

New Leaf PREP ACADEMY

Parent Handbook

For students in Junior Kindergarten, Elementary, and Middle School Grades.

Introduction

Welcome to New Leaf Prep Academy! We look forward to guiding your child's education and growth in a healthy self-directed environment.

Mission

New Leaf Prep Academy provides a safe and self-directed environment for your child to learn and grow to their full potential through enriching experiences! Our Academy incorporates nature-inspired, self-directed learning environments, Montessori inspired curriculum taught by qualified and passionate teachers, healthy and organic food, and an eco-friendly toxic-free environment. Every aspect of New Leaf Prep Academy was meticulously planned with your child's best interests in mind! Our professional teachers and prepared classroom environments cater to each child's individual needs and help them grow and expand mentally, emotionally, and socially at their own pace.

Goals & Objectives

- To foster and inspire a love of learning through the use of hands-on Montessori inspired teaching methods and enriching experiences
- To help students develop their self-confidence through the existence of a positive nurturing environment that encourages persistence
- To promote the use of manners and enhance student's values through hands-on experiences
- To develop a strong academic foundation
- To develop and refine life skills that will establish independence
- To empower self-discipline
- To create a clear set of classroom expectations to encourage responsible safe behaviors and freedom within limits

Admission Process

Children will be enrolled into New Leaf Prep Academy through our online admission process. Currently enrolled students and students with enrolled siblings will have priority on openings in addition to children of board members and staff.

Non-Discrimination Statement

It is the policy of New Leaf Prep Academy not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, students, families, and volunteers.

Admission

Junior Kindergarten

Our Junior Kindergarten Program is for students who are 3 years old by September 1st and fully potty trained. Previous Montessori experience is preferred. This is a mixed age classroom.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is for students who are 5 years old by September 1st. Previous Montessori experience is preferred.

Elementary & Middle School Grades

Elementary & Middle School grades 1st-8th are to be completed in chronological order after Kindergarten. Previous Montessori experience is preferred.

Parent Education Session

All parents of newly enrolled students must attend the parent education class in late August at the start of each school year. This event is for parents or guardians only and is a great opportunity to get to know your child's teacher, understand their classroom expectations, and lay out a plan of how cohesive home and school expectations and teaching methods can provide your child lifelong success.

Arrival/ Departure

It is your responsibility to walk your child into the vestibule and make sure they are greeted prior to leaving them. Students are expected to arrive at school on time. It is a distraction to the class and makes it difficult for your child to transition into the school day when they do not arrive on time.

If parents do drop off late they are required to sign their child in at the office and walk their child to their classroom. Parents must ensure that late students are acknowledged by their teacher prior to leaving them within the classroom.

Parents should call in the morning whenever their child will be out for the day or log the child as absent in the app. Please let the office personal know as soon as possible for longer-term absences.

Please do not allow your child(ren) to enter or leave the building unattended. You must accompany your child at all times until you sign them in.

Pick-Up Policy

Each student must be picked up by their legal guardians unless prior notice is given and the individual picking up your child is on the approved pick-up list on file in the office. Children are expected to be picked up from school on time. Late pickups are disruptive to our classroom routine, and often create anxiety for the child who is picked up late. Children who are attending only Junior Kindergarten are to be picked up at 11:25 am, Regular school days at 3:15 pm and children who are staying at New Leaf Prep Academy for after school care are to be picked up no later than 5:30 pm. A Child attending Program or School only should be picked up in the vestibule. Students who are enrolled in after school care should be picked up from their Classroom. Children who are not picked up on time will be charged a late fee of \$10 per 5-minute interval, or any fraction thereof, per child.

Curriculum

New Leaf Prep Academy Instructors plan activities, works, and provide children with a prepared classroom featuring traditional Montessori materials and enriching hands-on experiences. The Montessori Method and nature exploration are major components of our program. Our areas of study include sensorial, math, practical life, science, language, culture/ geography, and music/ art. We celebrate the uniqueness of each child and allow children to develop at their own pace. We "follow the child" by observing them and modifying lessons and materials to best suit their interests and skill level. In addition to this program, your child will enjoy various enriching

classes and activities such as music & movement, art, nature walks, gardening, yoga, cooking and nutrition classes, and use of our schools multipurpose spaces including the living atrium, libraries, music room, gymnasium, and art room.

New Leaf Junior Kindergarten curriculum meets or exceeds all WEMLS (Wisconsin Early Model Learning Standards). Teaching standards are met through Montessori and Montessori inspired works and teaching methods.

New Leaf Prep Academy Elementary & Middle School Education curriculum meets or exceeds all Wisconsin state teaching standards. Teaching standards are met through Montessori and Montessori inspired works and teaching methods.

Curriculum Goals/Standards

Constant teacher observation and evaluation is completed to monitor student progress. Progress reports and artifacts of learning are made available to parents as necessary and before every parent-teacher conference. Our Montessori Inspired curriculum is based on the Wisconsin Teaching Standards and ensures that children are meeting appropriate educational milestones.

Student Assessment Guidelines

Progress evaluations reflect how well a student has mastered the content material and the specific learning objectives through tracking of progress milestones and anecdotal records. Both anecdotal records and progress milestone tracking function as formative assessments providing ongoing feedback that can be used by teachers to help students improve in areas where they are struggling and build on skills that they are excelling on.

At the conclusion of each trimester teachers also conduct summative assessments. Summative assessments evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional trimester or unit by comparing their progress against the standard(s) or benchmark(s) that the student is recorded to have mastered, and the standard(s) or benchmark(s) that are age-appropriate according to the Wisconsin State Teaching Standards. Teachers must conduct summative assessments by evaluating students on the skill through a different method or work extension than how it was originally introduced to them, and deemed to be mastered.

Homework

Students will bring homework home from school sparingly and only as family-based projects. We expect that students will work on practical life skills and are responsible contributing members of their households as according to the teachings of the Montessori Method.

Dress Code

Students should come to school dressed in clothing that is comfortable and allows for large motor activity. Please consider that students will be involved in many hands-on activities using paint, glue, etc., and spend a large majority of their time outside exploring. Please dress your child with the understanding that they may get dirty. All clothing and other belongings that are brought to school should be clearly labeled with your child's name. If you do not wish to label items directly on the tag please label them with a piece of masking tape. If your child brings home clothes to be laundered please send a new set of clean clothes in their place the next day. Any soiled clothes will be placed in your child's locker in a plastic bag to be taken home and laundered. Independence is a key component of our program so we ask parents to

consider sending clothing that children can dress themselves in. Additionally we ask that students come in clothes that are not distracting to themselves or peers.

Children will be required to wear an approved pair of indoor shoes when they are in their classroom. Approved indoor shoe details will be included on each student's yearly supply list.

We do a great deal of exploring the outdoor environment and therefore require that a pair of rain boots also be present at school during all months when there is no snow on the ground.

Programming

Junior Kindergarten

Our Junior Kindergarten program is for children ages 3-5 by September 1st who are potty trained. Our 4K equivalent Junior Kindergarten program is a mixed-age Montessori based program in which we emphasize outdoor learning and nature-inspired activities while preparing your child for Kindergarten. Our classroom is set up so children can be independent learners. More advanced works are introduced as children become developmentally ready. Academic areas of study include Practical Life, Sensorial, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Culture and Geography. Additionally, our holistic approach to learning examines all avenues that will affect lifelong student success including social, emotional, and cognitive skill development. A minimalist environment free of technological distractions will aid in calming their mind and body and enable them to focus on the lessons and material at hand. We also have dedicated space for dramatic play and Art. Activities in each area get progressively more complex building as the child works their way through the curriculum. Uninterrupted work-time is another hallmark of the Montessori philosophy that is incorporated in our program and gives children the time they need to focus on a task until they feel it is complete. Teachers will complete observation-based progress reports and conferences will be held two times each school year so that parents have a solid grasp on how their child is progressing. Additional enrichment activities will also be offered on a regularly scheduled weekly basis such as yoga, cooking & nutrition, music & movement, nature exploration, and gym.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is for students who are 5 years old by September 1st. Montessori experience is preferred but not required for students within this classroom. Academic areas of study will include Science, Mathematics, Practical Life, Culture and Geography, and Language Arts. Additionally, our holistic approach to learning examines all avenues that will affect lifelong student success including social, emotional, and cognitive skill development. A minimalist environment free of technological distractions will aid in calming their mind and body and enable them to focus on the lessons and material at hand. With low teacher to child ratios maxing out at 1:13 students can safely learn through trial and error. Teachers will complete observation-based progress reports to ensure that students are meeting and exceeding all state teaching standards and conferences will be held two times each school year so that parents have a solid grasp on how their child is progressing. Additional enrichment activities will also be offered on a regularly scheduled weekly basis and include yoga, gym, art, music, cooking & nutrition. All aspects of our curriculum will be carried out in a toxic-free, natural-minded environment with very limited use of technology.

Elementary and Middle School Grades

Elementary and Middle School Grades 1st-8th are to be completed in chronological order after Kindergarten. Montessori experience is preferred but not required for students within these classrooms. Academic areas of study will include Science, Mathematics, Practical Life, Culture and Geography, and Language Arts. Additionally, our holistic approach to learning examines all avenues that will affect lifelong student success including social, emotional, and cognitive skill

development. A minimalist environment free of technological distractions will aid in calming their mind and body and enable them to focus on the lessons and material at hand. With low teacher to child ratios maxing out at 1:15 students can safely learn through trial and error. Teachers will complete observation-based progress reports to ensure that students are meeting and exceeding all state teaching standards and conferences will be held two times each school year so that parents have a solid grasp on how their child is progressing. Additional enrichment activities will also be offered on a regularly scheduled weekly basis and include yoga, gym, art, music, cooking & nutrition. All aspects of our curriculum will be carried out in a toxic-free, natural minded environment with very limited use of technology.

Enrollment Forms

The State of Wisconsin and the school's Board of Directors require that the following information be kept on file for each child enrolled in the program:

1. Enrollment Contract
2. Health History & Emergency Care
3. Emergency Contact Form
4. Photo Authorization Form
5. Health Report (required only for children under 5)
6. Immunization form or copy of immunizations
7. Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

Invoices & Forms

Each family will have any important forms put in their student's take-home folder for review. Should you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask your teacher or the office. Forms for the office can be placed in the black drop box located outside the office or handed directly to office personnel. Any changes to address, phone numbers, emergency contacts, etc, should be directed to the office. Invoices (if applicable) will be placed in your child's take-home folder. All paperwork will be reviewed yearly by the office staff.

Communication

It is important that we communicate daily concerning the needs and interests of each child. We offer, and highly encourage attendance at, parent-staff conference opportunities at least 2 times per year to discuss student's growth and development. If there are issues or concerns that need to be discussed, parents should arrange with us a convenient time to talk. To foster communication regularly, New Leaf Prep Academy provides scheduled conferences, written newsletters, a parent bulletin board, daily conversations, and a school application.

Starting the School Year

At New Leaf Prep Academy our emphasis begins with the development of strong, warm, trusting relationships. The social self-directed environment paves the way for students to get the most out of their physical environment as well as our routines and academics. For every child, the first days of the year at New Leaf Prep Academy are filled with new experiences, people, and expectations. We try to make this adjustment period as smooth and comfortable as it can be for each student. We require parents to attend the parent education session at the start of the school year to ensure school and home are working together as a team. We ask parents to work with the teachers and school in creating a bridge between home and school and to help your child establish trusting relationships with their new teachers.

Outdoor Time

We believe that the outdoor environment is just as important as the indoor space. It is healthy for children to get fresh air, aids in the development of social and gross motor skills, and helps to strengthen a child's body and mind to help them to establish a bond and understanding of the living world around them. Children will be allowed free time for large muscle and gross-motor development on a variety of developmentally appropriate fixed play equipment and portable equipment (such as balls and tricycles) to allow mastery of balance and coordination & peer engagement. Our outdoor area also seeks to give children a place to explore and learn about nature through sensory experiences. Alternative large muscle indoor activities will be offered when the weather does not permit going outside. Children will go outdoors twice daily when the weather permits, therefore please dress your child appropriately for the weather. Children may be kept indoors during inclement weather such as any of the following:

- Heavy rain
- Temperatures above 90 degrees F.
- Wind chills of 0 degrees F. or below

Screen Time

We feel that limited screen time is very important in regards to the development of children. For this reason, students are only allowed to watch age-appropriate short educational segments when they are cohesive with the teacher's lesson plan and material can not be shared in an alternate manner. On the occasion that screen time is available to students it is aligned with the content of our curriculum, is brief, and is teacher-directed.

For children to succeed at New Leaf Prep Academy we highly encourage limited and monitored screen time at home. It is important that an adult is present to discuss and help their child understand the information that students are gaining through television, videos, and commercials so that it can be used as a tool for learning. Social Media is regarded as unnecessary for our students outside of school and may actually interfere with their learning growth both emotionally and academically within the classroom.

Guiding Behavior

Student's behavior will be guided by setting clear limits and rules within the school and classrooms. Students may always work freely within the consistent rules of their classroom. We will talk with students about expected behaviors and model those behaviors consistently for them. We will state positively what children can do and undesirable behavior will be redirected to another activity when possible. Behavior management will be for the purpose of helping children develop self-control, self-esteem, and respect for the rights of others. Students are redirected to safe physical activities and are involved in a discussion about safety concerns, when necessary.

When a student is distraught, teachers will work to calm and comfort the student, in ways that are appropriate for his/her age and personal disposition. (This may include offering them a drink; acknowledging their fear, sadness, or conflict; redirecting to another activity; or talking calmly with the child about how s/he is feeling or what has happened.)

If the redirection is unsuccessful students will take a break from working freely within their classroom to evaluate their behavior. This break will be used to remove a student from a situation that has gotten out of control before they can hurt themselves or others. When used, the break time will immediately follow the behavior. Teachers will speak with the student about why the behavior was unacceptable, and what else s/he might have done or said instead.

We recognize that no single technique will work with a student every time. If a student exhibits unacceptable behavior, we will request a conference with parents to consider how to deal with the behavior. If the behavior continues, the next steps may include referrals to appropriate community resources, and/or discharge of the child from school. Actions that are aversive, cruel, humiliating, and actions that may be psychologically, emotionally, or physically painful, discomforting, dangerous or potentially injurious are absolutely prohibited at New Leaf Prep Academy. Prohibited actions include spanking, hitting, pinching, shaking, slapping, twisting, or inflicting any other form of corporal punishment on the child; verbal abuse threats or derogatory remarks about the child or the child's family; physical restraint, binding or tying the child to restrict the child's movement or enclosing the child in a confined space such as a closet, locked room, box or similar cubicle; withholding or forcing meals, snacks or naps; punishing a child for lapses in toilet training. These forms of punishment will never be used, even at a parent's request.

New Leaf Main Rules

All New Leaf School rules stem from 3 main rules which are hallmarks in a Montessori classroom:

1. Respect for oneself
2. Respect for others
3. Respect for the environment

General School & Classroom Rules

- Walking feet are to be used indoors and down the outdoor ramp
- Indoor voices are to be used at all times when inside school
- Keep your hands to yourself, no aggressive behaviors will be tolerated
- Respect classmates and do not disturb those who are working
- Respect others personal belongings
- Use manners at all times
- Take care of the classroom by using works for their intended purpose and cleaning up after yourself
- Do not touch doors unless instructed to do so by a teacher or parent. Please help us to enforce this rule at pickup & drop-off

Separation

The building of a relationship between parents and teachers is the foundation for each student's positive experiences in school. For this reason, we ask parents to visit your child's new classroom or attend "Meet the Teacher" events with your child. During this time, their teacher will ask questions to enable them to better know your child before the school year and full separation begins. Parents must say "goodbye" to their child and tell him/her when they will return. Parents may NOT "sneak out" to prevent their child from crying during separation. Although the crying may make the goodbye harder on parents it is a symbol of their healthy attachment to you, and it is healthy for children to fully understand what is going on and be able to express their emotions. Leaving without saying goodbye to your child will also cause them to fear any possibility of unexpected departure, and does not support the trust that you are trying to build with your child. It is also important to establish a routine when saying goodbye to your child. A routine with a clear goodbye helps children to understand what to expect and become comfortable with saying goodbye.

Please leave all treasured items at home, unless it is show and share day. These items will be confiscated from a child's locker if they become a distraction in the classroom.

Daily Routines

Junior Kindergarten Overview	
6:30am-8:00am-	Before Program Care
8:00am-11:30am-	Junior Kindergarten Program
11:30am-5:30pm-	After Program Care

Elementary Bell Schedule	
Before School Care	6:30am-8:15am
Elementary Doors Open	8:00am
Classes Begin	8:15am
Student Dismissal	3:15pm
After School Care	3:15pm-5:30pm

Supervision of Children

We operate our school following the state licensing ratios set for group childcare centers in Junior Kindergarten and operate with a maximum of 1:15, teacher to student ratio, within all of our Elementary classrooms. The student to teacher ratios are as follows:

Students Age	Teacher Quantity	Students
3	1	8
4	1	10
5	1	15

Daily Attendance

Attendance will be kept in each classroom. Parents are responsible for signing in their children via the tablet located in the main entrance when their child arrives late to school and to sign them out if they leave school before the end of the day.

Take-Home Folders

Children each have a take-home folder located in their art file in their classroom. Your child will place this folder into their backpack at the closing of program or the school day. It is the parent's and student's responsibility to empty this folder each evening and return it to school empty in their backpack/ locker. Artwork, classroom announcements and other important paperwork will be placed in this folder.

Lost & Found

With so many children working on their independence skills it is sometimes difficult to keep track of clothing and other belongings. It is important that each article of your child's clothing and all personal belongings is clearly labeled to prevent losing items. A lost and found area will be located on the front desk outside of the office. Items that are not claimed after a reasonable amount of time may be kept for school use or donated.

Inclement Weather

Any extreme weather closings will be announced on our Facebook page no later than 5:30 am the morning of closing as well as on local news stations.

Nutrition

We have a 4-week rotating menu that features organic and nutritious meals and snacks that meet USDA Guidelines. All food is prepared onsite in our school kitchen. No child will ever go longer than 3 hours without nourishment.

Food Allergies

If your child has food allergies parents must notify the school in writing, and provide a signed doctor's note indicating the allergy. Food allergies will be discretely posted in the classroom and the kitchen. If the school can not accommodate a child's food allergies parents will need to provide snacks and meals. Snacks and meals must replicate our menu. If meals and snacks are not being replicated a conference with parents will be held with the Assistant Principal.

Field Trips

Parents will be notified in advance of any field trip requiring the use of a vehicle. Children who are unable to attend a field trip will be required to stay home because staff supervision is not available at school during field trips.

Birthdays

Each child is celebrated with a "Birthday Walk", a Montessori tradition, in which children take a walk around the representational sun one time for each year of life. Parents will help their child by selecting photographs from each year of their life and helping them prepare a written history of milestones reached and fun times had during each year. The photographs and milestones will be shared with their classroom and displayed for the week. Birthday treats that follow the guidelines below are welcome but not required.

New Leaf places a strong value on healthy and organic options so it is important that birthday treats also reflect this. We ask that birthday treats are not pre-packaged and it is a snack that the students can prepare together. Your child will be the "chef" for snack time and teach the rest of the class how to prepare their special birthday treat.

If you plan to bring in a special treat to celebrate (which is completely optional) we do need to be made aware at least a week in advance and snacks must meet the following criteria:

- Must be a healthy option with a fruit or vegetable
- No Corn Syrup in ingredient lists
- Should contain limited refined sugar
- No artificial colorings or preservatives

- Apples or Dairy must be Organic

Examples: Ants on a Log, Organic Apples & Peanut Butter, Chocolate Covered Bananas, Fruit or Vegetable Pinwheels, Fruit Popsicles, Trail Mix, Chips & Humus... etc. Please ask for a handout from the office if you would like a printed copy of our Birthday Treat Guidelines.

Holiday Concert

New Leaf Prep Academy will host a holiday concert every year. Parents and relatives will be invited to attend to support their student's progress and hard work at New Leaf Prep Academy and celebrate the holiday season through prepared songs, dances & fine art.

Graduation Ceremony

At the closing of each school year our Junior Kindergarteners, 4th and 8th graders will participate in a graduation ceremony in full caps & gowns. This is a great opportunity to celebrate all that they have accomplished through their school years thus far and acknowledge their hard work!

Star of the Week

Students will get the chance to be recognized as the star of the week once each school year. Information will be sent home with families 2 weeks prior to their special week. A Family member of our star of the week will be invited to eat lunch with our star and participate in closing meeting or a classroom activity.

Show & Share

During the school year there may be pre-arranged show and share days. If your child would like to bring a toy/item from home to share with the class please be aware of the following general guidelines. Show and share may also follow a theme in which additional guidelines would be applied (ex. bring a stuffed animal to read to, bring a tool etc.)

1. Items may not promote violence in any way (no weapons or figures holding weapons)
2. Students can only bring one item for show and share
3. Item must be small enough to fit in their locker
4. There will be designated time for students to share and play with their item. Please help us by making this understood and placing their item in their locker at the start of the day.

Meet your Teacher Night

At the beginning of each school year Children & Parents will have the opportunity to meet their Teacher, see their classroom, and drop off any personal belongings that will be kept at school.

Rest Time

Parents and teachers will work together to support the developmentally appropriate rest needs of each child in our Junior Kindergarten classroom. Parents will be expected to have a consistent bedtime routine at home to aid in their child's success at school. Children will be asked to stay on their cot during rest time from 12:30 pm-2:30 pm. We will not wake children at the conclusion of rest time but will discuss with parents if their child is consistently wanting to sleep much longer than 2:30 pm or if they are tired throughout the day.

Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are held twice each school year, once in the fall and once in the spring. Additionally, parents may request a conference with their child's teacher at any time throughout the year. We expect parents to attend both spring and fall conferences.

Illness Policy

We are not authorized to care for mildly ill children. Children who are ill are not to be brought to school. This includes any children who has received fever-reducing medication within the last 24 hours. The following are examples of children who are ill:

- A temperature of 101.0 degrees F. or higher
- Vomiting or diarrhea has occurred more than once in the past 24 hours
- A contagious disease such as chickenpox, strep throat or pink eye
- An unidentified rash
- Has not been on a prescribed medication for 24 hours or continue to have symptoms of illness
- Has a constant, thick colored nasal discharge

If a student should become ill or seriously injured while at school, parents will be contacted immediately. Sick children will be isolated within sight and hearing and made as comfortable as possible. Children should be picked up as soon as possible, within 1 hour. If a student is not picked up within one hour, the emergency contact person on the child's enrollment form will be called.

Children may return to school when they are fever and symptom-free, have been appropriately treated, or have been given medical approval to return to school. Children may not attend school the next day unless they have a doctor's note indicating otherwise.

Medication Policy

New Leaf Prep Academy will administer only prescription medications as long as parents have completed the Medication Authorization Form. We will administer over the counter medications when a Medication Authorization form is on file and all rules below are followed.

All medicine must be in its original container, bearing the label with the child's name, dosage, and administration directions. Additionally, prescription medication will bear the name of the doctor and pharmacy. It will be stored in a medication box that is inaccessible to children. Medicine requiring refrigeration will be kept in a covered, labeled container in the refrigerator.

We will not exceed the age-related dosage on the label of any medication without a written doctor's authorization. If a dose is missed we will not double up. You will be notified and the missed dosage will be documented in the medical log.

Withdraw or Discharge

Parents must give a written notice of their intent to withdraw their child(ren), and will not be refunded for the remaining days in the month and following month whether or not children continue to attend (If applicable). All outstanding fees must be paid. Parents will be asked to fill out a questionnaire to help us better understand their reasoning for withdrawing their child(ren).

Should New Leaf Prep Academy decide to terminate a child's enrollment, the parents will be notified verbally and in writing.

If both New Leaf Prep Academy and parents decide to discontinue enrollment a 2-week notice prior to discharge and written agreement must be signed by both parties. Parents will be required to pay for those 2 weeks whether or not children continue to attend. All outstanding fees must be paid (when applicable).

Parent Handbook Acknowledgement

I have read and agree to all guidelines & rules indicated in the parent handbook. I acknowledge that the parent handbook can be accessed at any time by going to:

www://newleafprepacademy.com

Child's Name: _____

Parent's Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____