

The logo for Sparrow Academy features a stylized blue sparrow silhouette integrated into the letter 'S' of the word 'Sparrow', which is written in a dark blue, elegant serif font. Below 'Sparrow', the word 'ACADEMY' is written in a dark blue, all-caps, sans-serif font.

# Sparrow ACADEMY

Where Learning & Healing Meet

**Student Handbook**

# Table of Contents



## Academy Policies

Discipline Policy.....	2
Equality Statement.....	3
Parental Involvement.....	3
School Climate & Discipline.....	4
Approach to Discipline.....	4
Behavioral Expectations.....	5

## General Rules & Regulations

Attendance.....	6
Bullying.....	6
Dress Code.....	8
Individual Behavior Plans.....	8
Medication.....	9
Cell Phones/Electronics.....	9
Computers/Media.....	9
School Property.....	10
Chapel.....	10
Visitors.....	10

# Academy Policies



## Discipline Policy

**The mission of Sparrow Academy is to approach the whole child in a compassionate, safe, and progressive learning environment where all children are able to reach their maximum potential.**

Our core belief at Sparrow Academy is based on the paradigm of a compassionate, progressive approach to education. We understand that children respond to their environment and we strive to take a purposeful, relational approach to our children, parents, and teachers in order to create a place of safety and acceptance for children to learn. Sparrow Academy is attuned to the latest research and studies in education, neuroscience, and the healing arts, and has taken that knowledge to create a school for children who need that understanding.

We take a purposeful, relational approach to all individuals, especially those children who need a calm, relaxed environment, those exposed to trauma, and those who are dealing with emotional stress. We seek to understand the connection between presenting symptoms and behaviors and the child's life experience in

order to better educate the child. We offer an environmentally-aware atmosphere that focuses on meeting the needs of the child before the child acts out to have needs met.

We understand that our brain controls all behaviors. In order to calm the behaviors of children, we must work to calm their brain. Neuroscience tells us the brain can be calmed through the five senses. Therefore, our classrooms are calm, sensory-aware environments. We strive to understand why behaviors happen instead of blaming the child for the behavior. Once the behavior is understood, we can then help the child behave in a more appropriate manner.

We also believe that ultimate healing only comes from God. Therefore, guiding children to a personal understanding and relationship with God is imperative to success. We lead children in a daily time of prayer and reflection. Additionally, all children take part in direct instruction on the Bible and attend weekly chapel services.

## Equality Statement

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

## Parental Involvement

Sparrow Academy understands the importance of families being actively involved in the education of their children. As such, administration and teachers encourage parents to volunteer in variety of ways at Sparrow Academy. Parents can accompany their child on field trips, volunteer to help with school events, be a guest speaker in a class, or parents can participate in our mentoring program which involves mentoring another student here at Sparrow whether weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly.

# School Climate & Discipline

At Sparrow Academy we take a proactive, innovative approach toward classroom management and student discipline. We will strive to meet the needs of children before they act out to have their needs met. We understand that our brain controls our behavior. Therefore, in order to calm student behaviors, we must first calm the brain.

We take a positive, proactive approach to meeting the behavioral needs of our students in a manner that promotes respect for self and others. At Sparrow Academy we implement a “responsibility modeled approach” toward discipline, instead of the traditional “obedience modeled approach.” The key points to our classroom management program will focus on the following aspects:

- Managing student behavior is part of the job of an educator.
- All children deserve to be treated with dignity.
- Discipline works best when coupled with effective teaching strategies
- All adults will strive to make positive, consistent connections with children.
- Acting out equals stressed out and can be an act of sanity.
- Being fair is not always equal. Each child and situation will be handled by considering all of the relevant facts.

## Approach to Discipline

The approach to discipline at Sparrow Academy incorporates the components of a variety of programs and research. We take a common sense, proactive approach. We use what has been called the “Rule of Good Judgment,” when disciplining a child. Our program is based on the neuroscience research of Dr. Bruce Perry and Dr. Spencer Kagan. We implement components of “Discipline With Dignity” developed by Richard Curwin and Allen Mendler, and the idea that children do well if they can, developed by Dr. Ross Greene. Our program is proactive and strives to ensure a calm, peaceful environment for children and teachers.

Sparrow Academy does not have a lengthy document that sets out to define every offense a child may commit, along with an “if that, then this” set of consequences. Instead, Sparrow Academy employs professionals who look at a situation, consider all of the factors, and then make an informed decision that will help the child learn a better way to handle a similar situation in the future. We see behavior just like academics. If a child cannot read, we teach; if a child cannot multiply, we teach; if a child cannot behave appropriately, we teach.

At Sparrow Academy we endeavor to not use out-of-school suspension. We understand that children need to be in class in order to learn. Most children with emotional illness know how to “leave.” At Sparrow Academy we want to teach children how to stay. Only after multiple interventions have been unsuccessful, will out-of-school suspension be considered.

## Behavioral Expectations

All students at Sparrow Academy are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is respectable and God-honoring. Students are expected to treat their classmates, teachers, staff members, and self with dignity.

If a student requires a behavior plan, administration and teachers will meet to discuss the student’s behaviors and all possible options in order to help the student succeed. Parents will be informed of the plan. Sparrow Academy offers a variety of concessions that can help students meet their needs and goals. The staff of Sparrow Academy will expect the student to strive to meet his/her individual behavioral goals and to follow the behavior plan developed. Parents may be required to attend meetings involving their child’s progress if the student still struggles with the initiated plan.

All infractions of a student’s behavior plan will be documented and provided to the child and parent, as needed. A student’s continued refusal to work towards the goals set in the individual behavior plan may result in dismissal from Sparrow Academy.

# General Rules & Regulations



## Attendance

Regular school attendance is extremely important for student success. While we understand at times students will miss class due to appointments, these should be kept at a minimum as much as possible. The school day begins at 7:45am each morning and ends at 2:45pm. Any student arriving after 7:45am will be considered tardy. All early check-outs will be documented on the student's attendance record. Excessive absences, tardies, and early dismissals could result in dismissal from Sparrow Academy. Ten or more unexcused attendance issues per quarter may result in your child being placed on probationary status.

## Bullying

Bullying can affect the mental health and well-being of the child. More importantly, it can severely interfere with a student's healing and progression at Sparrow Academy. Research suggests that children who are bullied over time are more likely

to experience depression, anxiety, become lonely, and often prefer to avoid school. Research also suggests those who bully over time are at higher risk of intense anti-social behaviors such as problems at school, aggressive behavior, and substance use. Therefore, Sparrow Academy will not tolerate bullying. The staff of Sparrow Academy will strive to maintain a bully-free atmosphere. All accusations of bullying will be investigated and dealt with in an appropriate manner. In order for an incident to be considered bullying, the following criteria must be met:

1. The behavior is unwanted, offensive, threatening, intimidating, insulting, causing discomfort or humiliation, or interferes with the individual's school performance which results in the victim feels stressed, injured, or threatened.
2. The behaviors are repeated.
3. There is an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim.

Consequences of bullying at Sparrow Academy will result as follows:

1. Anyone who is caught bullying will be counseled by the staff member who witnesses it.
2. Staff member will fill out an Incident Report for administration to be kept on file.
3. Administration will meet with student to counsel them on the effects of bullying and discuss future consequences if bullying persists.
4. Administration will use "good judgement". Using good judgement involves taking into consideration all aspects of the situation to conclude a consequence that is appropriate, based on the action(s) of the offender.
5. Administration will enforce consequence, whether holding student back from special activities, in-school or out-of-school suspension, etc. Administration will determine if dismissal is necessary. Decisions will be based on the student's receptiveness on reform.



## Dress Code

**Tops:** A Sparrow Academy t-shirt is to be worn daily.

**Bottoms:** Students may wear pants or appropriate length shorts made of any fabric desired. Shorts must be at least mid-thigh length. Pants and shorts should be free of rips or tears. Pajama pants are not allowed.

**Shoes:** Students must wear closed-toe shoes of the appropriate size. Boots, crocs, slides, and slippers are not allowed.

**Hoodies/Jackets & Logos:** No hoods are to be worn while inside the school or church. Students will be asked to wear an alternative jacket if they persist in having their hood on while in the school or church buildings.

*\*No large graphic designs on hoodies/jackets are allowed.*

*Any clothing that has words, terms, or pictures is unacceptable. Examples include but are not limited to: people, drug references, violent images, skulls, profanity, etc.*

## Individual Behavior Plans

Students at Sparrow Academy who are in need will work with administration and teachers to develop personal behavior goals and a plan to reach the goals. The plan will be individualized for each child and will include short as well as long term goals, steps for reaching goals, student, teacher and parent interventions, and rewards and consequences. Once developed, the plan will be reviewed with each student's parent or guardian. This individual plan will list specific, inappropriate behaviors and will list the progressive disciplinary actions that will be taken for individual students. All plans will be reviewed and revised as needed to meet the changing needs of the student.

## Medication

**Students are not allowed personal possession of any medication while at school.**

All medications will be stored in a locked cabinet in the school clinic. Medication will be administered by a trained staff member based on a doctor's order that must be on file with all medications. All medications must be brought to the school by an adult – only parents/guardians. Students should not bring medication for the clinic. Medication must be in the original labeled container prepared by a pharmacist or manufacturer accompanied by a completed Authorization for Medication form.

## Cell Phones/Electronics

**No cell phones or electronic devices of any kind are permitted on school grounds.**

Our culture is bombarded with electronic devices along with the internet and the social media they deliver. Although there are great benefits to accessing information instantaneously on our cell phones, they can become a distraction and are not necessary while attending Sparrow Academy. If there is an emergency, a member of the staff will contact a student's parent/guardian. In a non-emergency situation, the matter will be determined by administration if it is necessary to contact the parent/guardian.

## Computer/Media

All middle and high school students will have access to laptops for class projects and school work only. Students will not be allowed to explore any websites other than what is instructed by their teacher. Teachers are to monitor student use of laptops. Laptops will not be used for student free time. Instead, each classroom is equipped with a small library of books, games, and activities.

## School Property

Students are responsible for maintaining all books and materials in good, usable condition. Students are also expected to treat all areas of their school building and surrounding property with respect. Student/Parent will be responsible for any lost or damaged materials/property.

## Chapel

The acknowledgement and worship of God is a vital part of Sparrow Academy. As such, all students and staff alike are required to participate in chapel services. Chapel will be held once per week in the sanctuary of the church.

## Visitors

Students may not have visitors during the school day. Any parent or guardian wishing to observe their child in class must obtain permission from administration prior to the visit. Any outside counselors or other professionals wishing to visit with students must have proper documentation and should arrange visits in a manner which would minimize the disruption of the student's educational process.

Upon your enrollment into Sparrow Academy, you will need the following items in your student's cumulative folder:

- Birth Certificate
- Immunization Record
- IEP/Recent Report Card
- Any student records

*\*All student records will be kept at Sparrow indefinitely. In the unfortunate event that Sparrow ceases to exist, student records will be held at New Life Assembly.*



**SparrowAcademy.org**

863.777.2269

8595 Hwy 98 N • Lakeland, FL 33809