

Family Handbook

for

*Vinings
Academy*

International Preschool Program

2008-2009

School Year

School Information

Our addresses are:

Vinings Academy at S. Cobb
4425 S. Cobb Drive, Suite A Smyrna, GA 30080
770-805-0068

Vinings Academy on Concord
1198 Concord Road, Smyrna, GA 30080
770-437-8405

Vinings Academy at St. Benedict's
4223 West Atlanta Road, SE
Smyrna, GA 30080
770-990-2661

Directors: Vilma Lupo & Janet Rau

We are all here to help your child have the best possible preschool experience. Please feel free to discuss any aspects of your child's experience with any of us! We truly appreciate your decision to send your child to our school. Welcome to our family!

Entrance Requirements

1. All students must be between the ages of 2-5 years old on the day that they begin school with us.
2. Enrollment will be limited due to class size limits.
3. A child will not be accepted for enrollment or enrollment will not be continued in the preschool in cases where the director(s) and staff determines that the services necessary to protect the health and safety of the child or other children in the class while at the school cannot be provided.
4. Registration fees must be paid and all paperwork must be completed prior to the student's first day.

Withdrawal

Parents understand that admission to the preschool obligates the child to be enrolled for the entire school year. Withdrawals for hardship will be accepted solely at the discretion of the school.

Schedule Changes

Schedule changes must be made in writing on the schedule request form. Requests are just that and will be accommodated as we are able. Requests for reductions in schedules will only result in the corresponding reduction in tuition if there is another student ready to take the day(s) that are being released. The director will let you know what date, if any, the requested schedule change will take effect.

School Year

Our preschool program operates year-round. We publish our school-year calendar each January for the following school year. During summer months students are registered weekly to accommodate family travel plans.

* Holiday / Spring Break programs may be made available for an extra fee.

Fees/Tuition

Tuition is based on the days for which your child is registered. Tuition is due by the 1st of each month. If tuition is not received by the 10th the student account will be charged a late fee of \$25. If tuition, including late fees, is not paid by the 15th, the student may be removed from the class roster until tuition is brought current. Students are registered for the entire year and non-attendance does not release families from this commitment.

	Single Payment	2 payment structure		10 Month payment structure	
Ages 2 – PreK* Schedule options	August 1 st	August 1st	November 1st	August 1 st	Sept. 1st – May 1 st monthly payments
2 days	\$2,250	\$1,140	\$1,140	\$230.00	\$230.00
3 days	\$3,125	\$1,580	\$1,580	\$320.00	\$320.00
4 days	\$3,900	\$1,925	\$1,925	\$390.00	\$390.00
5 days	\$4,450	\$2,250	\$2,250	\$455.00	\$455.00

- The PreK program at St. Benedict's will be a 5 day per week enrollment. 3-day and 4-day schedules are available at S. Cobb & Concord Road
- Each student must also pay \$100 as a non-refundable registration fee.
- A supply fee of \$45 will be billed with the first tuition invoice.

Parent Teacher Conferences

We do not schedule regular parent teacher conferences for the preschool students. We are always happy to schedule an appointment to sit down with you to discuss your child's progress. Please schedule these conferences with your child's teacher and/or the director at your school.

Upon occasion, we may request a conference to discuss your child's progress. These conferences need to be scheduled before or after regular school hours. Please be aware that during carpool times we do have many children to get safely out of or into cars and so this is not an appropriate time for impromptu conferences.

School Hours

Our preschool hours are 9:00 – 1:00.

Please do not drop-off your child prior to 9:00. If you need to speak with us please make a morning or afternoon appointment so that during school hours we can focus on the children!

A late fee will be charged for any child not picked up by the end of the school day. Having children in the school after 1:00 jeopardizes our preschool status with the state, so it is very important that everyone is picked up on time.

The school at St. Benedict's will eventually have an extended day program for students who need longer hours of care – additional forms will be required for this program when it becomes available.

No one will be allowed to pick up a child unless they are listed on the written *Pick-up Approval List in the student's file or designated as an emergency pick-up person on a signed & dated note from a parent that has been sent in to the school.* If the person picking up your child is not well known to us, we will ask them to park and come in to pick-up the student and they will be required to show a photo ID. In *emergency situations only* a call can be made to change pick-up for the day but notes are the preferred method. Please make sure that car seats are available. **No child will be allowed to leave in a car with out a car seat.**

School Days

Our school is open Monday – Friday. Students register for the days that best fit their family needs. PreK students are encouraged to attend a Mon- Fri schedule. Space is limited and all days may not be available.

***The PreK program at St. Benedict's will be a 5 day per week enrollment. 3-day and 4-day schedules are available only at S. Cobb & Concord Road*

Attendance

Regular attendance is expected unless your child is ill. We have a specific curriculum and an academic plan for each child to accomplish during the week. Parents are requested to call in to inform us of any illness – letting us know symptoms so that we can keep the community as a whole informed of any illnesses that the other children have been exposed to. Knowing a child will be absent in advance will also enable us to schedule in make-ups for other children more effectively.

Make-ups

Every effort should be made to have your child attend on the days for which they are registered. If a child must miss school we offer the following policy for make-ups. Each child may have 1 “free” make-up per school semester

1st Semester: 1st day of school – Thanksgiving break

2nd Semester: Thanksgiving Break – February 27th

3rd Semester: March 1st – Last day of school

Make-ups are scheduled as space permits. Make-ups MUST be scheduled in advance to ensure that we have space available and proper staffing to accommodate your child. Each make-up day after the first during a semester will include a daily charge of \$10.

Due to the flexibility of the summer program, make-ups are NOT available.

Holidays and Spring Break weeks can NOT be used as make-up days. Make-ups must be taken during the semester in which the absence occurs and are not credited to reduce tuition. 5 day per week students pay a lower daily tuition because they do not have an option for make-ups.

Snack & Lunch

We are a NUT FREE SCHOOL! Please read the labels of all prepackaged food to ensure that you are not sending any items that contain nuts. We have several children with potentially life-threatening nut allergies. Any meals found to contain nuts will not be opened and you will be charged for an emergency lunch. Additional information about nut allergies is available at the front desk.

We ask that you send a nutritious snack & lunch each day. We take a snack break at 10:00 and have lunch at 12:00. Please do NOT send candy, junk food or sweets. We will send any unopened food or food that is in a resealable container back home in your child's bag so that you know what they have eaten. We also offer an optional monthly lunch program for \$3.75 daily if you would like us to provide your child's food. A daily "emergency lunch" is available for \$4.50.

Please make sure that all lunch boxes/bags and any reusable containers that you send in are clearly labeled with your child's name. Unlabeled items can easily get put into an incorrect bag accidentally! Please help your items find their way home!

Inclement Weather/Emergencies

Severe weather or other emergencies may necessitate the closing of the school. When such closing can be foreseen, an announcement will be made as early as possible.

If Cobb County Schools are closed we are closed. If Cobb County Schools are doing a delayed start prior to 10:00 we will do so also. If Cobb County Schools are doing a delayed start 10:00 or later we will be closed.

A phone tree may be organized to help disseminate information more quickly and efficiently for early morning decisions.

Illnesses

When your child is ill:

- If your child is vomiting or has diarrhea or fever, keep them home. They are probably contagious. Send your child back to school when they have been **SYMPTOM FREE** for 24 hours.
- If your child is on antibiotics for a contagious illness (i.e. strep, pinkeye, etc) please keep at home until treated for 24 – 48 hours. This will keep the condition from spreading to other children.
- If your child is on medication. Please arrange the medication dosage schedule so that there is not a need for us to give medicine during the school day. We are not able to give over the counter or prescription medication without complete written instructions signed by the parent/guardian and all medication containers must have child resistant lids and be labeled with your child's complete name.
- If your child becomes ill at school (i.e. fever, vomiting, diarrhea, etc.) we will call you to come and get them as quickly as possible. We realize how inconvenient this may be for working parents but it is imperative that children who are sick not be at school for their own comfort and for the health of all other students and staff at the school (and their families!!).

School Bags

Each child needs to bring a school bag that can accommodate their personal belongings as well as being a tool for parent/school communication. Bags need to be checked each school day to ensure that you are aware of all activities and communications. Please use the type of bag which can have a safety pin attached to it (canvas or fabric). We will supply the pin and we have appropriate bags available for a charge of \$12.

Personal Belongings

All personal belongings and clothing such as hats, sweaters, coats, bags & especially SHOES should be clearly marked with the child's name (using last names helps in the case of hand-me-downs to younger siblings!)

All 2-3 year olds should have a complete change of seasonally appropriate clothes in their bag at all times. All children who are in diapers or in the process of potty training should also have a large size zip lock bag in their bag in case of "accidents" (it is a great idea to keep the change of clothes in this bag to keep everything neat).

For students in diapers or in process of potty training, please make sure that their bag contains a supply of diapers & wipes sufficient for at least 2 days at school. For children who are with us for 5 mornings you may send in a diaper bag so that you don't have to restock your school bag daily. We will let you know when we need more.

Parent Drop-ins

While we love for our parents to feel comfortable coming into the school, we need you to be aware of the schedule for all of our staff during the school day. We arrange our classrooms and staff the school for all of the students who are attending for the day. If a teacher is pulled away from their group then it disrupts that group's schedule. Children can also become upset when parents come and leave again (not just your child but any of the children – they see parents and expect that carpool has started). If you would like to observe your child during school hours, please schedule the time with us in advance and make every effort to observe discreetly and not take time away from the teachers.

We have a “mystery reader” program, designed so that parents can come in during the day and read a book to their child's class. This activity will be planned with the day and the students will know that a parent is coming “just for a visit”. Please let us know if you would like to volunteer for this program.

Birthday Celebrations

If you would like to send in birthday invitations to be sent home in school bags we are happy to help as long as all children in the class are invited. If you would like to have a celebration on a smaller scale, please use the family directory or class lists to mail invitations.

On your child's birthday, you may send in special treats – *please keep in mind the nut-free environment!* If you would like to send a disposable camera for us to take pictures or if you would like to come in and have the treat with them, just let us know! We typically have the children share their special treats after lunch is over (approximately 12:15).

If you do decide to come in, please plan on having your child leave with you – even for older students it is confusing for mom or dad to come and then leave without them that close to carpool. *** this does not apply to Kindergarten students or children who attend the extended day program at the St. Benedict's location.*

GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL!!

For our first time parents we would like you to know a few things that may make your child's transition to school a little smoother.

1. Talk about school! Try to begin a month before your scheduled start date. Be enthusiastic about it! Drive by the school and pretend you are in carpool line. Explain that the teacher will get them out of the car.
2. Move the car seat to the driver's side of the car (S. Cobb) or passenger's side (Concord).
3. Start getting on the school schedule. Wake up & get dressed by the time you would need to for arrival at school. 10:00 snack time / 12:00 lunch time. Adjust morning nappers to afternoons.
4. Have "school" clothes ready. (We have an optional school shirt that is appropriate for all activities)
5. Don't Worry! We will call you if there are any emergencies; some children walk in the first day without a problem and some can take a week or more to really settle into the routine. Regular attendance is imperative for them to make a successful transition.

Carpool Etiquette

It is very important that we create a safe carpool system. We have developed the following guidelines to help us create an efficient and safe carpool.

1. No cell phone usage once you enter the parking lot area. *PLEASE make sure that any other person picking up your child is aware of this rule!!*
2. Have your child stay buckled until you have a staff member ready to help them out of the car.
3. Stay in your car.
4. Obey the directions of the staff member in the parking lot.
5. Be aware of and be courteous to the parents around you.
6. If you would like to bring your child into the building, please park in a parking spot and walk carefully across so that the curb area can be used for parents dropping off.
7. Do NOT leave your car in the carpool lane even for just a minute! It creates a back-up very quickly!

Drop-off begins at 9:00 am; there will be a staff member there to help the children out of the car and into the school. Prior to that please remain in your car or on the sidewalk with your child(ren) securely in your control.

If you arrive late for drop-off, pull up to the curb side or into a parking spot and bring your child to the door. Ring the bell and we will come to get your child.

Pick-up guidelines! Pick-up begins at 12:45.

1. No cell phone usage once you enter the parking lot area. *PLEASE make sure that any other person picking up your child is aware of this rule!!*
2. Stay in your car.
3. Obey the directions of the staff member in the parking lot.
4. Again, be courteous to the parents around you!
5. While we may buckle children in their seats, it is always your responsibility to check all car seat restraints to ensure your child's safety after leaving the carpool line.
6. Please be patient while we get the children and communicate with other parents. If you need to have your child picked up early for appointments or other afternoon commitments please call or send in a note.

Family Handbook Agreement

Child's Name _____

I _____ have read and agree to comply with the Vinings Academy Family Handbook. I understand that rules may be added or changed during the school year as the school staff feels that they are necessary and that the school will inform me of these changes and/or additions via the school's website, email or school bag communication.

Signature

Date