

Parent & Student Handbook

2022-2023



402-390-0556
1110 N. 66th Street
Omaha, NE 68132

<https://phoenixacademyomaha.org/>

Executive Director – Nancy Liebermann
Assistant Principal - Jen Di Ruocco

Phoenix Academy Day School

Phoenix Academy is an independent private ALL DAY school established in 1991 for children who are experiencing difficulty learning. We are approved by the Nebraska State Board of Education for kindergarten through 8th grade, and our teachers are certified. We follow the rules and regulations required by Rule 14 for operation of private schools in Nebraska.

Many of the students who attend Phoenix Academy have had difficulty learning to read, and often have had difficulty with math as well. A high percentage of these children have been labeled Attention Deficit, Dyslexic, Learning Disabled, or Underachievers. Some have been in Special Education classes and even with this additional help they have not been able to progress.

Without appropriate reading, spelling, writing, and math skills, children often find the classroom a hostile and threatening environment. Research done at the University of Oregon has shown that 90% of the children who are behind in reading at the end of first grade will be even further behind at the end of the fourth grade. There is a high probability that these same students will drop out of high school.

The Phoenix Academy is successful because of the curriculum and the small student teacher ratio. Students are taught to read by multi-sensory intensive phonics based approach to spelling, reading and writing using Spalding's Writing Road to Reading. Our teachers receive extensive training in this method. In addition to a strong language arts program, math, science, social studies, health, art, physical education, and music are part of the curriculum. We also offer summer school classes.

Curriculum and Classroom Organization

It is essential that our students work at a level where they are having success. They must work in a relaxed atmosphere with encouragement and praise.

As students learn, and relearn, phonics and the rules of the English language they will begin to believe that they can learn. They will start to ask questions. They will begin to enjoy reading and learning. Homework becomes their own because it is at their ability level. They will also begin to be proud of themselves for all that they are accomplishing.

Students in all grades begin by learning the Orton phonograms. From here, students progress according to their ability. They begin to learn spelling and vocabulary, and then sentence and paragraph writing. All students learn to proofread, recopy, illustrate, and perfect their own written work.

All students are placed at a math level which the student understands and finds success in. We always focus on basic math facts first and then employ a variety of different math programs depending on the child's needs.

Social Studies and Science are incorporated into the language arts program and are also taught in isolation.

In addition to the core classes, students receive instruction in Music, Art, Physical Education and Health. Library is a class for younger students and Noticability (an entrepreneurship program) is taught in the upper grades.

The students have rules and regulations, as they need to know what is expected of them. They will have the security of certain boundaries and will be with adults whom they know and trust. They will grow to understand that the teachers care for them and have their best interest at heart.

The success of the Phoenix Academy is measured by the countless number of students who have returned to traditional classrooms with the skills they need to be successful. The students stay on average at the Phoenix Academy for two to three years.

Phoenix Academy Pledge

I realize that one of the greatest powers in the world is the power of knowledge.

I am smart and I can learn.

I recognize that making mistakes helps me learn.

I will discuss what I have learned and questioned at school today.

I will learn new skills and work hard on them.

I will read for learning and read for enjoyment.

I will follow my dreams and pursue my goals.

Today, I will treat myself and others with respect and kindness.

Phoenix Academy Policies and Procedures

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR CLASSROOM

1. School begins at 8:15 sharp each day. Tardies will be counted at 8:16 AM.
2. Students are permitted to enter the school at 8:00 AM.
3. Students begin each day with the Pledge of Allegiance and the Phoenix Academy Pledge at 8:20 AM.
4. Gum chewing, eating or drinking beverages in class and hallways is not allowed. The exception for this is a sealable water bottle containing **only** water. Students must keep the water bottles closed and in designated areas set by the teacher. Water bottles **MUST** be metal or plastic. No glass.
5. Students are to leave the classroom only with permission from the teacher.
6. Students are required to be courteous to all teachers, staff, and visitors of Phoenix Academy.
7. Students are to follow the rules set by each individual teacher.

ABSENCE

Parents are requested to call the school office (**402-390-0556**) by 9:00 a.m. to explain the reason for their child's absence. If the parent does not report the absence, the school office will call to determine the child's whereabouts.

A written or verbal excuse explaining the absence from school from the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) must be presented to the school at the time of the student's return. The Director will assess absences of more than 10 days per semester.

Parents may make arrangements for homework assignments to be sent home with a sibling, friend, or to be picked up from school after the school day if it is the student's second day of absence or beyond. Beginning in first grade, with support from the school and home, getting homework assignments is ultimately the responsibility of the student. Please request makeup assignments ASAP to allow for teacher preparation.

Excessive absences and tardies may result in your child being dismissed from our school. Please contact the director if there is a medical concern or family emergency that is affecting attendance.

APPOINTMENTS and EARLY DISMISSAL

Visits to a physician or dentist by students during the school day are discouraged. Parents are encouraged to schedule appointments as close to the beginning or end of

the school day as possible. The parent or guardian must come inside the school to sign the child out.

ATTENDANCE

School begins each day at 8:15 a.m. Tardies will be recorded when students arrive at school. Regular attendance at school is strongly encouraged. Excessive absences are detrimental to both the student and to the class.

BIRTHDAYS and HOLIDAY PARTIES

Students may bring a special treat to celebrate their birthday. Snacks should be store bought and individually wrapped. Please coordinate this with the student's teacher.

CALENDAR

The calendar is set each year by the Director and the teachers. It is published annually, listing teacher in-service and non-student days, parent/teacher conferences, holidays and activities. A copy of the school calendar shall be provided to each student.

WEATHER and CLOSURES

Watch local TV stations or check online for school closings due to inclement weather. Not always, but we usually follow OPS for school closures due to weather. Once school is in session we will not close early. However, with predicted severe weather in our area, parents are free to pick up their child early from school.

We will keep the children inside for recess if the weather is unstable, too hot or cold or air quality a concern.

CANCELLATION OF SCHOOL DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event that snowfall or severe weather conditions cause it to be unsafe to have school, Phoenix Academy shall cancel school. Notification of cancellation will be made on major radio and television stations beginning at 6:00 a.m. that morning and an email will be sent to the email address provided to the school. Whenever there is severe winter weather, parents should listen for school information. In the event of a tornado during school hours, students will be taken to the Multipurpose room which also serves as a FEMA certified storm shelter.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

Students will participate in fire, tornado, lock down and lock out drills throughout the school year. For the protection of all students, staff, and property students must follow directions the first time they are given by staff members. Any student, who interferes or contributes to the interference of a drill shall be subject to disciplinary action.

CARE AND USE OF SCHOOL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY

A student who damages or destroys school facilities, its contents or property, or the personal property of other students or employees of the school, will be required to make complete restitution as provided by Nebraska law. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Books and materials provided by the school to the students for their use are expected to be returned in good condition. Students and their families will be held responsible for any damage to the books and materials in their care. Students are encouraged not to bring personal property to school. If they choose to bring personal property to school they assume complete responsibility for such items.

CELL PHONES

Cell phones are not to be used at any time during the school day, including recess. Students who have a cell phone out or one that goes off during class time will have their phones confiscated and it will be kept at the front office. First offense, it will be returned at the end of the day. Continued issues with cell phones during school may result in the phone being held overnight. We do have a cell phone garage for safe keeping at the office for students who ask for us to hold them. Phoenix Academy is not responsible for cell phones that are lost, damaged, or stolen at school.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Electronic devices including **cell phones are NOT ALLOWED** to be operated before, during or after school. If electronics are brought to school, they are to be turned off and kept in their backpack or in their locker at all times. Electronic devices include but are not limited to (cell phone, iPads, and Smart Watches). Students may use the office phone for necessary calls. Bringing electronics as well as valuables is strongly discouraged. **Phoenix Academy will not be responsible for lost, stolen or broken items.**

CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT

State law requires that if any school faculty member has reasonable suspicion that a student has suffered from any form of child abuse (emotional, physical, sexual or neglect), the school must contact the Child Protective Services of the Nebraska Department of Social Service. The school must also cooperate with Child Protective Services or police investigations of reports of child abuse or neglect. In cooperation with such investigations, the school may be prevented from informing parents of such suspicions or investigations.

CLOSED CAMPUS

Students are not to leave campus at any time during the school day without permission. This includes before and after school, the lunch period, and recess breaks.

CLOTHING IDENTIFICATION

Identification is required on all outer clothing in order that lost items may be returned to the proper owner. Lost and found items will be placed in a container in the school office. All items not claimed will be donated to charity.

COMMUNICATION

Our primary way of communication will be through email or Class Dojo. Therefore, it is very important for every family to be connected via an email address or phone number. You may respond via email or Class Dojo.

A newsletter will be distributed to the students to take home the first Thursday of each month. In addition to the paper copy, an emailed version will be sent out. It will contain important dates and information about upcoming news, events, and opportunities and may contain parenting tips etc. At times there will be additional notes sent home when the need arises. **It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to review and retain this information for future reference.** Please check your child's backpack daily.

COMPUTER USAGE

Damages: Using the school computer is a part of the curriculum but it is also a privilege. Typical wear and tear of the computers is understandable, but students also need to take responsibility and handle the computer with care. The parent/guardian will be responsible for the cost of any repairs beyond normal wear and tear. If computers are sent home for virtual learning they must be returned in working condition. Any lost chargers or computers will be the parents' responsibility to pay for full cost.

GoGuardian: We use a monitoring program to protect the children from visiting sites not relevant to school work. The staff is alerted if your child attempts to open a site that has questionable information. If your child is often choosing to use curriculum time to visit unrelated sites, their computer will be taken away for a determined amount of time.

DISCIPLINE

The teacher is the first and main vehicle of school discipline. The teacher and/or administrator determine consequences for inappropriate behavior. The final decision regarding what is best for the student and Phoenix Academy is made by the administration. Parental cooperation is essential in all areas of discipline. Phoenix

Academy uses a school-wide approach to teach self-discipline skills to its students. These skills are listed below:

- Listening
- Following Instructions
- Asking Questions
- Self Advocacy
- Social Skills
- Cooperating with and Respecting Others
- Understanding Rules and the Reasons for the Rules
- Accomplishing a Task
- Leadership Skills
- Communicating Time Effectively

Compliance with three school-wide rules is expected of all students at all times. These rules are:

1. Demonstrating respect for yourself and others.
2. Demonstrating responsibility by following school and classroom expectations.
3. Demonstrating safe actions to aid in our secure environment.

Discipline will vary from class to class, depending upon the teacher and the needs of the students. Classroom discipline will be used to address infractions of the three school-wide rules, and infractions against classroom procedures.

Toys

Toys (i.e. fidgets, slime, pop its, Pokemon Cards) are NOT ALLOWED. Repercussions will be at the discretion of the teacher.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips shall be scheduled when they have a purpose which supports the curriculum of the school. Parents or guardians shall be notified in writing of the time, date, and mode of transportation and other pertinent details of the field trip. Students may not participate in field trips without written permission from parents or guardians. The school reserves the right to deny students the privilege of attending a field trip, if deemed necessary.

FIGHTING and OTHER DISTURBANCES

When a fight occurs, the possibility of injury or damage to the people involved, other people, and property exists. For the protection of all students, staff, and property, such action will not be tolerated. Fighting on school property during school hours will result in disciplinary action that may include suspension or expulsion and may be referred to the legal authorities. Causing or attempting to cause physical injury to a school employee or student may result in suspension or expulsion. Any student, who interferes or contributes to the violent action or disturbances or

further inflames the issue, shall also be subject to disciplinary action. Students who observe a disagreement or fight in progress must notify a staff member immediately.

GENERAL GROOMING and APPEARANCE

General grooming and appearance must be neat, modest and appropriate. Hairstyle must be neat and not a distraction to others. T-shirts, shirts or shorts worn under uniform clothes may not be visible through uniform clothing (such as a dark colored t-shirt).

HARASSMENT

It is the policy of the school to provide a learning environment free from discriminatory insult, intimidation, sexual harassment and/or other forms of harassment. Harassment may be overt or subtle, but whatever form it takes (verbal, nonverbal, or physical), harassment is insulting and demeaning to the recipient and will not be tolerated.

Students are expected to conduct themselves as good citizens at all times. Examples of poor citizenship shall include, but not limited to, teasing, taunting, name-calling and all other forms of verbal or written cruelty based on any real or perceived physical or personal characteristic. The use of abusive, profane or obscene language or gestures is prohibited. Such behavior may result in disciplinary action.

HOMEWORK

Homework will be assigned at all grade levels. The amount of work and time necessary to complete the homework will increase as the student's skills improve. All homework assignments are important. Homework provides reinforcement of classroom lessons and mastery of concepts and allows students the opportunity to share newly learned skills with their families. Responsibility is also learned; learning to follow directions, complete an assignment independently, and turn the lesson in on time, are skills necessary to the student's success.

On average, 10 minutes multiplied by a student's grade level gives parents an approximate guide for time spent on homework. A minimum of 20 minutes reading each night is also expected. **It is very important that our students complete all of their work with little assistance.** We insist that parents do not correct the student's work at home when this happens, teachers have a difficult time gauging the student's true ability.

If you feel your child is assigned too much homework, the homework is too challenging, or your child is having difficulty completing homework in a reasonable amount of time, please contact your child's teacher(s) to discuss possible accommodations. **Failure to complete homework may result in disciplinary action at the discretion of the teacher or administration.**

ILLNESS

A student who is ill or has a temperature should be kept home until symptom free and fever free without medication for 24 hours. Students who are ill with easily communicable diseases, such as rash, pink eye, chicken pox, etc. may not attend school until cleared by a physician. When

children become ill with such conditions at school, parents will be contacted to pick up the child from school as soon as possible. When a student is ill at school they will be sent to the office to be evaluated. When necessary, the parent will be contacted. **All COVID concerns should be directed to Nancy Liebermann.**

MASKS

The school year will begin without mandatory mask wearing. However, the administration will monitor COVID concerns within the community and if we see the need to require masks due to a surge in cases, we will require and provide masks for all staff and students. At any time students may choose to mask for their own safety and provide their own masks.

IMMUNIZATIONS

All students are required to have a copy of their immunization records on file at school. The records must include the date, month and year of administration. Immunization shall not be required for a student if we have one of the following: A statement signed by a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner stating that immunizations would be injurious to the health of the student, or a signed statement from a parent stating that immunization conflicts with the personal and sincerely followed religious beliefs of the student and family.

SCHOOL PHYSICALS

In accordance with the Nebraska Law LB-59-Rule 55, a printed form signed by a licensed physician indicating that a physical examination was administered on a specific date within the previous six (6) month period on a specifically named individual prior to the entrance of a child into kindergarten and seventh grade or in the case of transfer from out of state, to any other grade, shall be required. As a substitute for such evidence of a physical, an objection (waiver) to a physical examination of such child signed and dated by a parent or guardian of such child may be submitted to the school.

INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE AND GESTURES

The use of abusive, profane or obscene language or gestures is prohibited and offenders may be suspended or excluded from class and/or school. Abusive, profane or obscene language includes, but not limited to, slandering or abusing the ethnic background, sex, race, religious preference or physical appearance of any student or staff member which by their very utterance inflict injury and/or intent to incite an immediate breach of peace.

BREAKFAST

Breakfast is not provided at school. Students must consume their breakfast prior to entering the building.

LUNCH and SNACKS

Students must bring their lunch daily and are asked to bring food and drink in non-breakable containers. **Students must supply their own napkins, straws and plastic silverware.** Items requiring preparation, such as ramen, must be brought **already prepared** in an appropriate

container. Parents are asked not to send soda, powder packs, or gum as part of a child's lunch. Pizza will be available for purchase (cash only) on Fridays, however students must still provide their own beverage. A milk (white or chocolate) ticket may be purchased for a lunch time beverage. If food needs to be microwaved please limit cook time to 2-3 minutes. Students may bring a nutritious snack to eat during the morning recess. If your child happens to forget or brings an inappropriate lunch we will provide peanut butter/sunbutter and saltines. Due to food allergies, we have a no sharing policy with food. If your child has a food allergy, please inform the office and classroom teacher(s).

MEDICATION - GUIDELINES FOR DISPENSING

When under the exceptional and/or occasional circumstances a student is required to take oral medication during school hours the medication will be administered in compliance with the following regulations:

1. Prescription medication must be brought to school in the **original container**, properly labeled, including the student's name, physician's name, and directions for administering.
2. Over the counter medication (Aspirin, Tylenol, Motrin, cold tablets, cough drops, etc.) will be administered **ONLY** with written permission from a parent or guardian and a signed statement from the child's physician with directions for administering..
3. ALL medication must be left at the office and will be properly stored. An exception would be an inhaler used to control asthma.
4. Medications not picked up by a parent or guardian will be properly disposed of at the end of the year or when the student is no longer enrolled at Phoenix Academy. Any student who needs to limit his/her physical activities due to health or injury must bring a written note from the parent, guardian or physician explaining the special consideration.

PARKING

Parents are asked not to park north of the front door between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. as the students will be using the blacktop for recess. Please drive very slowly and use caution in the parking lot at drop off and pick up time. The safety of the students is our number one concern.

PICK-UP and DROP OFF

Students may be dropped off as early as 8:00 a.m. and picked up by 3:45 p.m. We do not offer before and after school care. For the safety of ALL students, we ask that you drive slowly in and around the school perimeter. **Please remain off cell phones when students are present in the parking lot.** Follow the procedures for pulling around to pick up your child or park in the lot. There is NO PARKING on 66th Street.

POLICY ON ALCOHOL and DRUG USE

Phoenix Academy prohibits the possession, distribution, and use/consumption of alcohol, drugs/controlled substances, tobacco, nicotine products or vaping materials (e.g. e-cigarettes),

chew, imitation controlled substances, and drug paraphernalia by any student. Lighters, matches, smoking paraphernalia, and nicotine packaging are also included in this policy. These items will be confiscated and disciplinary action will be taken.

Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary sanctions being taken within the bounds of applicable law, up to and including short-term suspension, long-term suspension, expulsion, and referral to appropriate authorities for criminal prosecution.

FIREARMS, EXPLOSIVES and WEAPONS

Phoenix Academy prohibits any weapon on school property. Weapon is defined but not limited to: firearm, BB gun, paintball, airsoft gun, knives, explosive materials, brass knuckles. These items will be confiscated and disciplinary action will be taken. The administration has the final discretion of what is considered a weapon. Law enforcement may be contacted.

Violation of this policy will result in disciplinary sanctions being taken within the bounds of applicable law, up to and including short-term suspension, long-term suspension, expulsion, and referral to appropriate authorities for criminal prosecution.

RECESS

Recess periods, outside, are provided daily for all students. The students perform better AFTER a break and many benefit immensely from the opportunity to spend time in the fresh air. During inclement weather, students will have indoor recess. The students must bring clothing needed for outdoor recess (hats, gloves, coats, and boots). Students WILL NOT be excused from outdoor recess because they do not have appropriate outdoor wear. Notification by a parent is required to excuse students from recess or any other school activity.

REPORT CARDS and PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Students will receive a report card for each quarter. Phoenix Academy offers parent/teacher conferences each semester. Parents are expected to be in attendance. Parents should welcome this opportunity to confer with the teacher on the progress of their child and to receive information from the teacher about their child. Teachers are available for conferences at other times during the school year. Parents should arrange these meetings with the individual teacher.

All student fines and fees including tuition must be paid, and all school property and library books must be returned before students receive their final report card.

TUITION

Phoenix Academy is a 501(c)(3) not for profit school. All revenue to operate the school is received through tuition and fundraising. The true cost to educate a child at our school is \$11,000 per child so even for families who pay the highest amount of tuition charged, it does not cover the cost. We do not receive funds from the state or federal agencies to supplement tuition.

Tuition is collected through FACTS and the payment plan is set up with the parent. It is extremely important that payments are made as set up in your plan. When tuition payments are 30 days past due, the tuition payment is considered delinquent. It is the family's responsibility to inform the Director if they are unable to fulfill their obligation to stay current with their monthly tuition. **When tuition is delinquent and the school has not been contacted, the child is in jeopardy of being dismissed from the school.** Enrollment for summer school or the following year will not be an option and the child will be placed on the waiting list, if tuition from the school year is past due.

UNIFORM GUIDELINES

Girls:

Girls may wear the appropriate skirt or jumper, in McDonald plaid, black or khaki. Pants and walking shorts in black or khaki made of a woven material (cotton, twill, etc.) may be worn. Walking shorts must be no more than 2 inches above the knee. Shirts or blouses are to be plain white, black, or red with a collar. Plain or solid color tights or form-fitting leggings are optional, but must be worn under the school skirt or jumper and not in place of pants. Sweat pants, jeans, and form fitting pants are not allowed.

BOYS:

Shirts are to be plain white, black, or red with a collar. Pants and shorts in black or khaki made of a woven material (cotton, twill, etc.) may be worn. No jeans, knit, or sweat pants will be allowed. No sagging will be allowed.

ALL STUDENTS:

Shoes are to be closed (tennis shoes are recommended). Open toe shoes (sandals, sliders, slippers, flip flops or high heels) are not allowed. A change of shoes is required during snowy months. No wet shoes or boots will be allowed in class. Socks must be worn at all times. Sweaters or sweatshirts worn in the classroom are optional and must be plain black, plain white, plain red or the official Phoenix Academy sweatshirts. All types of outerwear are allowed during recess.

FREE DRESS:

If your student has earned a free dress pass, shorts are allowed but must be 2 inches above the knee. No tank tops, crop tops, or ripped pants are allowed. The administration has the final discretion of appropriate attire.

PARENT & STUDENT HANDBOOK

Please verify that you have read and discussed this handbook with your child. Both you and your child need to sign this form and return to school by August 31, 2022.

I have read the Phoenix Academy Parent & Student Handbook. I understand that the policies are for the safety and well being of all students.

Parent's Signature

Date

Print Name

Child's Signature

Date

Print Name