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Parent Handbook

Program Year 2018 - 2019

5015 Fannin Street

Houston, Texas 77004

713-526-5015

www.nehemiahcenterhouston.org

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MISSION, VALUES, AND GOALS

**VISION** To help develop in a child a sense of self-worth, Christian

values and direction that will ensure his/her lifetime self-determination.

**MISSION** Neighbors helping neighbors create a safe haven in which children are motivated, inspired and equipped to realize their God-given potential.

**VALUES**

**STATEMENT** As Christ’s disciples, we are obligated to be His role models in a culturally sensitive and age appropriate way.

*Adopted by the Board of Directors September 23, 1995*

***The Nehemiah Center reserves the right to amend the Parent Handbook at any time.***

HISTORY AND MISSION

Over two decades ago, a group of volunteers from First Presbyterian Church who tutored at MacGregor Elementary School developed the idea for the Center. Deeply touched by the children they tutored, the volunteers envisioned a place, a safe haven, where the needs of children and their parents could be met. Inspired by the work of Nehemiah from the Old Testament, they started and supported a new ministry.

The Nehemiah Center is a multi-faceted ministry model that provides assistance to low income families who are invested in seeking a better future for their children through education, emotional wellness and spiritual enrichment.  This Christian-based non-profit organization works with children attending public schools in Houston’s inner city. The Nehemiah model is a holistic approach to building children’s lives, minds, hearts and spirits by working with the entire family.  The Center serves and follows the children as toddlers through their college years by engaging and retaining family participation year after year, creating the opportunity to build trust and a sense of community through relationships. We provide services to assist children in overcoming barriers to their academic and life success.

NEHEMIAH CENTER STAFF

Lucia Apreza Kitchen Manager

Maria Bolaños Pre-K4, Assistant Teacher

Kathy Brown College Prep Program Teacher

Joseph Carrier Afterschool Teacher

Willie Mae Countee Receptionist, afternoon

Justin Deslandes Pre-K3, Lead Teacher

Maribel Estupiñan Receptionist, morning

Heidi Glantzberg Grant Writer

Kristi Gonzalez Bookkeeper

Nora Hall Development Coordinator

Melodee Jordan Director of Education

Tonia Labbé Executive Director

Sam Marshall Volunteer Coordinator

Katie Moorman Marketing and Communications Coordinator

José Perez Family Services Coordinator, Music Ministry

Deysi Rivera Pre-K3 Assistant Teacher, Administrative Coordinator

Jackie Rosette Pre-K4, Lead Teacher

Diana Sanchez Afterschool Art Teacher

Shaundra Simien Bus Driver

TBD Director of Development

LaTisha Washington College Prep Program Manager

Emma Watkins Administrative Secretary

Dr. Ellen Welsh High School Transition, Counselor

## PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Nehemiah Center offers the following programs and services:

***Mommy and Me Program*** *(toddlers and caregivers****)***

***Prekindergarten*** ***Program (***3-5 year-olds)

***Afterschool Programs***

***Academic Enrichment Program – AEP*** *(Kindergarten –5th grade)*

***College Prep Program -- CPP*** (6th-12th grade)

***Academic Tutorials*** *(by selection only)*

***Family Services***

***Effective Parenting Program (EPP)***

***Mental Health Services and Referrals***

***Micro Finance Program***

***ESL, GED Referral Program for Adults***

***Discovery Middle School at Nehemiah Center – DMS-N (6th, 7th, 8th)***

***NOTE:*** *The Nehemiah Center is licensed as a child-care center, therefore, the area within 1,000 feet of Nehemiah is designated as a gang-free zone. Any criminal offense related to organized criminal activity within this area is subject to a harsher legal penalty.*

# ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

# **ADMISSION POLICY AND ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

Families must qualify for the HISD free/reduced lunch program. **Verification must be presented prior to enrollment.** Special consideration may be given to households who do not meet income requirements and other families who can demonstrate a special need. Recommendations are also accepted from select school officials and First Presbyterian Church members. Enrollment applications are available at the Front Desk from August 1 – September 30. After completing the forms, the prospective family will meet with the Family Services Coordinator to review enrollment qualifications and space availability.

### **GOOD STANDING POLICY**

Many families have been with the Center for several years and have benefited from consistent participation. **Continued participation from year to year is based on the individual family’s “good standing” with the Center. All parents must:**

1. Complete the appropriate enrollment forms each year.

2. Provide academic information on child(ren) throughout the year: report cards,

STAAR testing results, and standardized testing scores.

3. Satisfy 20-hour volunteer requirement every school year.

4. Complete Effective Parenting Program requirements.

5. Adhere to all the Center’s program policies.

6. Pay program fees in a timely manner.

7. Cooperate and attend public relations/fundraising activities for the Center.

### **The Nehemiah Center reserves the right, at the discretion of the Executive Director, to immediately terminate the enrollment of a student whose family does not meet the “good standing” requirement.**

MONTHLY TUITION AND OTHER FEES

## PROGRAM FEES FOR PROGRAM YEAR 2018-2019

Pre-K Regular Day (3-5 years old) $90/ month per child (8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.)

Pre-K Extended Day (3-5 years old) $200/month per child (8 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.)

Pre-K Annual Registration Fee $50 per child

Afterschool Program (K-12th) $90/month per one child

*Family discounts*: Afterschool $110/month per two children

*(Pre-K not eligible for discounts)* $130/month per three or more

**PAYMENT**

**Payment Due:** The first (1st) of each month

**Payment Options:** Only checks and money orders accepted. **NO CASH PLEASE.**

**Payment Procedures:** Use a payment envelope to submit your payment

**Payment Envelopes:** Provided at the Reception Desk (Front Desk). Please complete the information on the outside of the envelope so that your account is properly credited. Place your payment in the fee box located by the Front Desk. Your receipt will be placed in your mailbox. Please collect and keep for your records.

**Late Payment Fees:** $10 fee will be assessed for every payment received after the 7th day of the month.

**Late Payment Notification Procedure:**  A late notice reminder will be placed in the child/parent mailbox after the 7th of each month unless specified otherwise.

**Returned Check Fees:** Each returned check will be assessed a $6.00 fee in accordance with banking procedures. Parents with returned checks should make all future payments using a money order.

**Late Pickup Fees: $1 per minute per child late fee will be assessed for any pickups after 3:00 p.m. for Pre-K and after 6:00 p.m. for AEP and College Prep (CPP). No exceptions. If you fail to pay we reserve the right to add the additional amount to your tuition.** We will follow the time on the clock in the lobby. Please adjust your watch accordingly. **The late fee is due when you pick up your child. Excessive late pickups will result in your child’s dismissal from our program.**

**CO-OP OPTION**

The CO-OP program allows a limited number of parents to work in lieu of paying fees. CO-OP is offered on a short-term basis (3 months maximum) for families who are experiencing extreme financial difficulty. Please call Ms. Watkins at (713) 526-5015 to discuss the program. There is limited availability in the CO-OP Program.

**It is extremely important that all parents remain current with fees to ensure your child's continued participation in the program. Failure to stay current with the payment schedule may result in family dismissal from the program.**  If you experience a financial hardship, please contact Mr. Perez, Family Services Coordinator, to discuss the matter.

CENTER POLICIES

***NOTE*:** *Parents who would like to review or discuss the policies and procedures of the Center should request a meeting with the Director of Education.*

**ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN: PREVENTION AND RESPONSE**

The Center provides annual training for employees through its partnership with the Children’s Assessment Center, a community leader in the prevention of and response to child abuse and neglect. A similar session is offered to parents through the Effective Parenting Program. Pertinent written materials are posted in the entry hallway. Parents of a child who is a victim of abuse or neglect should contact the Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline at 1-800-252-5400, [www.texasabusehotline.org](http://www.texasabusehotline.org)

**BREASTFEEDING POLICY**

Parents may breastfeed or provide breast milk to their children at the Center. Any mother wishing to breast feed should check in at the Front Desk to find out which private area is available at that time.

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

The Center takes security and emergency planning very seriously. The most recent Emergency Plan is posted on the bulletin board by the copier in the entry hall.

**ENTRANCE TO THE BUILDING**

When dropping off or picking up your child at any time, you must use the entrance/reception area on Palm Street. To enhance security, the front door remains locked at all times and the Receptionist will unlock the door electronically for approved visitors.

**ATTENDANCE: AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM**

If your child will not be attending the afterschool program on any given day, please call to notify the Center staff **no later than 1:00 p.m**. Please let us know if your child is staying after school for ANY reason (tutorials, extra-curricular activities etc.). It is extremely important to let the bus drivers know about any child who will not be riding the bus in the afternoon.

**CLOSURES**

Nehemiah Center programs will be limited or cancelled on “bad weather” days or if emergency conditions are present such as, but not limited to, a severe thunderstorm, flash flood, and/or tornado/hurricane watches. Please monitor media broadcasts and the REMIND system (see next item) for updates on the Center’s availability. The Nehemiah Center follows HISD’s school closing decisions.

**COMMUNICATION**

The Center provides each family with a mailbox for special announcements and important dates and times of relevant events. **Please check your box on a regular basis! Additionally, make sure you** **enroll in REMIND, a free messaging service, to receive important messages from the Center (e.g. school closings).**

**DISCIPLINE**

Please refer to the Discipline Policy in this Handbook that is in effect for all Center programs. Parents share the responsibility for ensuring that their children are aware of the behavioral expectations and consequences for all students enrolled in the Center.

DISMISSAL TIMES: AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS

Our goal is to provide children with a **one-hour uninterrupted academic enrichment session Monday-Thursday from 4:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m**. During this session the children receive tutoring/mentoring, assistance with their homework, and are scheduled for a reading skills activity. We **require** as an **enrollment policy** that parents agree to pick up children after the academic session to help us fulfill our program goal. AEP children and College Prep Program youth may be picked up after 5:30 p.m.

Frequent early pickups will be noted and may be cause for tutors to be assigned to other children at the discretion of the Director of Education and Volunteer Coordinator. If a child must be picked up before 5:30 p.m., please inform staff in advance. We would prefer one week notice to communicate with tutors to let them know their students won’t be present that day.

**DETENTION/EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

The Center will not be responsible for transporting children or youth who are required to do detention after school or participate in other school activities. The parent must notify the staff as soon as possible when this occurs so as not to delay pickup of other children.

EARLY ARRIVAL

**Please DO NOT drop your child off before the start of his/her program**. This includes morning drop-off for Pre-K and afternoon drop-off for the afterschool program. Supervision is very limited before the start of the programs.

**EARLY DISMISSAL DAYS**

Throughout the year, schools schedule Early Dismissal days. The Center will provide extended care for your child on those days including early pickup. Typically, Center field trips are scheduled on these days. **During 2018-2019 Discovery/Nehemiah students will be dismissed EVERY WEDNESDAY at 12:45 pm. Discovery Middle School students must be enrolled in the College Prep Program to remain at Nehemiah after 12:45 pm on Early Dismissal Days.**

EMERGENCIES: ILLNESS AND ACCIDENTS

**All family information forms must be updated regularly by parents with current information on who to contact and what medical services to access during a health emergency.**  Your child will be treated for minor illness and accidents on site. We use an *Incident/Illness Report* to inform you of any incident that involves your child while he or she is in our care. We will be as specific as possible in the report and will ask that you sign the form as an indication that you were notified of the situation.

**FOOD ALLERGIES: INFORMATION**

Parents must present signed documentation by a health care provider regarding their children’s food allergies. With parental permission, vital information regarding individual allergies is posted in all areas of the Center so that caregivers are alert to children’s needs. Pertinent allergy information is also taken on all field trips.

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

It is the general policy of the Nehemiah Center not to provide monetary assistance to members of the community.

**HEARING AND VISION SCREENINGS**

These screenings are provided each year to all students enrolled in the prekindergarten.

**ILLNESS**

Children who are ill must be kept at home when the following symptoms are observed: fever (101 degrees or higher), diarrhea, vomiting, sore throat, eye infection, constant cough and/or runny nose, ear ache, and head lice. It will be left to the discretion of the Nehemiah staff to decide if your child is healthy enough to remain at the Center. Please notify the Center immediately if your child contracts a communicable disease such as chicken pox, strep throat, head lice, Fifth disease, or mumps.

**IMMUNIZATIONS**

The law requires the Center to request a current record of immunizations and a medical statement. These documents and other required paperwork must be on file with the Center before your child can be enrolled in prekindergarten or the afterschool programs.

**LICENSING REQUIREMENTS**

All Nehemiah Center programs are licensed by the State and must adhere to standards set by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) in order to ensure the safety of the children we serve. Required signage is posted in the lobby for your perusal. The Nehemiah Center is required to report all cases of suspected child abuse and neglect to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and other appropriate authorities. Additionally, parents have the right to contact local licensing offices.

**Texas Department of Family and Protective Service (DFPS)**

701 W. 51st St.

Austin, Texas 78751

or

P.O. Box 149030

Austin, Texas 78714-9030

(512) 438-4800

<https://www.dfps.state.tx.us>

**Local Licensing office:**

2500 Bolsover 2221 W. Loop S.

Mail Code: 6002 Mail Code: 1826  
Houston, Texas 77005 Houston, Texas 77027

Tel: (713) 986-3300 (713) 940-5200

T**exas Abuse/Neglect Hotline**

1-800-252-5400; <https://www.txabusehotline.org>

# **MEDICATION**

If your child should require medication during the school day, parents must complete a form authorizing its use. Medicine must be in the original bottle and a medication form with the doctor’s name and number must be filled out. We will only accept medication that has a current prescription. Please give medicine directly to teachers. A parent authorization form must also be completed for non-prescription medication and parents must supply the medication.

**PARENT PARKING AREAS**

Parents may park in the Nehemiah lot that fronts San Jacinto Street (back parking lot), on Palm Street, or in the large First Presbyterian Church (FPC) parking lot on Main Street. The FPC lot has a single entrance located on Oakdale Street. A Parking Attendant frequently monitors access to the lot. If questioned, Nehemiah parents should identify themselves as members of the Nehemiah community.

**Parents may NOT park on the Origin Bank property and may NOT park (or “wait”) in the Mann Eye Institute lot. Towing is enforced by both these property owners. Parents who ignore these policies and continue to use the Origin Bank area or Mann Eye Institute lot will be asked to withdraw their students from Nehemiah programs.**

**POLICY CHANGES: NOTIFICATION**

Information on changes in Center policies are made through one or more of the following methods: posting on entry hallway bulletin board; letter in parent mailbox; REMIND texting system.

**RELEASING CHILDREN IN THE AFTERNOON**

Children are only released to parents and those ***persons authorized by parents in writing***. On the enrollment form, please list anyone who may pick up your child during the academic year. In the event that someone not listed on the enrollment form must pick up a child, please follow this procedure:

1. Notify the Center in writing: bring a note or fax a note to (713) 526-8687.

**Parents are responsible for making sure the staff receives the note.**

2. Proper identification (e.g. drivers license) will be required before a child is released.

3. The individual must abide by the “pickup policy” and “late pickup policy.”

**“REMIND” COMMUNICATION SYSTEM**

All families should enroll in this phone alert system to receive important reminders and emergency information from the Center. Information on how to sign up is included at the end of this handbook and is available at the Front Desk.

**VALUABLES**

Students should not bring valuables, toys or excessive amounts of money to the Center. When you are picking up your child please do not leave any valuables (purse, bags, etc.) visible in your car and be sure your car is locked. **The Center is not responsible for the loss of valuables. Please be aware of your surroundings.**

**VISITING THE CENTER: PARENTS, VOLUNTEERS, OTHER ADULTS**

All adults visiting or volunteering at the Nehemiah Center between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. are required to sign in at the Front Desk, wear an identification badge, and sign out after their visit. Visitors will not be allowed beyond the Front Desk without proper identification and a valid reason for their visit. Pre-K and afterschool program parents are welcome to spontaneously observe center activities as long as their presence does not disrupt staff attention to the teaching and supervision of children.

FAMILY SERVICES

**EFFECTIVE PARENTING PROGRAM (EPP)**

The Family Services Program expects parents to be an integral part of their children’s academic lives and to partner with the Center in motivating, inspiring, and equipping their children to realize their God-given potential. To help achieve these objectives, Family Services offers a variety of adult learning and participation opportunities known as the Nehemiah Center Effective Parenting Program (EPP). The EPP has three components:

* *New Family Classes*
* *Parent Seminar Series and Special Events*
* *Parent Volunteer Activities*

*1. New family classes*

These classes are the first component of the Effective Parenting Program (EPP). All new parents/guardians/caregivers are required to participate in the New Family Classes to remain in “good standing” with the Center. Please review all the information below and mark your calendar for the class dates you are expected to attend. **Classes are mandatory to maintain your child’s enrollment in the Nehemiah Center and all its programs.**

**ALL NEW PARENTS Pre-K3 to 12th GRADE: “Nehemiah Center Orientation”**

September 18, Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. Please bring your *Nehemiah Center Parent Handbook*.

**ALL NEW PARENTS Pre-K3 to 12th GRADE: “Building Confident Families” offered by Nehemiah and Escape Family Resource Center.**

**Tuesdays, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.**

October 2

October 9

October 16

October 23

October 30

November 6

November 13

Light refreshments and childcare will be provided at sessions**. Parents who fail to attend the mandatory New Family Classes will forfeit their child’s participation in the pre-K and/or afterschool programs.**

*2. PARENT SEMINAR SERIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS*

This is the second component of the Effective Parenting Program (EPP). The journey through parenthood is easier when support is given and resources are available. Each year we offer a variety of events to provide information and connect families with resources.

**ALL PARENTS Pre-K3 – 12th GRADE MUST ATTEND TWO OF THE PARENT SEMINARS/EVENTS IN THE FALL AND TWO (2) PARENT SEMINARS/ EVENTS IN THE SPRING. Attendance is mandatory to stay in “good standing” with the Center and maintain your child’s enrollment.**

A list of the seminars and special events will be posted and placed in family mailboxes in the first weeks of the school year.

### *3. PARENT VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES*

This is the third component of the Effective Parenting Program. Parents are required to **volunteer a total of 20 hours per year in the Center, 10 hours per semester.** **No exceptions**. Please complete your hours before the stated deadlines.

**DEADLINES: Fall semester 2018, November 30; Spring semester 2019, May 3.**

Mr. Perez has the final say on what are considered acceptable volunteer hours.

# **Approved School Activities**

Parents may earn volunteer hours by participating in the following:

* Attending Open House at your child’s school (attendance will be verified by the school’s sign-in sheet); attending the Pre-K Open House hosted by the Nehemiah Center on Thursday, September 27 (1 credit hour), 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
* For AEP/College Prep Parents (K-12th grade): emailing your child’s classroom teachers a minimum of once per month **to check progress, behavior, homework, and project assignments.** Parents will email teachers and **cc: email** Mr. Perez

at [jperez@nehemiahcenterhouston.org](mailto:jperez@nehemiahcenterhouston.org). A list of email addresses for each school is located in Mr. Perez’s office. A training session on emailing will be hosted by the Nehemiah Center upon request and computer access for parents will be available during normal operation hours. For each (1) email parents will receive a credit of 15 minutes (2 credit hours maximum).

* For conferencing with Nehemiah personnel to review report cards and student standardized test scores. **Report cards and test scores need to be submitted to Mrs. Jordan not later than one week from the date the schools distribute the cards to students. This helps us intervene immediately if there is a need.**
* Attending parent/teacher conferences at school, including Discovery Middle School at Nehemiah (DMS-N). After their conference, parents should send a courtesy copy (cc) to Mr. Perez of their follow-up email thanking the teacher for the meeting (1 hour maximum).

## Other Approved Activities

Parents will receive credit for volunteering at the **Nehemiah Center**. While volunteer activities are always available at the Center, we **may not** be able to accommodate you if you do not make prior arrangements or if you wait until the end of the semester to complete your hours. **A maximum of 5 hours PER SEMESTER may be earned by:**

**Activity** **Time/Date Available**

Helping children with homework 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. (Mon-Thurs)

Supervising children on the playground TBA (Mon-Fri)

Serving as Bus Captain 2:45 p.m.-4:30 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Assisting teachers in the Pre-K rooms 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Assisting staff with clerical duties 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Monitoring the classroom/study area 4:00 p.m.-5:45 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Becoming a Pre-K room mother (fathers too) 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. (Mon-Fri)

Serving as Field Trip Chaperones Check with teachers

Attending approved Parent Seminars/Events See Mr. Perez

Presenting and/or facilitating a workshop See Mr. Perez

Attending PTO events See Mr. Perez

Helping decorate for programs and dinners See Mr. Perez

To receive credit for these activities please follow these instructions:

**Steps 1** First make contact with Mr. Perez. He may be reached by phone at (713) 526-5015 or at [jperez@nehemiahcenterhouston.org](mailto:jperez@nehemiahcenterhouston.org)

**Step 2** Select an activity from the list.

**Step 3 Schedule a day and time with Mr. Perez.**

**Unscheduled activities will not be honored or credited.**

**Step 4** On the day of your assignment, please check in on the computer laptop that is available at the Front Desk. Do this before starting your assignment to be properly credited.

**Step 5** After your assignment, make sure to sign out before leaving the building. Mr. Perez will help you track your volunteer hours throughout the year. Please be sure to meet to discuss your assignments and to verify your hours.

**MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND REFERRALS**

The Nehemiah Center recognizes the importance of social-emotional health for children and adults to learn and thrive. Family Services coordinates the identification of individuals who might benefit from mental health services and refers them to appropriate community resources. Parents who are concerned about their children’s well-being are encouraged to contact Mr. Perez or Mrs. Jordan.

**MICRO FINANCE PROGRAM**

This program empowers women to become independent entrepreneurs by learning to make and sell jewelry. See Mrs. Jordan for more information.

**GED, ESL REFERRAL PROGRAM**

Family Services assists parents who are interested in completing their GED and/or learning English as a Second Language (ESL). Contact Mr. Perez who connects parents with community resources to help them further their education.

|  |
| --- |
| “MOMMY AND ME” PROGRAM |

The “Mommy and Me” Program consists of a weekly session for toddlers and a caregiver (e.g. parent, grandparent). Children participate in a variety of activities to stimulate key developmental areas: physical, cognitive, social-emotional, communication, and self-help skills. Caregivers learn activities that can be continued outside of the sessions. The program is offered on Tuesdays, from 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m., starting after Labor Day and continuing until early May. There is no charge for this program.

# PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM

The Program provides a nurturing and academically enriching environment to children ages 3-5. Class sizes are small and the teacher-to-student ratio is low. The Pre-K 3 class is comprised of a maximum of fifteen (15) children and Pre-K 4 has a maximum of seventeen (17) children.

# **HOURS AND DAYS OF OPERATION**

The preschool operates Monday through Friday unless otherwise noted. We follow the HISD calendar and our closings (holidays and in-service days) also correspond with the HISD calendar. Once the school year begins, you will receive a monthly calendar of school holidays, family events, and field trips.

Pre-K3 or Pre-K4 Classes/**Regular Day** 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Pre-K3 or Pre-K4 Classes/**Extended Day**  8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

# **PROCEDURES FOR DROP-OFF AND PICKUP**

All children MUST come inside the building ***with*** a parent or adult over 18 years of age who MUST then sign the attendance sheet. **Drop-off time is between 8:00 a.m. and**

**8:30 a.m.** If you should need to bring your child to school after **8:30 a.m.**, please make arrangements with your child’s teacher. In the event of bad weather, we will be flexible with the drop-off time as we are more concerned with your safety than your promptness. ***We do not accept any student later than 10:00 a.m. without notice from the parent and/ or a health care provider.***

Pickup time for **Pre-K Regular Day is between 2:45 p.m. and 3:00 p.m.**

Your child should be signed out and walked out of the building by a parent or other authorized **adult over 18 years of age**. If on occasion you need to pick up your child earlier than the times listed above, please arrange this with the teacher.

# **ATTENDANCE**

Daily attendance is essential to the success of each child. Students are expected to be on time and present in school every day.

# **BIRTHDAYS**

The children love to celebrate their birthdays with their classmates. Please inform your child’s teacher at least 3 days in advance to add an activity to the daily schedule. **You may bring a cake or cupcakes to celebrate during the lunch period.**

# **CLOTHING**

**Please note the preschool students will be required to wear uniforms. Our polo style shirts are red, gold, forest green, navy blue, and light blue; our shorts, pants and skorts are navy blue or khaki in color. No jeans, please.**

Please consider your child’s comfort and need for independence and dress him/her in clothing that is free of complicated fastenings. Remember that we will be painting, cooking, and playing outside, so dress your child in clothing that is comfortable and washable. Your child should come appropriately dressed for the weather. Loose, light-colored clothing is ideal for warm days. Layers, hats and mittens are appropriate for our occasional cold days. **Please provide an extra change of clothes to keep at school.** A complete set includes shoes, socks, underwear and an outfit. If your child needs to use the extra change of clothes, you should provide us with a new set the very next day. **Label all items with your child’s name.**

**FIELD TRIPS**

Pre-K children will ride the bus when going on field trips. Due to safety requirements, children who are not enrolled in the Nehemiah program are not allowed to ride in the Center’s vehicles. Parents are encouraged to chaperone children on their field trips.

# **IMMUNIZATION INFORMATION (see General Policies)**

# **MEALS**

All children will be served breakfast and lunch. **Do not send your child to school with** **food for breakfast or lunch.** A copy of the weekly menu will be posted. Please make sure we know about any diet restrictions your child may have. Food allergies and special diets need to be discussed with your child’s teacher before the first day of school.

**MEDICATION (see General Policies)**

# **NAPTIME**

All Pre-K students rest between 1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. We provide a mat for each child. Please do not bring pillows. Each child will have an assigned mat and a cubby to store belongings.

**OPEN HOUSE**

**The Pre-K Program will have Open House 2018 for parents on Thursday, September 27th, at the Nehemiah Center from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

**SHOES**

Send your child to school in **closed-toe and rubber-soled shoes**. These shoes are safer for outdoor play. **No sandals, flip-flops, or “high” heels – they are a safety risk!**

# ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT PROGRAM (AEP)

The Academic Enrichment Program (AEP) is an afterschool program designed for children in kindergarten through the fifth grade. The goal of AEP is to use homework help, tutoring, social-emotional learning, Bible study, prayer, high expectations, wholesome role models, and supervised recreation to help children realize their full potential.

#### **FRIDAY FUN**

Fridays at the Nehemiah Center are fun days for the children. With volunteers from various businesses, organizations, churches, and local universities, we are able to offer a variety of activities for your child. Notifications will be placed in your mailbox if an activity requires parental consent to participate.

#### **HOMEWORK SESSION**

All of the children participate in the “Homework Session” to receive assistance completing school assignments. Parents are encouraged to use their volunteer time in the homework session. **Homework is scheduled Monday-Thursday, 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.**

**HOURS OF OPERATION**

The program operates during the school year, Monday through Friday, from 3:00 p.m. to

6:00 p.m.  We follow the HISD calendar and will provide care on early dismissal days. Our closings (holidays and in-service days) also correspond with the HISD calendar.

###### **INSTRUCTION**

Each afternoon, children participate in Praise & Worship, and engage in a brief Bible study.  Four afternoons per week the children receive instruction in math, reading, writing. The children are divided by grade level and may be assigned to a tutor to assist with homework until he/she is picked up. Parents are encouraged to become acquainted with your child’s tutor.

##### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Plastic bins are available for personal items such as backpacks and books. Please make sure your child does not bring money or other personal belongings to the Center. If you think your child may have lost an item, please check the plastic bins, classrooms, and speak with the Receptionist. **The Center is not responsible for lost items.**

#### **PLAYTIME**

After children arrive each day, they have plenty of time to run off energy on our playground. The children will be supervised at all times by Nehemiah staff and/or volunteers.

##### **SNACKS**

The Center will provide each child with a healthy snack daily. Please do not send extra food **(including candy).** Any candy that children have in their possession will be taken or thrown away. **We ask for children not to sell fundraiser candies at the Center.** Notify the staff immediately if your child has any food allergies.

#### **TRANSPORTATION**

The children are transported from school to the Center daily.  Please ensure that your child is at the designated pickup area at his/her respective school. Your child’s teacher may be of assistance to make sure your child is at the correct area. **The Nehemiah bus/van** **will only make one (1) trip to pick up the children**.

Please inform your child(ren) that when school is dismissed, they must report immediately to the designated area where students are picked up. The Nehemiah Center will not be responsible for children who do not meet the bus/van. Please inform your child that in such instances he/she will have to call a parent to arrange transportation.

Safety is at the forefront of all our activities. Please help us keep your children safe each day by reminding them to board and exit the van carefully, to fasten their seatbelts, and to be courteous to the bus/van driver. The noise level should be kept to a minimum. Children who do not behave safely and respectfully on the bus/van may lose transportation privileges.

##### **TUTORING**

Our staff and volunteers provide one-on-one assistance and tutoring for those children who demonstrate additional need. If you are aware that your child needs help in a particular subject, please notify the Director of Education to add your child’s name to the list. **We ask you to sign a *Tutoring Commitment Letter* for you to designate the day(s) you would like a tutor for your child. You must also agree to ensure your child’s presence at the Center from 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. on the scheduled tutoring day(s).**

**REPORT CARDS**

The Nehemiah Center staff requires feedback from teachers within each HISD school (and from Discovery Middle School - Nehemiah) to support the learning of each child. We also use semester report cards and results from standardized testing to monitor the student’s progress in school and in the program.  This helps us identify problem areas for each child and design intervention strategies with a team of staff members, educators, volunteers and parents.

Report Cards and other standardized test scores are to be received by the Director of Education from each parent and/or student **upon the day of the release of academic information**. Photocopies of academic grades and/or test scores are kept in individual student files. These files are available not only to Nehemiah staff, employees and parents, but to volunteers who work one-on-one with the students to meet their academic needs.

The Director of Education reserves the right to contact the school about your child’s grades and conduct if the requested academic reporting is not provided within a timely manner.

COLLEGE PREP PROGRAM (CPP)

In September 2001, the Center began its adolescent program, now called the College Prep Program (CPP). This program serves middle school and high school students. The overall focus is on homework help, tutoring, enrichment activities, Christian education, and recreation. Additionally, older students are supported with college entrance exam preparation (PSAT, SAT, ACT) and career counseling. These young people are provided with the special attention and education they need in order to successfully navigate a time when they are most vulnerable to unhealthy behavior.  The College Prep Program directly confronts issues such as pre-marital sex, drugs, delinquency, violence, and disrespect that can threaten young people in their middle and high school years.

Participants in the CPP meet five days a week, from 3:40 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. and earlier on Early Dismissal Days. One or two evenings per week are dedicated to special events and team projects. Special field trips help introduce the students to the greater Houston community, to possible careers, and to local colleges and universities. The College Prep Program serves students from four different middle and high schools in 6th – 12th grade.

**Fred C. Alcorn Scholarship Program**

The Board of Trustees has established a scholarship fund to assist college-bound Nehemiah students financially. See Mrs. Jordan or Mr. Perez for more information.

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| discovery MIDDLE SCHOOL at nehemiah |

From August 2011 through June 2017 Nehemiah Middle School (NMS) offered a personalized, Christian, private school education to young adolescents in grades 6, 7, 8. By June 2017 NMS had graduated forty-two students who now attend some of Houston’s finest public and private high schools. In July 2017 the Nehemiah Center entered into an agreement with Southwest Schools, a choice-based Texas education district, in order to sustain, expand, and enhance the academic offerings for its middle school learners. NMS now operates as Discovery Middle School at Nehemiah Center (DMS-N).

**DMS-N students are strongly encouraged to enroll in the Nehemiah Center’s College Prep Program in order to participate in some of the programs that made NMS uniquely effective such as Bible Study, Praise and Worship, Visual Arts, *Eagle Times* Newspaper, Year Book, Human Development, career guidance, museum visits, homework assistance, recreation, and high school tours.**

**DMS-N students must be enrolled in the College Prep Program to remain on campus after school dismisses. Every Wednesday during 2018-2019 is an Early Dismissal day at 12:45 p.m. On other days students are dismissed at 3:35 p.m.**

**DMS-N staff is employed by Southwest Schools, a state charter district. A list of teachers, administrators, and support staff is available in the DMS-N office on the second floor of the Center.**

**NEHEMIAH CENTER STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY**

Children will be expected to treat their classmates, teachers, and parents with respect when they are at the Center. Likewise, we want students to feel secure while in the presence of their classmates and all adults. PARENTS: Please keep this in mind when you are interacting with your child at school. Physical punishment, yelling or failure to supervise your child will not be tolerated. If you need some assistance with your child, the staff will be available to help you.

We believe that students need many opportunities to practice being independent thinkers. We will encourage them to solve their own problems in an appropriate manner and to develop adequate social skills. When a child behaves inappropriately, we will observe the child and work with him/her to promote positive behavior. We will document the incident, the intervention used, and will inform you as the need arises. If the problem persists, we will call a parent conference. In the event that the behavior continues, the teacher will initiate a meeting with the Director of Education. Together we will meet (the parents, the teachers, and the Director) to recommend a behavior plan. The recommendations may include a time frame in which completion of appropriate counseling, testing, or observation will take place in order to maintain enrollment of the child in the program. Parents may request a conference at any time.

The Nehemiah Center follows a strict Discipline Code set forth by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (Texas Administrative Code Title 40, Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapters L, Discipline and Guidance). In addition to the state’s guidelines, the Center maintains a separate discipline policy that we expect all persons affiliated with the Nehemiah Center to follow (e.g. staff, volunteers, parents, students). In the event that a student chooses not to follow Nehemiah’s rules and display acceptable levels of respectful conduct, the Center will respond with any or all of the following consequences/actions:

* 1st-Verbal warning (directly with the student)
* 2nd-Verbal warning (with parent notification)
* 3rd-Loss of activity privilege (with parent notification)
* 4th-Sent to Director of Education
* 5th-Conference with parent, teacher, and administrator, and the development of a Behavior Intervention Plan
* 6th-Suspension (number of days will be determined by the Director of Education)
* Behavioral Intervention Plan reviewed
* Dismissal from Center

The Nehemiah Center has zero tolerance for the following: immediate suspension

* Fighting
* Vulgarity and disrespect to peers, staff, and volunteers
* Misuse of Nehemiah Center property
* A pattern of teasing and bullying (including cyber-bullying)
* Stealing
* ANYTHING THAT IS DEEMED UN-CHRISTIAN and not of NEHEMIAH’S PURPOSE and STANDARDS

**The Nehemiah Center reserves the right to dismiss a child from the Center if any parent fails to comply with conference requests and/or intervention plans with the Director of Education or other Center personnel as appropriate. A recommendation for dismissal will be made to the Executive Director. We encourage parents to request a conference with the Director of Education to discuss any problems with your child’s behavior at the Center. The student may be referred to outside professionals. Parents must comply with the behavioral plan in order to maintain enrollment of their child at the Center.**

**PARENT/GUARDIAN ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM 2018-2019**

**Please write and sign your name at the bottom of the page to certify that you agree with the following statements regarding policies and/or expectations of the Nehemiah Center. Return signed copy to staff.**

### A. I have read and understood the policies and expectations set forth in the Nehemiah Center, Inc. Parent Handbook. I agree to abide by the policies and will work towards remaining in good standing with the Center to ensure my child’s enrollment privileges in the Center’s programs.

### B. I agree that the Nehemiah Center. Inc. shall not be responsible for any personal injuries or losses sustained by my child(ren) while on the Center’s premises or in vehicles as a result of any Nehemiah sponsored activities. I further agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Nehemiah Center from any claims or demands arising out of any such injuries or losses.

C. I give authorization for my child to be photographed, videotaped, and or digitally recorded for all purposes toward the Center’s daily operations. This includes, but is not limited to: **Annual Newsletters; Thank You Letters; Photo Albums; Off-Campus Activities; Family Services; Volunteer Program; College Prep Program; Fundraising & Development; Marketing & Advertising.**

D. I acknowledge that report cards and other standardized test scoring are to be received by the Director of Education from myself or my child **upon the day of the release of academic information** that is set by HISD. I understand that photocopies of academic grades and/or test scores will be kept in my child’s individual academic file. In the event that academic reporting is not received within one week of release from the school, the Director of Education reserves the right to contact the school about my child’s grades and overall conduct.

**Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Names of Child(ren) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

Student, Parent, Volunteer Tutoring Commitment

School Year 2018-2019

Dear Parents,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to work with your child. Each grading period we review report cards and other important tests to identify areas in which your child may need extra academic assistance. We have volunteers that come to the Nehemiah Center to help with homework and offer extra support. Our Nehemiah volunteers are very valuable to us. We are blessed that they have made a commitment to work with your child.

**We ask that you and your student agree to the following:**

1. Please circle **one** or **more** days he or she can receive **a full hour** of tutoring.
2. Ensure that your children attend the Nehemiah Center on their designated tutorial day(s) and can remain the **entire time** from **4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m**.
3. Do **not** pick your child up early on designated tutorial days.
4. Bring a copy of your child’s **report card** after each grading period.
5. Show your tutor respect and appreciation for his or her time and dedication to helping you.

If you and your child cannot comply with these requirements, we will have to assign your child’s tutor to another student.

Thank you,

Mrs. Melodee Jordan

Director of Education

Student: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Student’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Day or days your child will be able to stay for the **entire** one-hour session.

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday