at CLA without a voucher on file and will not be allowed to attend until one is received.

Potty Trained Policy

Children enrolled in PK4/VPK at CLA must be fully potty trained before attending VPK. Children must be wearing underwear with very few accidents. A child having accidents daily would not be considered potty trained. Please note that wearing pull-ups isn't considered being potty trained.

We do understand that even potty - trained children will occasionally have toileting accidents. By definition, "accidents" are unusual incidents and should happen infrequently. Our K4/VPK students will need to be able to change clothing on their own.

A potty - trained child is a child who can do the following:

1. Communicate to the teachers that he/she needs to go to the restroom before it becomes an emergency.
2. Alert him/herself to stop what he/she is doing, to go and use the bathroom.
3. Pull down his/her clothes and get them back up without assistance.
4. Wipe him/herself after using the toilet.
5. Get on/off the toilet by him/herself.
6. Wash and dry hands.
7. Postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are away from the classroom.

It is not uncommon for a child who is fully toilet trained to have a setback when he/she is in a new environment. Our Early Childhood Staff are aware of this. Please send a complete change of clothes appropriate for the season. These will be left at school in case of accidents and returned at the end of the school year. Parents will be notified if a child has a toileting accident.

If your VPK student has a bowel accident, a parent will be called to come to the school to help their child change their soiled clothing.

If your student is not completely potty trained by the start of the school year, they will need to wait to enroll until at such time they are ready to use the bathroom independently. If your child has begun school and shows signs of not being potty trained he/she will need to stay home/withdraw until they are successful in that area.

Attendance

All VPK parents must verify student attendance each month on the forms prescribed by the Office of Early Learning. Our VPK program hours are from 8:30am - 1:45pm Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Parents will receive a CLA calendar that will include all K4/VPK days.

Regular attendance of the classroom days at CLA is critical, due to the limited time our teachers have to share new academic concepts with the students. Therefore, we strongly encourage parents not to schedule medical, dental or any other appointments during these days. Attendance during the scheduled instructional days is of utmost importance to remain in the VPK program. Not only is the school funding linked to attendance, it is also imperative for the students' success upon entrance into kindergarten. If a VPK student accumulates too many absences, 20% or more of the total VPK hours, which is equivalent to 36 VPK days, CLA will not be reimbursed by the state. Therefore, CLA has the right to dismiss a student from the VPK program after the 25th VPK absence, excused or unexcused. Please call the school when you know your child will be absent. Upon return, provide written documentation of the absence. Documentation should be given to our front office staff.

Students should be on time each morning so they have time to prepare and organize their belongings for the academy day. The instructional day begins at 8:30 and all children are expected to be in place and ready to start the day by 8:30. Arrivals after 8:30 are disruptive to the class in progress and difficult for the arriving student as well. Excessive late arrivals can result in termination from the VPK program.

Dismissal is at 1:45 for any students not staying for the full day program. Please be on time. Any student still on campus after 2:00 pm will report to the receptionist. This will be counted as a late pick up and a fee of \$10 will be charged AND beginning at 2:01, an additional fee of \$1.00 per minute will also be added. This fee will be charged per student.

A late arrival (tardy) occurs when a student is not in their classroom and prepared for the day by no later than 8:30am. Joining the class at morning assembly does not constitute being on time for class. Each child is allowed up to 3 unexcused tardies per quarter. **On the fourth unexcused tardy and beyond, the family is fined \$15 per child per tardy (late arrival).** It is important that your child be at the academy on time. Doctor and dentist appointments are excused if a note from the clinician is provided.

VPK and VPK full day students have to be signed in and out each day by the person dropping off and picking up the student. In preschool at CLA, students are signed in through Brightwheel. Each family member who has permission to pick up the student will need to download the app so that they can scan a QR code and enter a person specific code at both drop off and pick up. This pin code will be sent via an email and is specific for the person picking up and dropping off, this number should not be shared with others

Homework

All VPK students will have at-home learning assigned each Thursday and Friday that will be due on Monday. Please review the “Lesson Plans/At-Home Learning” section of the family handbook for further details. Parents are also responsible for checking their child’s at home learning assignments and ensuring it has been completed properly by checking and initialing it.

Parent Responsibilities

Please review the family handbook for a complete list of parent responsibilities. The following policies apply specifically to VPK parents.

When a student in the VPK program is absent it is the parents’ responsibility to call/text and email the teacher letting them know the reason for the absence.

All VPK parents must verify student attendance each month on the OEL Short Form prescribed by the Office of Early Learning.

Parents are also responsible for checking their child’s at home learning assignments and ensuring it has been completed properly by checking and initialing it.

Parents of students enrolled in standard VPK hours only (and not in the full day program) are allowed and encouraged, but not required to volunteer in the classroom for their VPK student. If you wish to volunteer, visit the classroom, eat in the lunchroom, or attend a field trip, you must successfully complete the required sexual abuse awareness training and have a background screening report on file as outlined in the Background Check section of this handbook. Parents of students enrolled in the VPK with a full day and/or

Thursday/Friday program are required to fulfill parent partner responsibilities as outlined in this Family Handbook.

We require that parents attend all Parent Fellowships, and fundraising events.

For standard VPK parents, we ask that you participate in fundraising activities to the best of your ability. Our desire is for all families to do their part in order to raise money for our school, but there will be no fundraising requirements for standard VPK families.

Dress Code

All students enrolled in the VPK full day program are required to abide by the full uniform dress code for lower school students at CLA. Students only enrolled in VPK hours (M-W, 8:30 - 1:45) are required to abide by the full CLA dress code with one exception, they may wear a red polo with or without the logo. Red polos with the logo must be purchased from the approved vendors, Land's End or Tommy Hilffiger. For VPK only students choosing to wear red polos without the logo, the red polos must be purchased at either The Children's Place, Old Navy, or Target so that the reds match our CLA red. Please note this exception is only for students enrolled in VPK hours only (M-W, 8:30 - 1:45). Please see the full CLA Dress Code for PK2 - 8th grade for full details.

Statement of Faith

By signing this VPK appendix, parents are acknowledging that they have read the CLA Statement of Faith provided in the Family Handbook and understand that CLA teaches students according to this statement of faith.

We have **read, understand** and **agree to abide by** the Family Handbook VPK Appendix. We will do everything in our power to help our family follow the rules and policies set forth in this handbook appendix.

Father's Name Printed: _____

Father's Signature:_____ date:_____

Mother's Name Printed: _____

Mother's Signature:_____ date: _____

Please print the **entire VPK appendix** and return this signed original to the academy office prior to the first day of the academy school year.

Community Leadership Academy

Dress Code 2026-2027

Grades PK2-8th

Boys and Girls K2,K3, K4/VPKF, Lower & Middle School Uniform Summary

- Community Leadership Academy's prescribed dress and personal appearance is meant to promote modesty, respect, and cleanliness; be appropriate; and reflect a standard of excellence.
- Students are required to wear the designated uniform for K2, K3, K4/VPKF, Lower and Middle School. Tops must be purchased at the approved sources only. Students may choose from khaki or navy uniform line bottoms paired with red or white tops with CLA logo. CLA defines uniform line as items that maintain traditional colors, cuts and lengths considered appropriate for many school dress codes.
 - At CLA, uniform-line does not include stretchy material, drawstrings, skinny pants, cargo pockets, and other non-traditional elements.
- In the 2024-2025 school year, CLA changed the logo appearing on the uniform tops. Beginning in the 2025-2026 school year, only shirts with the new crest logo are allowed.

Approved Sources:

- Lands End School (www.landsend.com/uniforms). The school code is 900150103.
- Tommy Hilfiger (www.globalschoolwear.com). The school code is COMM01.

Girls

Bottoms: Please see Uniform Regulations for specific guidelines. Girls can choose from the following uniform line bottoms in khaki or navy.

- Knee-Length Skort (Knee-Length is defined as no shorter than 3" above the knee)
- Knee-Length Skirt (Knee-Length is defined as no shorter than 3" above the knee). Privacy shorts in white or navy are required under skirts in K2 - 3rd grade.
- Pants
- Jumper (Grades K2-5th only and must be purchased at approved sources only. Khaki and Navy jumpers must have a CLA logo.) The jumpers will need to be no shorter than 3" above the knee and girls will be required to wear privacy shorts underneath.
- Lands End red/classic navy plaid is available in box pleat skirt or jumper. (Jumper is for Grades K2-5th Only).
- Capri Pants

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- Knee-Length Shorts (Knee-Length is defined as no shorter than 3" above the knee)
- Knit Dress is approved in red only from approved sources. Red Knit Dress is for Grades K2-5th only and must have a CLA logo. The dresses will need to be no shorter than 3" above the knee and girls will be required to wear privacy shorts underneath.

Tops: Please see Uniform Regulations for specific guidelines. Tops must be purchased from approved sources.

- Girls can choose from uniform tops in the colors of red and white from approved sources only.
- All tops must have a CLA logo.
- Please remember to buy a red CLA logo polo top for field trips.
- No t-shirts allowed for PK2 - 8th grade uniforms. CLA T-shirts are only allowed on Spirit Fridays as outlined below or on field trips, if designated by the teacher.

Boys

Bottoms: Please see Uniform Regulations for specific guidelines. Boys can choose from the following uniform line bottoms (see definition above) in khaki or navy.

- Knee-Length Shorts (Knee-Length is defined as no shorter than 3" above the knee)
- Pants

Tops: Please see Uniform Regulations for specific guidelines. Tops must be purchased from approved sources.

- Boys can choose from uniform tops in the colors of red and white from approved sources only.
- All tops must have a CLA logo.
- Please remember to buy a red CLA logo polo top for field trips.
- No t-shirts allowed for PK2 - 8th grade uniforms. CLA T-shirts are only allowed on Spirit Fridays as outlined below or on field trips, if designated by the teacher.

Uniform Regulations

Teachers will enforce the CLA dress code at all times during on campus school days. The teachers and the administration will address dress code violations. Interpretations of the policy are at the discretion of the administration.

Bottoms:

- Shorts, pants, and skirts are to be uniform line bottoms only (see definition above and pictures below) and must be worn on the waist.
- Students may choose from khaki or navy uniform line bottoms (see definition above and pictures below) that are not shorter than 3" above the knee.
- Bottoms with belt loops are to be worn with a belt (solid color in brown, black, navy or tan). PK2 & 3, K4 and K5 are exempt from belts.

- No “skinny” uniform line bottoms will be allowed.
- No “cargo” uniform line bottoms will be allowed
- No drawstring waists, tie waists, elastic ankles, or similar non-traditional uniform elements.
- In K2-3rd Grade, privacy shorts, or leggings (white or navy) must be worn under skirts, knit dresses, and jumpers.



Tops:

- Only a CLA logo sweatshirt or sweater or jacket with the logo may be worn over the uniform in the classroom.
- Uniform tops are to be in approved colors (red and white), be from approved sources and have the CLA logo.
- Jumpers must be from approved sources and have the CLA logo or be the approved plaid.
- Only a solid color long sleeve shirt may be worn under the uniform shirt. Approved colors for both girls and boys are: white or navy blue.
- Shirts must be tucked in, with the exception of K2/K3 and K4. If a student is wearing pants, shorts, etc. with belt loops, a belt (solid color in brown, black, navy or tan) is required. PK2 & 3, K4 and K5 are exempt from belts.
- Students may not wear oversized uniform shirts that hang well below the waistline, nor should students wear shirts that are too short or too tight.
- Outerwear, worn indoors, must have the CLA logo on it. The only non-approved CLA clothing allowed is that for inclement weather. These articles must be removed and properly stored when inside the buildings.
- Sweatshirts and coats may not be tied around the waist when not being worn.

Shoes:

- Only black, brown, navy, red, white, tan, gray, or saddle oxford. Athletic type shoes are fine. The majority of the shoe must be in above colors. Any accent color is allowed.
- No sandals, clogs (Crocs) or open toe shoes.
- No more than a 1" heel.
- No shoes with wheels or lights.
- Boots may be worn only with pants.
- Athletic shoes must be worn for PE.

Socks:

- Should be worn daily.
- No-Show socks are not permitted.
- Must be a matched pair in any of the solid colors approved for shoes.
- White or navy leggings/tights may be worn under jumpers and skorts.

PE:

- Lower School should wear uniform line shorts or pants with CLA logo uniform polo shirts on PE days.
- No t-shirts for lower school even on PE days. (no skirts, skorts, dresses, or jumpers)
- Athletic shoes and socks must be worn for PE.
- Upper school students (grades 6 - 12) are required to dress out for PE. Beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, all upper school students must wear the official PE uniform, which consists of the following:
 - Red CLA PE shirt
 - Black CLA PE shorts (5" inseam for girls and 7" inseam for boys)
 - Athletic shoes and socks

The CLA PE uniform is mandatory and non-negotiable for all Upper School PE classes. Only the official CLA approved uniform shirt and shorts may be worn during PE and may be purchased through the CLA PE Department.

Cold-weather attire for PE is allowed only when approved by the PE Department and must consist of school-issued black joggers and/or a CLA hoodie. Personal hoodies, sweatpants, or non-CLA outerwear may not be worn during PE.

Field Trips:

- Dress for field trips will be a red polo top with CLA logo and approved uniform bottom. Often red CLA t-shirts are also allowed on field trips, if specified by the teacher.

Hair:

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- Hair should be worn in an appropriate, tasteful, non-distracting style.
- No spiked hair.
- No unnatural or bleached hair colors.
- No facial hair.
- Sideburns not to extend below the bottom of the ear.

Ears & Jewelry:

- Boys may not wear earrings while representing the school in any capacity.
- Girls may wear two earrings in each lobe of ear.
- Body piercing and tattoos are not permitted.
- Unobtrusive necklaces, rings, and watches may be worn.
- No choker necklaces.

Hats:

- Not to be worn inside the building. This includes bandanas, hoods, and other head coverings.

Make-Up:

- Clear lip-gloss is OK. No other make-up is allowed. Middle School and up may wear make-up in moderation. Please monitor this at home, before coming to school.

Nail Polish:

- Nail polish and decorations are allowed in moderation.

Bathing Suit:

- When attending a school sponsored water activity all bathing suits for girls must be one-piece, full-length tankini or a dark colored t-shirt must be worn over the suit.

Dress Code Violations

If a student is not in compliance with the CLA dress code, the following consequences may be enforced:

- A Uniform Alert will be sent home. First time dress code violators will be given mercy.
- The second offense will include a phone call to the parent. Parents must bring appropriate clothing to school. An unexcused absence for that class period will be issued to the student.
- After the third notice for the same violation, the student may not return to school until the problem is resolved (socks/shoes appropriate, etc.). In Upper School the third dress code alert for any reason results in a Level 1 infraction and a detention will be served. See the Upper School Handbook for the full disciplinary policy.

Spirit Fridays!

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Every Friday students are allowed to dress down in an official CLA t-shirt and bottoms that meet the criteria below. Homemade t-shirts are not allowed. Please understand that this criteria for bottoms is only for Spirit Fridays. For all other school days, students in preschool through 8th grade must be dressed according to the CLA Dress Code for uniforms.

On spirit dress down days all bottoms must meet the following criteria.

- All bottoms must be in blue or black jeans or uniform bottoms.
- All pants must be appropriately secured or fitted at the waist. No rips revealing skin higher than 3 inches above the knee. Tight fitting pants or jeans are only allowed if the accompanying top is at least fingertip length.
- No leggings or pajama pants or athletic shorts.
- All shorts must be knee-length (no shorter than 3" above the knee), securely fastened at the waist. No pajama bottoms.
- Girls may wear knee-length skirts or dresses (no shorter than 3" above the knee). Any slits must also be no shorter than 3" above the knee.
- Athletic shoes, dress shoes, and boots are allowed. No flip flops or strapless sandals. No crocs/clogs.

Personal Items

Lunch boxes, book bags, etc. should be in good taste and free of character brands, i.e. Disney, Pokemon, Harry Potter, Pixar, etc. This list is just to provide examples of brands and is not exhaustive.

We have read and agree to this CLA Dress Code Policy for PK2 - 8th grade students.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Community Leadership Academy

Parent Resources

How to Make the Most of Your Academy Year

1. Pray daily for your teachers, the students, and the academy staff.
Pray that they will have wisdom.

Colossians 1:9 ...pray that you may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom...

Pray for every need to be met.

II Corinthians 9:8 And God is able to make all grace come to you in abundance, so that you may...be self-sufficient...and furnished in abundance for every good work....

2. Encourage others – words of encouragement from you and/or your child to others are a great blessing. Send notes or call: your teachers, other parents, students (yours and others) and school staff

I Thessalonians 5:11...encourage one another and edify – strengthen and build up – one another...

3. Get involved – Your children benefit immensely when you (Mom **or** Dad) help out in the classroom. Get involved in the Parent Partner program, be a room parent, or volunteer to help with class parties or field trips. Find a need and fill it. Many hands make light work!

4. Follow through – If you are reading this it is because you have committed yourself and your family to Community Leadership Academy. You completed all the paperwork, paid the fees, and met for an interview. As the academy year progresses:

- a. Have your children in the academy every day
- b. Be on time for class
- c. Turn in your at-home work every Monday (if participating in the hybrid program)
- d. Make timely tuition payments

Proverbs 28:20 A faithful man will abound with blessings...

5. Talk about it! – Speak positive words over the academy and tell others about it.

Proverbs 16:24 Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the bones.

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Character Training

Help! Why do our children behave so well in class for their teacher, but when it comes to the at-home learning days they whine, complain or make excuses? Instead of becoming frustrated at having to stop school work to deal with character issues, remember one of the main reasons we are at CLA is to develop godly character in our children! Use these instances to train and teach your children (Deut. 6:6&7). When your children moan about their schoolwork, teach them what the Bible says about complaining and arguing. We can also use at-home learning days to focus on character qualities such as patience, gentleness, and thankfulness. It takes much patience on our part as a parent to be willing to put aside the academic goals of the moment in order to discipline, but we must if we are going to reach the goal of Christ Jesus as the center of our child's heart. Hebrews teaches us the value of this in chapter 12 verse 11. We are responsible to God for teaching our children in His ways and will stand before Him one day to account for our part in their lives. Learn to view at-home learning as training opportunities!

Here are some suggestions for making your at-home learning days as peaceful as possible:

Start each at-home learning day with a family devotional time. Reading the Bible, singing a praise song, and praying together can help start the day out on the right foot for everyone.

Take time to read about great men and women of the faith, missionary stories, or a Christian classic such as Little Pilgrim's Progress.

Have individual quiet times in the morning. Teach your children the importance of spending time with God. (Even little ones can look at a Bible story book in their room for a few minutes.)

Your attitude is an example for your children! Are you demonstrating peace and dependence on God even when things aren't going smoothly?

Do not become discouraged if your children don't seem to overcome their character challenges right away. Remember, "*Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up.*" *Ephesians 6:9* It is ok to stop and re-group later that day.

At CLA, our children's character is our foundation. It is easy to start out with this in mind, however, after a few months we can tend to shift our focus to academics. Although academic excellence is important, it will be a natural result as our children learn to be self-disciplined and diligent in their work. Your primary job as a parent is not to turn out a straight A student, but a well-grounded, mature leader for the kingdom of God!

Deuteronomy 6:6&7 These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Hebrews 12:11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

Helpful Reading for Parents

This list of books is not exhaustive, nor is it required reading. These books have helped others in their education and parenting efforts. They are listed in no particular order.

A Thomas Jefferson Education: Teaching a Generation of Leaders for the Twenty-First Century, by Oliver Van DeMille. “Is the education our children are receiving on par with their potential?” Dr. DeMille’s first book, *A Thomas Jefferson Education*, not only dares to ask this question (on page 7), but is bold enough to offer an alternative solution to the failure of 20th Century education. That solution is to go back to the methods espoused when America was still an educational success.

The Way They Learn, by Cynthia Tobias. This book is an enlightening approach to the uniqueness of children. We all know that our kids are different, but this book explains it in detail and offers many ways to use those differences to everyone's advantage.

What Your Child Needs To Know When, by Robin Scarlatta. This book is an evaluation checklist for grades K-8. Concepts are listed for each subject, by grade level, and make a checklist easy for multiple children. The author dedicates the first half of the book to questions about testing, testing options, and home schooling in general.

Gaining Confidence to Teach, by Debbie Strayer. Debbie is well known for her seminars and magazine columns on this topic. In this book, Debbie speaks from the heart in forty-two brief confidence builders that deal with such topics as relationships at home, facing changes, and enduring trials.

Shepherding Your Child's Heart, by Ted Tripp

How to Homeschool Your Child, by Gail Graham

The Educated Child, by William J. Bennett

The Well-Trained Mind, by Jessie Wise

Making Children Mind without Losing Yours, by Dr. Kevin Leman

Age of Opportunity, by Paul David Tripp

Toddler Ideas for Hybrid Days

Many homeschool families have toddlers who sometimes present a challenge to school time. Here are a few tips that can help the family at this point:

Keep in mind the toddler is also learning, perhaps at a different level, but still learning. He is probably trying to fit in with the family or seeking attention from Mom and the siblings.

Spend 15-20 minutes of focused attention on the toddler BEFORE the school day begins. Physical contact, hugs and kisses, as well as verbal contact are important. Usually the toddler will decide he has had his fill and will be quite content to explore on his own while you teach.

Coloring books and crayons are considered school stuff to toddlers. He can color or draw while you are teaching. If you let him use them all the time, they will lose their appeal.

Water play is messy but easily cleaned up. Put a giant plastic bowl or a roaster pan in the middle of the kitchen floor. Put in an inch or two of water. Put a few measuring cups in the bowl, as well as a paper towel or two on the side. This will often keep a toddler happy for quite some time. Later a quick mop up will leave you with a clean floor.

Magnetic refrigerator shapes, large enough so they can't be swallowed, could be used only during school time to keep little ones entertained.

Cover a large piece of cardboard with felt. Cut out shapes such as trees, circles, squares, stars, houses, fruit, people, etc. Allow the toddler to use these during school time only.

Conduct oral lessons outside so you can watch the toddler play outside while you are teaching.

Some days will require toddler attention. Give your older child a project to do: independent research, teach the toddlers something new, etc. Be flexible.

Talk to other mothers of toddlers for their ideas.

Helpful Websites

Florida Department of Education: www.fldoe.org

Office of School Choice: <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/>

Step Up for Students Scholarship Programs: www.sufs.org

Right Now Media: www.rightnowmedia.org

Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend - for VPK information and vouchers
[VPK - Early Learning Coalition of the Big Bend \(elcbigbend.org\)](http://elcbigbend.org)

Bright Futures Scholarship: <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/ssfad/bf/>

Free Homeschool Resources: <https://www.thehomeschoolmom.com>

Focus On The Family: <http://www.focusonthefamily.com>