



## **Mission Statement**

LadyBug Academy's mission is to provide families in Arlington, Merrifield and surrounding communities with holistic, high-quality childcare in a caring, supportive and educational atmosphere. Our small group environment, experienced and licensed childcare providers, and state-of-the-art curriculum ensure your child receives the best possible care.

### **LadyBug Academy**

**3018 Javier Rd**

**Suite 100**

**Fairfax VA 22031**

Cell: 703 - 814 - 5514

Phone: 703 - 849 - 8000

Email: [info@ladybug-academy.com](mailto:info@ladybug-academy.com)

Center Director: Cristina Reed [creed@ladybug-academy.com](mailto:creed@ladybug-academy.com)

Website: [www.ladybug-academy.com](http://www.ladybug-academy.com)

### **LadyBug Academy 2**

**3020 Javier Rd**

**Fairfax VA 22031**

Cell: 571 - 201 - 2963

Phone: 703 - 849 - 8500

Email: [info@ladybug-academy.com](mailto:info@ladybug-academy.com)

Center Director: Saima Jahan [sjahan@ladybug-academy.com](mailto:sjahan@ladybug-academy.com)

### **LadyBug Academy Courthouse**

**2500 Wilson Blvd Suite 100B**

**Arlington VA 22201**

Phone: 571- 473 -7295

Email: [info@ladybug-academy.com](mailto:info@ladybug-academy.com)

Center Director: Aleksandra Razavi [arazavi@ladybug-academy.com](mailto:arazavi@ladybug-academy.com)

Website: [www.ladybug-academy.com](http://www.ladybug-academy.com)





## **Welcome to LadyBug Academy!**

We are delighted that you have chosen us to care for your child.

The Parent Handbook describes our program, policies, and all the practical details necessary to ensure your child is happy, healthy, and as successful as possible every day. Please carefully read this Handbook and keep it for future reference. LadyBug reserves the right to change its policies and procedures at any time without notice. If parents have questions about any policy or procedure, please direct them to Aleksandra Razavi at [arazavi@ladybug-academy.com](mailto:arazavi@ladybug-academy.com).

## **About Us!**

LadyBug Academy was established in 2013 by Aleksandra Razavi as a small, home daycare in Arlington. As a mother of three, Aleksandra was disappointed by the lack of quality care options in her community. As a passionate advocate for children's well-being and as a student of the Reggio Emilia teaching style, Aleksandra decided to create LadyBug Academy. Since its inception, LadyBug Academy has maintained its commitment to providing an enriching and diverse learning environment for children in the community.

## **Our approach is inspired by Reggio Emilia Philosophy:**

### **We believe ...**

- That each child is strong, confident, and competent. Strong children have their own ideas, express opinions, make independent choices and are able to play and work well with others.
- That each child is precious, unique and must be heard by adults who are willing to learn alongside them. Throughout our program, children and adults work in partnership - the adult does not always have to be in charge and have all the answers.
- "It takes a village to raise a child", so parents, teachers and the director must work together

to communicate effectively and provide the best environment for our children. Parents contribute to and enhance the quality of care offered at LadyBug Academy.

- That each child should experience numerous positive learning milestones, leading to an increased sense of competence and independence.
- That children's play is extremely vital to healthy physical development, acceptable social skills, and cognitive growth.
- That teachers, drawing upon their training and experience, must create an appropriate educational environment which carefully guides children from one developmental level to another.

### **Reggio Emilia Inspiration**

The Reggio Emilia teaching and learning method is rooted in the philosophy that children are full of curiosity, creativity, and powerful ideas needed to inspire meaningful and deep learning. In contrast to traditional teaching methods that view the teacher as the source of knowledge and children as empty vessels waiting to be filled, the Reggio Emilia curriculum believes that children are active participants in the learning process and capable of constructing / defining their own learning experiences as they explore their curiosity and creativity. For this reason, the Reggio Emilia philosophy encourages expressive learning - a method proven to result in more profound and enduring outcomes for children.

**LadyBug Academy welcomes those of diverse faiths, ethnic, origins, and race.**

## I. Preparing for the first day

### **Install Brightwheel**

We use **Brightwheel** software to manage all communications, drop-offs/pick-ups, and financial transactions between parents and LadyBug Academy. You will receive an invitation email or text to join Brightwheel prior to your child's first day of school. Please install the Brightwheel application once you receive this invitation and prior to dropping off your child on his/her first day. Your initial tuition payment (due on your child's first day) and all subsequent monthly payments must be paid via Brightwheel. If you have any questions about Brightwheel – how to install it, how to use it – please contact your relevant Center Director.

### **Register for the Food Program**

LadyBug Academy offers an optional food program for enrolled children. If you sign up for the food program, your child will receive a daily breakfast (before 9am), lunch (around 11:30am), and snack (around 2:30pm) provided by [Good Food Company](#). If you have questions about or would like to enroll your child in the food program, please contact the Center Director at least 2 business days prior to your child's first day of school.

### **Immunization & Physical Examination Records**

LadyBug Academy requires that all children meet state immunization and physical examination mandates. Parents will need to submit a [Virginia School Entrance Health Form](#) on your child's first day of school (see list of documents included in Welcome Email in Section II) filled out and stamped by a physician.

### **Notify and Submit Documentation for any Medications or Allergies**

*Medicine:* Prescription medicine will only be administered with written consent of both a parent and a doctor. **A parent must administer the first dosage of any new medication; LadyBug Academy staff must never be the first to administer a new medication.** Non-prescription medications (i.e. tylenol, nose drops) will only be administered after a parent signs, dates and submits a Virginia Department of Social Services [Medication Authorization Form](#). **Parents must provide all medications in the original container with a valid expiration date.**

*Allergies:* If your child has any allergies (mild or severe), you must inform the Center Director in advance in order to jointly develop an allergy plan before your child's first day of school. If your child has any allergies that may require medication, you must submit a [Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan](#) signed by both a parent and a licensed medical professional prior to the first day of school. In addition, you must submit an [Allergy Care Plan for a Child with Diagnosed Food Allergies](#) form signed by both a parent and a licensed medical professional prior to the first day of school. These two forms, in combination with the Medication Authorization Form (see above), will provide all necessary authorizations and instructions on how to administer any medications for treatment of allergies. **Please note that for any necessary emergency auto-injectors (e.g. epipen,**

auvi-q, etc.) a minimum of two devices must be provided for the affected child.

## II. Things to bring on the first day of school:

- Proof of your child's identity – Birth Certificate or Passport
- All required forms:
  - Child Registration Form, School Entrance Health Form – filled out and stamped by a physician, Authorization to Apply a Non-Prescription Topical Skin Product, Photo Release Form, School Catering Sign-up Form,
  - In addition to the above forms, parents will be required to sign a LadyBug Academy Enrollment Contract and Building Access Safety document that will be provided to you on the first day of school.
- Light, child-sized blanket - labelled with your child's first and last name
- Crib sheets size 24 inches x 38 inches for infants (up to 16 months) - labelled with your child's first and last name (*failure to provide properly labelled crib sheets each week will result in a fee – see Other Miscellaneous Fees in Section VIII*)
- Sheets size 50 inches x 26.5 inches for toddlers and older – labelled with your child's first and last name (*failure to provide properly labelled sheets each week will result in a fee – see Other Miscellaneous Fees in Section VIII*)
- Two extra changes of clothes, including socks and shoes (open-toed shoes are not allowed) - labelled with your child's first and last name
- Diapers and Wipes – disposable diapers only please! (*failure to provide sufficient diapers to cover each day will result in a fee – see Other Miscellaneous Fees*)
- Lunch and 2 snacks, unless you have enrolled in the LadyBug food program - the lunch container (bag/box) must be labelled with your child's first and last name as well as the date each day
- Separate sippy cups for water and milk – each cup must be labelled with your child's first and last name daily
- Breastmilk or formula bottles for infants - label the tops and bottoms of all bottles with your child's first and last name as well as the date each day.
- Emergency backup premade formula to be used for children in case of any emergency (6 pack formula for children up to the age of 16 months) and an empty bottle or sippy cup to serve it in.
- Parking: **LadyBug Academy Merrifield** has plenty of on-site parking available for drop-off and pick-up. *Note: please do not use the handicapped-accessible parking unless you are properly permitted to do so.*
- Arrival Time: we recommend arriving after 8:30am on your child's first day at LadyBug Academy. This will facilitate more efficient communication with the Center Director and Teachers and completion of all necessary paperwork.

Every enrolled child will have a small cubby inside of the classroom labeled with his/her name. All your child's belongings will be kept in this cubby during the school day. Be aware that cubbies are small but must accommodate everything you send with your child, so please do not send oversized/adult backpacks, blankets, etc.

**Please note that...**

- **LadyBug Academy is completely Nut Free. Do not send your child to school with any products that may contain nuts.**
- **No glass containers or bottles are allowed.**
- **No outside toys are allowed into the facility. The only exception is for small stuffed animals and those will only be available for children during nap time. Stuffed animals are not allowed for Infants.**

### **III. Building access**

Adults approved to drop off or pick up an enrolled child will have access to the building during school hours through their phones using Kastle software. Access is provided prior to your child's first day of school. Key fobs to access the building will also be available for \$20 each. See the links below for instructions to set up Kastle. Any other questions about Kastle should be directed to the Center Director.

[Kastle Quick Reference User Guide](#)

[Kastle Personal Management Guide](#)

### **IV. Communication**

Daily communication between the parents, teachers, and Center management is extremely important. At LadyBug Academy, we use Brightwheel to communicate and share important information about Center activities, schedules, tuition status, the educational program, as well as any special events. We also send individual daily updates about children's progress at specific checkpoints during the day. The individual daily updates may include pictures, naptimes, diaper changes or potty training, as well as educational notes and achievements.

Brightwheel is a two-way communication platform. Parents will be able to contact their child's teacher directly with the messaging feature. Messaging should be used only for essential communications about your child's day-to-day needs. During the school day, our Staff members' attention must be on your children at all times, but staff do have limited availability for communication via Brightwheel during our hours of operation. There should be no expectation of a response until the following business day for messages sent after business hours. Administrative, operational or programmatic questions should be directed to the Center Director by email.

*Absent Children:* Please notify your child's teacher on Brightwheel if your child will not attend the



Center on a given day or will be away for vacation. It is important that our attendance records are accurate, and we are always able to identify the location of the children.

Parents will also receive a monthly Newsletter. The Newsletter includes all important information on our Center's monthly activities, including special celebrations and events, as well as notifications of any holidays, Center closings, policy updates, and reminders.

Parent – Teacher conferences are held at LadyBug Academy twice a year. The conferences are held virtually, but occasionally we may ask you to come in person. During those conferences we will discuss your child's academic progress, behavior, social skills, and any other topics related to your child's development. We highly encourage parents to participate in the conferences, so that we can provide you with all the highlights of your child's experience at LadyBug Academy.

Concerns about any aspect of our Program, your child's care, or all other inquiries related to our operations and academics can be discussed with the Center Directors. Please email them directly to set up a meeting.

**You must promptly notify the Center Director of any changes in your contact information, including changes in physical address, phone number, and email address.**

## **V. Age Eligibility**

Children between the ages of 8 weeks and 6 years old (until they start Kindergarten) are eligible for enrollment at LadyBug Academy.

## **VI. Center Hours and Schedule**

Current operating hours for LadyBug Academy are **7:00AM to 6:00PM, Monday-Friday**. Hours of operation are subject to change depending on public health and safety protocols. Scheduled Center closures for teacher training, holidays, etc. will be [published on the website](#) each January.

Children may attend the Center for the whole time we are open. However, we encourage parents of infants (up to 16 months) to limit Center time to 9 hours per day.

### **Daily Schedules**

Daily schedules are maintained for each class individually at LadyBug Academy. Parents may request an electronic copy of the daily schedule at any time from the Center Director. Infants do not have a set schedule for activities, as their care is based on their individual needs.

### **Rest/Nap Time**



All children up to age 5 who spend a full day at the school are required to have rest time each day. *Infants:* Infants follow a natural nap schedule. We do not wake up infants while they are sleeping, nor do we try to put them to sleep outside their natural schedule. **We highly discourage parents from asking teachers to interfere with your child's natural sleeping pattern while at school.** *Children 16+ months:* Older children must also take a nap or have rest time each day. Nap/rest time takes place from 12:00 to 2:30pm at LadyBug Academy. Allowable rest time behavior includes lying down on their mats, quietly reading, or looking at books. **We highly discourage parents from asking teachers to disrupt your child's naptime during the nap/rest period.**

## **Mealtime**

Whether parents are sending their child with food from home or a child is signed up for the Food Program, LadyBug Academy students adhere to a fixed mealtime schedule. Breakfast is served when a child arrives between 7:00 and 9:00am (no breakfast after 9:00am for later arrivals), Lunch is served at 11:30am, and Snacks are served at 2:30pm. This mealtime schedule does not apply to the infant classroom; infants will be fed according to their natural feeding schedule.

Please note that no microwave is available for heating meals. Lunch boxes that have a frozen pack inside are recommended. If the child doesn't have lunch for the day, we will do our best to provide lunch served by caterer, and the parents will be charged \$6 per day (see Section VIII). If extra food is not available, we will ask you to bring food for your child or pick them up from school.

**LadyBug Academy reserves the right to change its hours of operation, if necessary, for the health, well-being, and safety of children in its care, and/or for the purpose of meeting childcare standards for teacher-child ratios.**

## **VII. Drop-off & pick-up**

Drop-off and pick-up can be a busy time, and we appreciate your cooperation in maintaining an orderly and safe environment for all children. Children being picked up must remain at all times with the adult picking them and should not be left unaccompanied under any circumstances while on the LadyBug premises. At drop-off and pick-up, it is important that you sign your child in and out on the sign in/sign out section of Brightwheel. The sign in/sign out code is outside the Center entrance door.

***Authorized Drop-off & Pick-up:* If any adults other than the parents of the enrolled child will be dropping off or picking up, they must be pre-authorized to do so in writing.** A list of pre-approved adults must be submitted via both the Child Registration Form (see Section II) and through Brightwheel. All adults dropping off or picking up should be able to show proof of identification. If there is any concern about someone other than a child's parents trying to pick up a child, the staff of LadyBug Academy reserves the right to deny that person's request to pick up the

child.

We understand that parents may sometimes have older children with them during pick-up or drop-off. Any accompanying minors must remain with the authorized adult at all times while on the LadyBug premises.

### **Drop-Off**

Drop-offs for all ages begin at 7:00am each morning and not before. We do not accept early drop-offs under any circumstances.

**We only accept children up to 10am each morning.** Children will not be permitted into the Center past 10am, regardless of the reason, as interruptions are highly disruptive to classroom activities and daily routine.

If your child is having difficulty leaving you, we will have a teacher assist you. It is a normal reaction for children to be anxious, especially when they are new to the school, and our staff are trained to help your child adjust. We have found that it is better for you and your child to let our staff handle the separation. Your child will usually adjust quicker once you are out of their sight. If we have any problems or concerns during the transition, we will reach out to you.

### **Pick-Up**

Pick-up can be done after 4pm each day. If you plan to pick up your child earlier, please message us ahead of time on Brightwheel so we can have your child ready. Pick-ups during nap time (12:00 - 2:30pm) are highly discouraged as they are highly disruptive to other children in the classroom. All children should be picked up by 6:00pm. **Pick-ups after 6:00pm will result in a late fee.** Further details on Pick-Up Fees are addressed in Section VIII.

*Pick-up for Medical Appointments:* If you are planning to schedule a doctor's appointment for your child, the best time for pick-up is before nap time (before 12:00pm) or after nap time (after 2:30 pm). Parents are required to message ahead of time on Brightwheel if their child needs to be picked up early for an appointment. **Children that leave school for any reason after 10:00am cannot return until the following day.**

## **VIII. Tuition, Fees & Payments**

### **Wait-list Fee**

If we do not have space for your child at LadyBug Academy but you would like to reserve a spot on the wait list for enrollment, you can pay a non-refundable wait-list fee of \$50 per child.

## **Registration Fee**

A non-refundable registration fee of \$150 is due when your child is enrolled at LadyBug Academy and on September 1st. If you withdraw your child from the Program and then re-enroll at a later date, another enrollment fee will be required.

## **Security Deposit**

LadyBug Academy charges a one-month tuition security deposit on your child's first day. A [schedule of deposit fees](#) is maintained on the LadyBug Academy website under *Tuition Rates*. This deposit must be paid at the same time as your first tuition payment. Your deposit will be returned on the last day of your child's enrollment at Ladybug Academy if you are current on all tuition payments and have met the 30-day withdrawal notification requirement (see Section X for more details on withdrawal policy).

## **Monthly Tuition**

Full tuition payments are due by the first day of each month of enrollment. Tuition received after the fifth day of the month will result in a late payment penalty of 15% of the monthly tuition amount.

A [schedule of tuition rates](#) (for both full- and part-time students) is maintained on the LadyBug Academy website. Tuition rate is based on the age and enrollment status of a child on the first day of the month of payment. A child that ages into a new tuition bracket after the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month will be automatically placed in that new bracket the following month. Similarly, if parents decide to change from full to part-time status or from 3-days to 2-days per week, the new tuition rate will only take effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the following month. At least two weeks' notice is required in writing when changing schedule.

*Mid-month start dates for new clients:* If your child is scheduled to start enrollment in the first 7 days of the month, you will be charged for a full month of enrollment. If your child is scheduled to start enrollment on the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month or later, you will be charged the daily drop-in fee for the number of days your child is scheduled to attend (depending on full or part-time enrollment status). There will be no discounts or credits applied for scheduled or unscheduled closures that may occur during the first partial month of enrollment; those days will be charged the fixed drop-in fee rate (see Drop-in Day Fees section below for more information).

*Mid-month withdrawals:* If you elect to withdraw your child from LadyBug Academy in the first 23 days of any month, you will be charged the drop-in daily fee (see below for more details) for each additional day of enrollment starting from the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. If you withdraw your child on the 24<sup>th</sup> day of the month or later, you will be charged the full monthly enrollment tuition for that month. All withdrawals require a 30-day advance notification, as covered in Section X.

*Multiple child discounts:* When multiple children from the same family attend LadyBug Academy schools, a 10% discount applies for the second enrolled child's tuition and 15% applies for the third and any additional child's tuition.

**LadyBug Academy tuition is based on enrollment status, not on attendance.** Tuition is not prorated, refunded, or credited if a child is absent due to illness, vacation, or personal reasons. Nor is tuition pro-rated, refunded, or credited if the Center is closed due to inclement weather, emergency closings due to electrical, water or building maintenance, or state mandated classroom closures due to public health considerations. Decisions about unscheduled closures of LadyBug Academy Centers will be made by Center Directors and announced via Brightwheel with as much advance notice as possible.

### **Materials Fee**

A materials fee is charged with tuition 4 times a year - Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter. A [schedule of materials fees](#) is maintained on the LadyBug Academy website under *Tuition Rates*.

### **Food Program Fees**

The fee to participate in the daily food program is \$6 per student per day of enrollment. The full amount to participate in the food program for the month will be billed at the beginning of each month. Parents will not be charged a food fee for LadyBug Academy's scheduled closure days. You will, however, be charged a food fee for unscheduled closure days if those closures occur due to circumstances that manifest within 5 business days of the unscheduled closure. If LadyBug Academy has more than 5 business days advance notice of an unscheduled closure (e.g. due to public health mandates), we are able to adjust the food delivery schedule with the provider and you will not be charged for those days.

### **Drop-in Day Fees**

If available and pre-approved (see Section IX for more details), additional drop-in days for part-time students will be charged on a per-day basis. Drop-in days will be billed at the end of each month and added to the next month's invoice. A [schedule of daily drop-in rates](#) is maintained on the LadyBug Academy website under *Tuition and Enrollment*.

### **Late Pick-up Fees**

Late pick-ups (after 6:00pm) will result in a fee in the amount \$5 for every 1 minute (or part thereof) and will be included in the next month's tuition invoice.

### **Other Miscellaneous Fees**

Item	Frequency	Fee
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Sheets (including Crib Sheets)	Per Week	\$20
Diapers (enough for full-day coverage)	Per Day	\$5
Wipes (enough for full-day coverage)	Per Day	\$5

## Payments

Monthly invoices and payment statements are available on Brightwheel for parents to review. Please note that the Brightwheel mobile phone application may only provide access to recent invoices and statements. You should be able to access a complete set of invoices and statements by logging in to the website.

**LadyBug Academy requires electronic payments for monthly tuition through Brightwheel and strongly recommends that parents set up automatic payments, which is possible through the application.** Payments made via check will be accepted in special circumstances but only with prior approval from a Center Director. Checks should be made out to LadyBug Academy or LadyBug Academy 2.

**Ladybug Academy reserves the right to change or adjust tuition and fees at any time.** All changes will be communicated at least 1 month in advance via the Newsletter and through Brightwheel and will be updated on the LadyBug Academy website. If you have any questions related to tuition, please contact your Center Director.

## IX. Enrollment Status: Full or Part-Time & Wait-List

We currently maintain three options for enrollment. These are full-time (5-days) or part-time, which may be either Monday-Wednesday-Friday (3-days) or Tuesday-Thursday (2-days) per week. We do not allow flexible day part-time enrollment schedules. For example, if you are only able to make Monday and Wednesday, you will still need to enroll in the 3-day program. **Due to limited space, we only offer full-time enrollment for infants.**

Schedule changes from part- to full-time or vice versa may be possible depending on Center capacity and with sufficient advance notice. A minimum of two weeks' notice is required in writing in order for a child to be considered for a schedule change.

## Drop-in Days for Part-Time Students

Parents may request additional attendance days for their child beyond their enrollment schedule. Such requests should be made in writing to the Center Director. The Director will check schedule availability and let you know if an opening is available. In many cases, availability can only be

determined the day-of based on absences of other children in the class. All drop-in days will be invoiced at the end of the month (see Section VIII for more information on drop-in day fees).

### **Wait-List**

A wait-list is maintained for those willing to pay a small fee (See Section VIII for fees). Enrollments from the wait-list are on a first-come-first-served basis. If a space becomes available and the next person on the wait-list does not confirm their intent to enroll within 24 hours, the space will be offered to the next person on the list. **Please note that current LadyBug Academy clients will have enrollment priority for additional children over new clients on the wait-list.**

### **X. Withdrawal Policy**

If you are withdrawing your child from LadyBug Academy for any reason, you must provide written notice to the Center Director of your intent to do so at least 30 days before your planned withdrawal date. We recommend you withdraw at the end of a monthly cycle. If your child's withdrawal will take effect outside the monthly cycle, you will be charged for the additional days as covered in the Section VIII.

### **XI. Cancellation of Enrollment**

**In rare cases, LadyBug Academy reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of any child.** The following reasons for cancellation of enrollment are for illustrative purposes only; this is not an exhaustive list:

- Non-payment or excessive late payments of tuition and fees.
- Not observing the rules of the Center as outlined in this Parent Handbook.
- Child has special needs that LadyBug Academy cannot adequately meet.
- Child is engaging in highly aggressive physical behavior that creates safety concerns for the other children enrolled in the class.
- Parents are highly disruptive, rude, or aggressive.
- Refusal to provide updated and accurate immunization and health records and/or refusal to immunize a child.

### **XII. Emergency Procedures**

Safety and well-being of all LadyBug Academy children and Staff Members is our first priority. Every possible effort will be made to ensure the safety of the children in our care.

We schedule, practice and document monthly fire drills (fire alarm/whistle sounds), and biannual shelter in place drills. In the unlikely event of disaster conditions, all children will be evacuated to an emergency shelter where they will wait for your arrival.

LadyBug Academy has an Emergency Response Plan in place. Should such an emergency occur,



LadyBug Academy will attempt to notify you as soon as possible via Brightwheel.

If emergency medical care is necessary, we call 911 first, and then parents. Should an ambulance be needed, parents will be responsible for any costs.

More information on emergency procedures can be requested from the Center Director.

### **XIII. Inclement Weather & Emergency Closings**

#### **Inclement Weather**

LadyBug Academy generally follows Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) inclement weather operating status determinations. When there is inclement weather, FCPS delays or closures will be published [here](#). A final decision on operating status for LadyBug Academy will be communicated via Brightwheel as soon as possible.

#### **Other Emergencies**

In the event of other emergencies like electrical outages or loss of water service, a Center may be forced to close. In such circumstances, every attempt will be made to inform parents of an emergency closing as soon as possible.

### **XIV. Health Practices - Prevention**

LadyBug Academy follows best practices to ensure a healthy, clean, and sanitary environment for all children and staff. Specific practices include:

- Handwashing: teachers will assist children to wash their hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds upon entering the classroom each morning, before and after all meals, after using the bathroom, and other times as needed (e.g. after an activity).
- Sanitizing: all surfaces, including classroom toys used by any child, will be regularly sanitized throughout the day with an approved sanitizing solution.
- Supply sharing: where possible, teachers will try to avoid having students share supplies and toys which cannot be easily sanitized (e.g. children will not be allowed to share playdough)
- Temperature checks: children may have their temperature taken during the day as a general health practice.
- Daily cleaning: LadyBug Academy contracts with a specialized cleaning crew to clean and sanitize the entire facility daily.
- Immunization of all children: LadyBug Academy requires that all children meet state immunization and physical examination mandates. This includes completing all documentation prior to any child's first day of school, as described in Section I. It also means that parents will need to regularly update their child's health records in order to remain enrolled. Specifically:
  - Health/immunization updates – every 6 months for children under the age of 2 years,



and once between each child's fourth and sixth birthdays. All documents must be signed and stamped by a licensed physician.

- Children's physical – every year for all children. All documents must be signed and stamped by a licensed physician.
- Nut-free facility: LadyBug Academy is completely nut free. We do not serve or use any products containing nuts. Parents must refrain from sending their children to school with products containing nuts.
- Medications: all documentation for any necessary medications must be kept current. Medications can only be administered if prescribed by a licensed physician and approved by a parent. See Section I for more details on required medication and allergy forms and practices.
- Sending children home when they feel sick: please see Section XV below for more details.
- Mask wearing: Mask wearing is optional for all adults and children over the age of 2 unless required by public health guidelines. Please see Section XVI below for more details.
- Limiting facility access: children exhibiting any symptoms of sickness will not be allowed into the facility under any circumstance.

*Healthy Eating:* Ladybug Academy does not serve or allow any sugary items into school, such as cupcakes, cakes, and candy. This policy especially applies to birthdays, holiday celebrations, and other special events. Healthy alternatives for celebrations include fruits, crackers, and cheese. We are happy to provide parents with a list of healthy and fun alternatives upon request.

## **XV. Student Illness Policy & Practices**

**Children who are ill cannot attend LadyBug Academy.** For the purposes of this policy, illness is defined as persistent cough, sore throat, sneezing, diarrhea, vomiting, yellow or green nasal discharge, congestion or runny eyes, chills or fever of 100 degrees F or higher, any visible rashes or bumps, lice/nit infestations, unexplained pain or swelling, if a child is not acting as usual, or there is any other suspicion of illness, including COVID-specific symptoms (see Section XVI).

If your child is exhibiting symptoms of illness, you must keep them home. If your child begins experiencing symptoms of illness while at school, we will use our best judgement to determine if the child should be removed the facility. If a child needs to be sent home, parents will be notified via Brightwheel or called (or both), and parents must arrange to have the child picked up as soon as possible.

### **Returning to school after an illness:**

Your child must be symptom free (without the use of medication) for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to school. That means that children who have been sent home, cannot return to school the next day.

Parents must inform the Center Director within 24 hours or the next business day after a child or any member of the immediate household has developed a reportable communicable disease, as defined in the [Virginia Reportable Disease List](#), except for life threatening diseases which must be reported immediately.

## **XVI. COVID-Specific Guidelines**

**LadyBug Academy generally follows Fairfax County Health Department (FCHD) guidance regarding quarantines, testing, readmission, and sanitization requirements.** Guidance is regularly updated and [available here](#). LadyBug Academy reserves the right to require additional safety measures in order to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

### **Mask Policy**

As of August 1, 2022 masks are optional for all children and adults. We will do our best to accommodate individual preferences with respect to mask wearing. We recommend that children under the age of 2 not use masks.

### **Exhibiting Symptoms**

Symptoms of COVID-19 may include:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

If a child is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 at home, they are not allowed to attend school until they have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours without use of medication.

If a child is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 at school, they will be immediately isolated in a safe location at the facility and sent home. They will not be allowed to return to school until they have been symptom-free for at least 24 hours without use of medication.

### **Close Contact with Confirmed COVID Case**

**“Close contact”** is defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) but generally means that an individual has been within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15

minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

Parents will be notified if a child is determined to have been in close contact at school with a child or staff member that has been confirmed to have COVID-19. Quarantine periods are no longer required in cases of close contact where the child is asymptomatic, but mask-wearing may be recommended depending on age and vaccination status.

LadyBug Academy reserves the right to implement test-to-stay requirements for children who have been in close contact with COVID. A Test-to-Stay program would require parents to test their children with rapid tests provided by the school before bringing them to school on Days 1-5 after the COVID exposure.

For general information on current quarantine and testing requirements, [please click here](#).

### **Confirmed COVID Case**

In the unfortunate event of a confirmed positive COVID-19 case at LadyBug Academy, all parents of children who may have been in close contact with the infected child or staff member will be notified.

Any child with COVID-19 will need to follow FCHD quarantine and testing requirements ([read them here](#)) prior to returning to school.

**Please note that specialized guidelines apply for childcare facilities.** Specifically, though updated county guidance has reduced the minimum quarantine period for confirmed cases to 5 days, **children who are too young to mask (under 2 years old) or are older than 2 years but unable to consistently and correctly wear a mask, may only return after the minimum quarantine period if they show proof of a negative COVID test on Day 6 and Day 8** (tests to be conducted 48 hours apart). This means that the first possible day back at daycare for an unmasked student would be Day 8 if the second negative test is conducted in the morning before school hours. On day 11, all unmasked children may return to school even without showing negative tests if they have been symptom-free (without use of medication) for at least 24 hours.

A cluster of more than 3 confirmed COVID-19 cases in a single group is considered an outbreak and will be reported to the Fairfax County Health Department and LadyBug Academy's assigned Virginia Department of Education licensing inspector.

### **Other Information**

Please note that monthly tuition will not be prorated or refunded in the event of COVID-19 related absences or closures.

## XVII. Injuries & Accidents

Every consideration will be taken to ensure the safety of your child while in our care. Should a minor injury occur, parents will be notified on Brightwheel or by phone (or both). An Accident Report will be completed and signed by the closest staff member witnessing the injury. Parents will be asked to review and sign all Accident Reports. All head injuries – no matter how minor – will be reported to parents and an Accident Report will be completed.

Should a major medical emergency or accident occur, Center staff will first call 911 and follow their instructions. Parents will be notified as soon as possible using all available means of communication.

Please be aware that LadyBug Academy complies fully with Virginia Department of Education requirements for all required staff to maintain their medication authorization training, first-aid, daily health, and CPR certifications.

## XVIII. Challenging Behavior

We will make every effort to work with parents to ensure a cooperative and collaborative approach for children having difficulties with behavior. We are here to serve and protect all our children! Center staff are trained to use a technique called positive redirection to address challenging behavior. However, a parent will be notified on Brightwheel or by phone (or both) if a child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that cannot be modified by Center staff and an *incident report* will be prepared and ready for a parent's signature on the next day. If necessary, the parent may be asked to pick up the child from school. **In any situation that a child poses a physical or emotional threat to the well-being of other children or themselves, they will be isolated immediately and parents will be required to pick them up.**

LadyBug Academy maintains security cameras in all classrooms and most common spaces. In many cases, behavioral incidents are captured by the cameras. In such cases, video may be shared with parents by the Center Director. Video will only be shown in-person and will never be sent or otherwise shared for privacy reasons.

The following steps may also be taken for children who display *chronic* disruptive behavior or behavior that upsets the emotional or physical well-being of other children or Ladybug staff members.

### 1. Initial Consultation:

The Center Director will schedule a conference with at least 1 parent. The problem will be described and intervention strategies will be discussed. Intervention strategies may include referring a family to seek support at Fairfax County Public Schools [Early Childhood Child Find](#). The best solution for addressing the problem behavior will be agreed upon in collaboration by the Center Director, teacher,

and parent(s). Any added expenses related to providing resources to control behavior will be the responsibility of the child's parents.

## **2. Second Consultation:**

If the initial plan for helping the child fails and the behavioral problems continue, the parent will again be asked to meet with the director and teaching staff involved. Another attempt will be made to identify the problem, and establish a new, or revised, approach to address the behavior. This may include requiring someone to shadow the child (typically a licensed therapist) and modify his/her challenging behavior while at school. Any added expenses related to providing resources to control behavior will be the responsibility of the child's parents.

## **3. Disenrollment:**

When previous attempts have been unsuccessful and no progress has been made toward solving the problem, a child may be disenrolled from the Center at the discretion of the Center Director.

*Please note: corporal punishment is not allowed at LadyBug Academy. We define corporal punishment as the use of negative physical touching (spanking, slapping, pinching, etc.).*

## **Biting**

Even though biting is a normal behavior for young children, it is not an acceptable one. Children who bite are often frustrated by their inability to convey or verbalize their feelings. We can help children learn more acceptable ways for expressing themselves using several positive strategies.

1. First, we comfort and administer first aid to the child who was bitten. It is important to give that child lots of affection and attention.
2. Second, we inform the biter of the unacceptable action. After attending to the bitten child, we tell the biter, "I can't let you bite. Biting hurts." We use firm but not harsh words and facial expressions.
3. Third, we redirect the biter's behavior and demonstrate / teach an alternative positive behavior. We demonstrate how to use soft touches. When necessary, we move the biter to a less frustrating area and engage him/her in a different activity.
4. Finally, we work cooperatively to prevent biting. Together, parents and staff identify reasons for a child's biting and implement positive behavior management strategies to extinguish the negative behavior.
5. If, however, the child continues to bite despite our interventions, she/he may be asked to withdraw from our Program for the time being and return when the biting is under control. Please be aware that a temporary withdrawal is only possible if parents continue to pay full tuition. Non-payment of tuition will be treated as a permanent withdrawal and subject to all the terms stipulated for withdrawal in Section X.

## **XIX. Child Abuse and Neglect**

Staff members are required by law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. All staff who care for children, as well as the Center Director, are obligated to complete Child Abuse and Neglect training. We also conduct abuse and molestation trainings for all staff working at LadyBug Academy.

## **XX. Educational Program & Kindergarten Workshop**

LadyBug Academy offers a variety of educational activities for children daily. Each week's activities are based on the Weekly Themes Calendar that is provided to parents each month via the newsletter. Themes cover different topics related to science, social studies, arts, culture, language, and more. All lesson plans for school activities are created by teachers based on the monthly themes and consider the interests and backgrounds of enrolled children.

The Kindergarten Workshop is a fun educational program offered free-of-charge by LadyBug Academy to pre-K students to help prepare them for kindergarten. The program focuses on language arts and mathematics and takes place daily in the afternoon. More information on the Kindergarten Workshop and our educational program is available on the website.

## **XXI. Classroom Transitions**

Aside from infants and toddlers, children will generally be transitioned to new classrooms each September for the new school year. Classroom assignments are made individually based on the child's age, social and emotional development, potty training, and academic level. Special requests for placing children in specific classrooms or levels will be taken into consideration, but the Center Director will make the final determination for all classroom assignments and will also consider the collective benefit of all children in each classroom. Mid-year transitions for individual students may be recommended based on their development. Such a decision would be made in consultation with and with the approval of the child's parents.

Children must remain in classrooms on the first floor until they are 2 ½ years old. Infants generally transition to a toddler classroom at 16 months, and toddlers transition to more advanced classrooms (including classrooms on upper floors) at around 2 ½ years of age.

## **XXII. Outdoor Time**

Licensing requires that children be taken outdoors each day, weather-permitting. Ladybug Academy children have scheduled outdoor time daily, at least 30 minutes in the morning, and 30 minutes in the afternoon. Please ensure your child is dressed accordingly: light jacket and cap in fall and spring; heavy winter jacket, mittens, scarf and hat in winter. An extra sweater or sweatshirt at school is recommended for sudden changes in temperature.

### XXIII. Diapers & Potty Training

Parents are required to supply all diapers, wipes, and diaper cream for their children. We are able to store these items for you at the Center, however we do not allow supplies brought in bulk. Please note, we cannot apply diaper creams or ointments without written authorization to apply non-prescription topical skin products (see Section II). Baby powder is not permitted at the Center. The teachers make their best effort to inform parents when running out of supplies. However, if your child runs out of diapers or wipes, we will use the Center's supplies and charge your account a fee (See Other Miscellaneous Fees in Section VIII). **Cloth diapers are not permitted at LadyBug Academy.**

Our teachers are experienced in training young children on how to use the bathroom. It is essential that the parent and teacher communicate about the needs of the child and work together to make this developmental milestone positive and successful. We recommend that when in training, **your child be dressed in "user-friendly" clothing and have spare sets of clothing each day** in the event of accidents. Overalls, zippers, and snaps are difficult for small children to manage--especially in a hurry! Portable potties are not used or allowed in the Center. Teachers will make their best effort to support potty training; however, in difficult circumstances with resistant children it may be necessary to use pull-ups during the day for hygienic reasons.

Children that are being potty-trained are generally assigned to classrooms with easier access to a bathroom. This may mean that your child is placed with children who are not the same age if potty-training is delayed.

### XXIV. Breastfeeding Support Policy

Ladybug Academy supports and encourages breastfeeding. We will ensure that:

- We provide a breastfeeding-friendly environment.
- We invite mothers to come to the Center and nurse their babies or express breastmilk at any time during the day, and there is a comfortable place for them to do so.
- All breastfeeding families are able to properly store and label milk at the Center. There is always refrigerator space available for daily storage of breastmilk. We don't provide freezer storage for breastmilk.
- All new staff receives training in storage and handling of human milk.

### XXV. Birthdays

Unless a parent requests otherwise, birthdays are celebrated at LadyBug Academy. Usually we celebrate by singing the happy birthday song and sharing any healthy snacks provided by parents. Just as birthdays are a time to celebrate, they are also a time to practice safety. The following list of outside items is prohibited for birthday celebrations at LadyBug Academy:

- Balloons



- Party Hats
- Plates (will be provided by LadyBug)
- Utensils (will be provided by LadyBug)

*Please Note: any party favors provided will be sent home with children at the end of the day, not distributed during the day.*

Parents are not allowed into the Center to join the celebration, but teachers will make their best effort to take pictures (but no videos) of the occasion. If a birthday is to be celebrated outside of school, please do not involve LadyBug staff members in the logistics or planning of your celebration. The only exception is if an entire class is invited, in which case teachers may help with distributing invitations into the children's cubbies. **Our Center will not distribute contact information of any kind for privacy reasons.**

## **XXVI. Cultural Celebrations**

LadyBug Academy celebrates all children and their cultures. If you want some element of your culture included in our program calendar, please contact the Center Director. We will make our best effort to include it in our Weekly Themes Calendar.

## **XXVII. Photographs and Publicity**

With your consent, photographs of the children in our programs may be taken from time to time and may appear in newspapers, magazines, brochures, publicity materials and/or educational trainings. Your permission is required for LadyBug Academy to use photographs of your child without compensation. A Photo Release Form is included in your Welcome Package (see Section II).

### ***Changes in Policies***

***The fees, procedures, and policies stated in this handbook are subject to change at the discretion of the Center Director or Center owner.***

Thank you for selecting LadyBug Academy as your childcare provider!