

# Science Sprouts at the Center Discovery School Handbook



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[www.discoverycenter.org/preschool](http://www.discoverycenter.org/preschool)

## **Mission**

To inspire curiosity and a life-long love of learning through memorable and engaging hands-on preschool experiences in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education

## **Vision**

To deliver a world-class educational experience through cutting edge science for the next generation of world changers.

## **Practices**

We value quality, creativity, inspiration, experiences, people, learning, progress, caring and an open culture.

Our leaders have a proven history of responding quickly and making thoughtful decisions confidently based on facts.

Science Sprouts at the Center programs will deliver engaging, play and inquiry-based, academically rigorous educational experiences based on the individual needs, interests, and strengths of each student. We will foster creativity, innovation,

wonder, joy, passion, and positivity in an affirming, safe, and just environment that strengthens character, leadership, responsibility, compassion and service alongside academic growth.

We practice problem solving, critical thinking, individuality, and failure in a way that gives children the safety to take academic risks and gain the confidence needed to obtain higher levels of achievement and develop their unique gifts.

We commit to loving our students and developing their talents.

## **Arriving to School:**

### **Dress Code**

For the time being, there is no dress code, aside from closed-toed shoes. The most important factor is for students to come in clean clothes. Students should have at least one extra pair of clean clothes in their belongings every day. E.g. Underwear, top, bottoms, socks, outerwear. STEM and recess activities will be engaging and fun. Your child's clothes and belongings should be able to get messy and clean easily so that we can focus primarily on our fun and learning!

### **Meals, Snacks, and Drinks**

Students may bring a lunch, snack, and water bottle to school each day. Breakfast, lunch and snack will be provided each day as an option for your student.

We are a peanut/tree-nut free facility. If your student has special dietary restrictions, everyone on our team will be made aware. We will always feed hungry kids so please communicate with us if your student is on an eating plan we should know about. You are welcome to provide or make suggestions for healthy snacks for your student to enjoy as long as they are peanut/tree-nut free.

### **Handwashing/Hand Sanitizers**

We will require proper handwashing for 20 seconds (not sanitizer) before every meal and snack. Throughout the day students will be given sanitizer before and after certain activities, including but not limited to, playing outside and playing in the sensory table. Hand lotion will also be available. Please note any allergies or concerns on your child's enrollment packet.

### **Rest Time**

A scheduled rest time will occur each day within the classroom. Students will not be required to sleep but they will be expected to rest quietly. A mat will be provided for each child. Students can bring a small blanket, pillow, and comfort item to use during rest time. These will be sent home every Friday to be washed.

## **In Case of Illness**

If a student or staff member starts to feel unwell during the school day, parents/administration will be contacted to determine plans for isolation until they can be sent home. Our teachers are trained how to handle students who are experiencing symptoms, including how to quarantine the student and how to keep the rest of the classroom safe. It is your responsibility to arrange for pick up as quickly as possible but no longer than 30 minutes after being informed of your child's illness.

If a child is well enough to attend school, they should be well enough to participate in all activities. If the child is not well enough to participate, then alternate care needs to be available until the child is well enough to participate.

A child may be sent home when exhibiting any of the following symptoms: a fever over 100° F by mouth or 99° F under arm, more than one diarrhea, vomiting more than once, severe coughing, yellow skin or eyes, pinkeye with tears, irritation or pus, unusual spots or rashes, trouble swallowing or sore throat, infected skin, tea colored urine, gray or white stool, headache with stiff neck, & severe itching of the body or scalp.

The safety of students in our care is ALWAYS our number one priority.

## **Medicines**

Science Sprouts Discovery School staff may administer medicine only after a proper medical form has been filled out by the parent/guardian and approved by the director.

## **Safety**

To promote each child's safety every adult in the school building (including parents) who directly supervise children will be given a background check. All of our staff are state mandated reporters and trained on how to prevent and respond to child abuse.

## **Accidents and Injuries**

We appreciate the trust you have shown by placing your child into our care. While we may feel very comfortable dealing with what we consider to be "minor" injuries, we understand there is a wide array of what each family might consider "minor". We will contact parents immediately for all accidents and injuries. As a parent, you have the right and ultimate responsibility to decide what action you want taken when your child is injured. Ultimately, contacting parents for each and every accident/injury is in the best interest of the child. It also prepares you before you arrive to pick up your child if you expect to observe an injury and know what caused it.

## **Communication**

If you need to communicate with your child's teacher during the school day, please email or call the Discovery School to schedule an appointment to meet when the

team is not supervising children. Teachers will not be using cell phones during the school day.

Drop off and pick-up times are not appropriate times for parent/teacher discussions about student progress or concerns. We will always have a door open for you during the times it's the safest for kids to have their teacher give you their undivided attention.

We will communicate with parents via email, text messages, and will personally call if there are any special circumstances we would like to consult you on. If a child is injured or becomes ill, we will call or text immediately to inform you. Please make sure one of your emergency contacts is a person who can pick up your child within 30 minutes of being contacted. Please provide a valid email that you check regularly.

Solutions to problems should always be attempted between teacher/parent first with the full support of school administration if and when more ideas need to be considered.

Science Sprouts Discovery School is an open culture and will use digital tools to stay connected in real time. Such tools may include but are not limited to email, phone, Zoom, and Google Drive accounts to track student progress. Parents will receive cell phone numbers of their teachers and school administrators and can call the school during school hours.

### **Freedom of Inquiry**

It is essential to the mission of the school for students and teachers to have freedom to teach or communicate ideas or facts that might conflict with certain political, religious, or ideological beliefs without being targeted for repression. Conflicting viewpoints will not only be allowable but encouraged when maintained in a respectful, emotionally safe atmosphere at age-appropriate levels of conversation. We will ask our staff and students to do their best to keep conversations strictly to scholarly viewpoints using a research-based approach. Teachers will be trained to carefully avoid controversial matters that are unrelated to the subject discussed or are best addressed at home. Thoughtful and respectful conversations on differing opinions will be allowable when contained within our school values of quality, creativity, inspiration, experience, people, learning, progress, caring and an open culture.

### **Commitment to Continuous Improvement**

Science Sprouts Discovery School will be built on the foundation of proven efficient and effective abilities of the Discovery Center to adapt and evolve to meet the ever-changing needs of our community. We ask all constituents including staff, students, parents, and members of the board to commit with a genuine desire to learn, succeed, and innovate. In our open culture when new methods or plans are discovered that will help us meet a clearly defined goal or objective, we commit to staying flexible and adapting together for the success of our students.

### **Admissions Policies and Procedures**

1. Submit application for admission
2. Perform meet and greet with assessment
3. Complete enrollment packet
4. New student is accepted for enrollment
5. Payment of one-time \$100 enrollment fee
6. Space is reserved once enrollment contract is completed

### **Criteria for Admission**

Children ages 4-5 who are potty-trained, thrive in flexible environments with mixed ages and abilities, enjoy an intellectual play-based environment and can work independently with few behavior challenges are ideal candidates.

Immunization records are required for admission.

We reserve the right to refuse admission or re-enrollment to a student.

### **Enrollment Process**

Families can apply at [www.discoverycenter.org/school](http://www.discoverycenter.org/school). Parents/guardians will be required to share physical and behavioral health information, including any allergies, and provide two additional emergency contact phone numbers and addresses. Enrollment forms, medical forms, and immunization records are required prior to the first day of care. You will be emailed directions on how to complete the enrollment packet.

### **Waiting List**

All incoming students will be placed on a waiting list until at least 5 or more students complete the enrollment process, at which time a classroom will be open to no more than 10 students. If more than 10 students are accepted for admission, students 11-15 will remain on the waiting list until a second classroom of 10 students can be opened and so on. All students on the waiting list who do not receive a spot in a classroom will be refunded their enrollment fees.

### **Financial Responsibilities**

New student enrollment fee - one-time fee \$100

Tuition - full time: \$200 weekly (\$867 monthly payment)

Thirty days' notice must be given in writing for a student withdrawing from the program before billing will stop. Because costs of the program do not change based on daily attendance, we are unable to issue refunds on the days your child is absent.

### **Instructional Tools & Programs of Study**

Instructional tools will be based on Missouri Early Learning standards to meet the

individual academic needs and interests of each student and particular stages of brain development for the age of the student. These tools will include but are not limited to project-based hands-on learning, use of technology, songs, stories, creative imaginative play, guided discovery, kinesthetic (linking the learning to the senses), exploration, field trips, guest speakers, expression of concepts through artwork, plenty of time for kids to ask questions, and lots of body movement. We will place no limits on how fast a student can learn or how much time they need to learn hard things. We will utilize the rich network of connections the Discovery Center has fostered for over 20 years to engage appropriate partnerships with organizations such as NASA and the Smithsonian to facilitate instruction for the age, needs, and abilities of each student.

## **School Calendar**

### **Academic Calendar**

#### **Fall 2022**

September 5 - Labor Day

September 10 - Night at the Museum (21+ Adults only tickets available)

October 20 - Pancakes with Pals

October 21 - Teacher In-Service (no school- School's Out Care Available)

November 7 - 11 - Spirit Week

November 11 - Picture Day

November 21 - Teacher In-Service (no school - School's Out Available)

November 24 - 25 - Thanksgiving Break (no school)

December 2 - Festival of Trees (21+ Adults only tickets available)

December 14 - Holiday Music Program

December 16 - Holiday Parties

December 19-26 - Winter Break (School's Out Care Available)

#### **Spring 2023**

January 2 - New Year's Day Observed (no school)

January 3 - Teacher In-Service (no school- School's Out Care Available)

January 16 - MLK Day (no school - School's Out Care Available)

February 14 - Valentine Parties

March 13 – 17 – Spring Break (no school - School's Out Care Available)

April 7 - Spring Parties

April 21 - Teacher InService (no school- School's Out Care Available)

May 17 - Field Day

May 29 - Memorial Day (no school)

July 4 - Independence Day (no school)

## **Hours of Operation**

The facility will be open from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday.

Car tags will be distributed for pick up. Each adult who has permission to pick up your child must be listed in the enrollment packet. Anyone who does not have a Science Sprouts Discovery School approved car tag will need to show a government-issued photo ID before picking up a child. If you need someone else to pick up your child, it is your responsibility to edit your child's registration profile with the name and contact information of the approved pick-up person. In case of emergency, contact Sprouts staff by phone to add someone to the pick-up list.

Students who are not picked up by their chosen schedule time will be billed \$1 for every 1 minute of extended care provided by our staff.

## **Attendance**

We will quickly fall in love with your child, and because we care, will want to know if they are okay when they are not with us. Please call the school to report student absences.

Please keep your child home until they are 24 hours fever free (fever of 100.4 or higher) without fever reducing medication.

If during a mandatory quarantine or vacation you would like developmentally-appropriate lesson plans or activities to do while out of school, please get in contact with your teacher as soon as possible.

## **Closed Campus**

All visitors, including parents, must check in at the front door.

## **School Rules/Expectations**

Our staff make a verbal commitment/promise to the students each day that they will keep them safe (mentally, emotionally, and physically). The students respond with a verbal commitment to do their part to keep it safe (for themselves, their peers, and the staff.) Daily instruction includes modeling, pictures and practice of that commitment along with other behavior commitments.

## **Discipline Strategies & Expectations**

Science Sprouts Discovery School will be a safe place to learn and make mistakes. We believe parents know their child better than anyone, so we will always communicate behavior issues and work with parents on individual improvement plans. Behavior instruction will be administered respectfully based on relationship building and restorative justice. Instruction will include activities the student's mind and body might need such as an opportunity to get energy out, and redirection to more engaging instruction. Emphasis will be placed on personal responsibility and improving relationships. Our expectation is that everyone be treated with honor, compassion, dignity, and kindness. Any direct hateful or harassing behavior, attitudes, threats, or physical aggression will not be tolerated.

At Science Sprouts, we implement Conscious Discipline which is a developmentally appropriate classroom management and social emotional program based on brain research. We are proactive instead of reactive to student challenges using a cultural & relationship-based approach which creates a positive school climate. The essential components for success include knowing a child's brain state, shifting how adults view conflict, classroom routines, belonging, goal setting and achievement, empathy and problem solving.

### **EXAMPLE Behavior Instruction Steps**

#### **Step One: Teacher Correction**

The majority of offenses require no more than a verbal correction or warning from the teacher and, when warranted, an apology and/or forgiveness for the offended person(s). Parents may or may not be contacted depending on the intent and nature of the offense and if it's recurring.

The following are examples of behaviors that could cause us to implement a behavioral correction plan:

- Disrespect shown to any staff member
- Noncompliance or outright disregard in response to instruction
- Fighting or striking in anger with intent to harm

If corrective behavior plans are not effective, it could affect your student's ability to continue attending Science Sprouts Discovery School. For example, the following procedures could be observed, though each child's experience may be different:

- The first and second times a student meets with a school administrator parents will be contacted with details of the visit. Parental assistance and support in behavior correction will be requested.
- The third visit will be followed with a meeting between the students, parents, teacher, and administrator.



- Should the student require a fourth visit, a suspension may be imposed.
- If a fifth visit is required, the student may be expelled from the program.

### **Crisis Management Plans**

Science Sprouts Discovery School teachers will receive written and verbal training on emergency preparedness including tornado, fire, Code Adam, bomb threat, active shooter, and coronavirus safety procedures. Drills will be conducted once per month for students to practice each emergency situation with escape routes and code words. These drills could be conducted as games with an emphasis on safety, fun, and play to reduce childhood anxiety. Classroom teachers will be connected to school administrators and Learning Center staff at all times using a two-way radio system for additional support at a moment's notice.

### **School Governance**

Science Sprouts Discovery School will be governed by the Discovery Center of Springfield Executive Director, who reports to the Board of Directors. This Board is composed of community leaders who will impact the growth and prosperity of the school by overseeing major school policies, strategic planning, the financial stability of the school, and lead in fundraising and promotion. This governing body will generate necessary resources for providing and maintaining physical facilities, equipment, and materials adequate to support the program of the school.

The Discovery Center of Springfield Board of Directors is responsible for employing, evaluating, and supporting the Discovery Center Executive Director who will supervise the Vice President of Education who hires and trains the Science Sprouts Director. All faculty, community partners, support staff, etc. will be recruited, evaluated and trained by the Science Sprouts Director.

The Executive Director will support the Vice President of Education in realizing the strategic vision of the school through management of school finances, programs, personnel, facilities, fundraising, public relations, and resources.

**Science Sprouts Discovery School reserves the right to update and/or amend these policies at any time and will provide a revised copy to parents should that occur.**