



Building a solid foundation & nurturing a love of learning.

Cornerstone Academy

Parent and Student Handbook

2024-2025

Cornerstone Academy

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Mariann Blaich, Principal

Cornerstone Academy does not discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, gender, national or ethnic origin, disability, religion, veteran status, or age.

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Principal's Welcome

Dear Current and Prospective Students and Families,

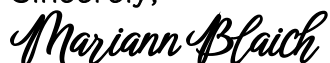
At Cornerstone Academy, a school of excellence, every child will be able to explore new beginnings as well as try their hand at all areas of interest. We believe that each child has a unique way of learning. We as educators use various techniques and best practices to help children develop as they grow and learn. We expect the highest results as children master skills in an environment that fosters their potential.

Our approach to education is an alternative to the typical classroom situation. As studies have shown, children are at various academic levels throughout their formative years. Developmental levels are consistently changing depending on each child's personal situation. We have the ability to cater to the individual needs of the child socially, emotionally, developmentally, and academically. This enables us to focus on developmental levels rather than chronological age.

At Cornerstone Academy, each child's unique personality and individual learning style guide teachers as they help each child find success. Small class sizes provide teachers the ability to give individualized attention, as well as customized learning environments to provide an ideal learning situation. We believe it is essential for children to thrive in an environment that has each child's best interest in mind. Our highly educated and passionate teachers are facilitators to the children's learning. As a facilitator, the teacher is able to set the stage for student-led discovery.

Each classroom is within their span of knowledge. Seeking success by activating previous learning, as well as challenging their ability to learn the next level of skills, is one of the unique ways of learning that Cornerstone Academy differs from other learning institutes. Learning environments which children can explore and experiment in a risk-free setting encourages children to be independent thinkers and successful problem-solvers.

Sincerely,



Mariann Blaich, Principal

Continual Growth of Cornerstone Academy

Currently, Cornerstone Academy serves children in Kindergarten through 5th grade. As enrollment grows, we have plans on making Cornerstone Academy a K-12th grade learning center. Because we hold our school to a higher standard, we do not feel it appropriate to expand until our program is functioning at its highest potential and community need is well-known. Once the opportunity arises and we are meeting our expectations, we will be able to launch our Higher Education Center for 6th-12th grades.

Our Philosophy

Cornerstone Academy is a progressive educational facility that believes in educating children using a specialized curriculum. This curriculum is designed to effectively build confidence and perpetuate the love of learning through the Seven Stars of Success!

- ★ We believe children are created divinely unique with individual personalities and learning styles.
- ★ We believe children progress through the various development stages at their own pace and the learning environment should support this belief.
- ★ We believe that the individual child should be provided with multiple opportunities and experiences to develop his/her talents and interests.
- ★ We believe the responsibility of the educators should be to provide various teaching techniques and practices to assure the highest level of learning.
- ★ We believe the physical structure of the classroom should be stimulating and flexible to support student-directed learning.
- ★ We believe the learning environments should allow children to explore and experiment, encouraging independent thinking and successful problem solvers.
- ★ We believe in creating a strong partnership with parents. This partnership should strengthen and support our goal of excellence in every child's educational process.

The Vision of Cornerstone Academy

Cornerstone Academy desires to provide a learning environment that will meet the needs of the whole child: mind, body, spirit. We believe these three areas of strong focus are necessary when preparing children to live a productive, fulfilling life.

Mind...by providing a multitude of information and experiences that challenge the child at their maximum intellect and understanding.

Body...by incorporating involvement in liberal arts and appreciation of multicultural diversities.

Spirit...by providing a safe, loving environment that enhances the uniqueness of the individual child fosters healthy social and emotional development, supported by an understanding of learning styles, personality and gender differences.

The Mission Statement of Cornerstone Academy

A cornerstone is the first or most important stone laid when constructing a building. All other stones will be set in reference to this stone, thus determining the position of the entire structure. At Cornerstone Academy, we understand the importance of building a solid educational foundation and nurturing a love of learning.

Cornerstone Academy is committed to facilitating students' individualized styles and abilities to reach their highest potential of learning.

The Cornerstone Academy invites students of all faiths, nationalities and family backgrounds to partner with us in providing an excellent, positive educational experience for your child.

Parent/Guardian's Responsibilities

The parent/guardian shall be responsible for three parts of their child's education:

1. **The first responsibility is to value attendance and punctuality.** Class session is held from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Parents are required to have students present and ready for learning at 8:30 a.m. Arrival begins at 8:15 a.m. and school is dismissed promptly at 3:30 p.m. Any child who is not enrolled in our Before & After School Program is expected to be dropped off and picked up at these times.

Additionally, our curriculum builds on itself, so attendance is very important. It is suggested that parents make every effort to arrange appointments outside of school hours or when school is not in session. We realize that is not always possible and on those rare occasions our teachers will do their best to provide the child any needed "catch-up" materials and instruction. Too many disruptions

deny other students their right to a high-quality education. Also, the “in and out” attendance is detrimental to the natural flow of lessons and student discovery. For that reason, our policy is that if a child needs to be taken out during the school day, he/she may not return to school that same day without prior approval from the teacher and/or administration.

2. **The parents’ second responsibility is to protect the learning environment.** Teachers are not able to concentrate and focus on the children appropriately if parents are requiring their attention. If a parent is in need of information or has questions, it is suggested to schedule a time in which they could talk with you during their plan time or after school hours. Sometimes a simple note is easily read and replied to when it comes to short-answer questions. Notes can always be given to parents at drop-off/pick-up or written on your child’s Daily Assignment Sheet.

3. **The parents’ final commitment is to follow-through.** Our program is designed to provide children with a significant amount of one-on-one time. When homework is given, it is the responsibility of the parents to “supervise” children in completing the work, getting it put back into the backpack, and returned to school. It is important to instill a sense of responsibility in the student but a reminder from the parent is always helpful. 😊 Some projects may require a twist on ‘traditional’ learning. Please take the opportunity to let learning be a fun, family project! Children learn by example and academic challenges should be as exciting as athletics and sporting events! Parents are reminded that students are able to focus much more when they are well-rested and ready for the day.

GENERAL INFORMATION

School Hours

The school day runs from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Arrival and Dismissal

Doors are open at 8:15 a.m. for students to enter the building and prepare for the school day. Students are to be dropped off between 8:15-8:25, so that they are unpacked and ready to learn by 8:30 a.m. Dismissal will begin at 3:30 p.m. and will be finished no later than 3:40 p.m.

Tardiness is disruptive to the learning environment. Therefore, a child that is tardy more than 3 times or more per quarter will be reviewed by the Board of Directors. This may result in the child's removal from our school.

It is Cornerstone Academy's policy that the parent "hand off" their child to an employee, always making sure that an employee knows he/she is there. Parents are encouraged to make a smooth transition by departing promptly. If there is a need for a conference with the teacher or principal, please contact us to schedule a conference.

NOTE: We are not equipped to care for suspended students during the school day. If your child is under a suspension, he/she will not be permitted at Cornerstone Academy.

Attendance

A parent or guardian must notify the teacher and administrator before 8:30 a.m. if your child is unable to be at school that day.

Attendance is very important because our curriculum builds on itself. It is suggested that parents make every effort to arrange appointments outside of school hours or when school is not in session. We realize that is not always possible and on those rare occasions our teachers will do their best to provide the child any needed "catch-up" materials and instruction. Too many disruptions deny other students their right to a high quality education. Also, the "in and out" attendance is detrimental to the natural flow of lessons and student discovery. For that reason, our policy is that if a child needs to be

taken out during the school day, he/she may not return to school that same day without prior approval from the teacher and/or administration.

Inclement Weather/Cancellation of Classes

Families will be notified via email and/or text message in the event that weather conditions force the cancellation of classes. Take advantage of 'the staying home situation' by teaching the little ones how to enjoy winter, such as...

- * Snuggling with hot chocolate
- * Sledding on the hills
- * Search for animal tracks in the snow.

Be advised that we often still have school even when Ray-Pec does not due to weather, because we do not have to worry about bus routes, etc. Therefore, we are able to have school.

Unless otherwise stated, Springing Up and Cornerstone Academy will still be open.

Before/After School Care

- Before-school care is available from 6:30 a.m. to 8:15 a.m.
- After-school care is available from 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on school days.
- Care is also available on most weekdays that school is not in session.
 - A sign-up sheet for upcoming no-school days can be found on the communication board by the cubbies in the Purple Room. **Your account will be charged for the days your child is scheduled to be at Springing Up, regardless of attendance.** When space is limited, priority is given to students who are currently enrolled in our before and after school program.

Options for care are:

- ONLY Before-school OR After-school
- Before- AND After- school care

For more information and questions on pricing please contact the front office.

Lunch

School lunch is available for an additional cost. See the ‘Tuition Cost and Dedication’ form for pricing.

Recess

We passionately believe that outside play is necessary for children’s growth and development! We have a *minimum* of 30 minutes of recess daily during the school day. Also, we will seize the moment to learn hands-on if the opportunity arises to experience rain, snow, or other real-life interactions with weather. (Please dress your child appropriately for current weather conditions and make sure their “extra clothes” are weather-appropriate.)

Staff will use their judgment when deciding if outside play is appropriate. We closely follow Childcare Weather Watch Guidelines regarding when it is safe to play outside (www.c-uphd.org). In case of inclement weather, we have an alternate space for our children to utilize for physical play and large motor skill development.

Please note: If a child is having “unsafe” behavior, we reserve the right to limit certain play activities.

Dress Code

- **Tops:** Long or short-sleeved, collared, or button polo shirts in any solid color. Also, t-shirts, crew neck sweatshirts, and hoodies with our school logo are available to order.
- **Bottoms:** Any solid-colored pants, skirts, shorts, capris, skorts, polo dresses, or jumpers. (Shorts are expected to be worn under all skirts and dresses)
- **Shoes:** Footwear that is safe and appropriate for the learning environment. Closed-toe shoes are required to play on the equipment and ride bikes during recess.

Visit these websites for examples of available options: [Children's Place](#), [Old Navy](#), [Target](#) *Please note: These are just examples. There are countless other options available. 😊

Theme Weeks/Special Events

- Some dress code exceptions may apply during theme weeks/special events (such as programs).
- Clothing/accessories worn during theme weeks may not have suggestive or inappropriate words, pictures, advertisements, or designs, or promote violence, alcohol and/or drugs.

NOTE: The administration retains the sole discretion to determine if these standards are being met. The first time a student violates the dress code, a warning will be given and parents contacted for change to appropriate clothing. In some cases, the school may supply the student with clothing to finish the day. Progressive discipline will follow if the dress code continues to be violated.

Communication

- **Daily Folder:** Students will be given a folder to use as their “Take-Home Folder”. The contents of the daily folder should be reviewed with your child everyday. Then, the folder should be returned to school empty the following day.
- **Daily Assignment Sheet:** The daily assignment sheet serves many purposes! First, students will write the learning topics from the day on it. This helps when you ask them what they did during the day, and it gets them writing! Your child’s teacher will also provide a brief behavior report for each day. Lastly, the daily assignment sheet is a great place for parents and/or teachers to communicate brief messages to one another. Please initial in the provided space each day (Monday-Friday).

- **Seesaw:** Students will use SeeSaw throughout the school year to create a digital portfolio of some of their work. We will also use SeeSaw to share pictures of class activities.
- **Sign-Up Genius** We will be using Sign-Up Genius for classroom sign-ups, including parties, conferences, etc.
- **E-mail/Bulk Text**
- **Phone/Voicemail**

Technology Acceptable Use Policy

Throughout the course of this school year, your child will be utilizing various technology tools to enhance his/her learning experiences. The use of these technology tools allows teachers to expand instructional methods and enhance instructional delivery, enrich student performance, and increase student engagement. Students will only use devices with the permission and direction of the teacher or other staff members.

Students can bring their own devices to school for educational purposes, but it is not required. We have several devices at school designated for student use, but some families may prefer to provide their own. Chromebooks are recommended for students who bring their own device.

Students will be educated throughout the school year on appropriate online behaviors, including how to properly access materials, how to interact with others accordingly, and how to stay safe online.

ADMISSIONS

General Information

Cornerstone Academy is a Kindergarten through 5th grade program. Students are enrolled upon successful completion of registration requirements and a review of previous records and/or placement testing.

A careful analysis of each application is made due to the high standard of conduct that is expected of each student. Each prospective student's records are examined with the understanding that the administration can elect to place the student in the class best suited for his/her needs.

Registration/Admission Process

A child is not enrolled until he/she has met all of the following requirements:

1. Prospective families are invited to complete the inquiry form on our website: cornerstoneacademyraymoremo.com/admissions/
2. Parents and students will tour the school with a school administrator.
3. The enrollment packet must be completely filled out and accepted.
4. Portfolio items will be submitted and reviewed by administrators.
5. Placement testing must be completed and evaluated, if necessary.

*Please note: Depending on screening results, we may require additional tutoring (at the family's expense) for full admittance to our program.

6. Dedication dues must be paid in full.
7. Financial arrangements must be made with administration.
8. Your child must have all the necessary immunizations as specified by Missouri State Law or have appointments to receive the necessary immunizations as soon as possible.
9. If the student is transferring from another school, we must have an authorization form signed by the parent or guardian requesting all records from previous schools.

FAILURE TO MEET ANY ONE OF THESE REQUIREMENTS MEANS YOUR CHILD IS NOT ENROLLED.

TUITION AND FEES

We understand that an independent school education is a financial investment in your child's future and is one that requires careful financial planning. We believe that a Cornerstone Academy education is an investment that will last a lifetime!

We currently offer two payment plan options: semesterly and annually. There is a 5% discount for those paying annually. For more information about the current tuition and fees, contact the front office or view the "Tuition Cost and Dedication" form on the "Enrollment" tab.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health Policy

Parents of students with health conditions must report them to the school office at the beginning of the school term or when such an instance arises. Special conditions include vision and hearing impairments, diabetes, seizures, rheumatic fever, recent surgery, medication, or anything that might limit students at school.

Medical Needs & Injuries

- In case of minor accidents or injuries, parents will receive an “Ouch Report”. This report describes what happened and the care that was given to fix the “ouch”. Parents will be notified immediately of any accident or illness more serious than an “Ouch Report”.
- Parents will be required to sign medical consent documents if a child requires prescribed medicine to be administered by staff.
- It is necessary for parents to inform teachers of any health conditions that should be monitored or considered during your child’s busy day of learning and play.
- Immunization papers (updated shot records) and other health/safety/or medical information sheets required by Cornerstone Academy and/or the state of Missouri should be filled out and updated by parents. This will be done upon enrollment and/or at the change of the child’s medical status. We require these updates to be on file after the most recent immunization and review again annually in December per state guidelines. Those students who are not current with immunization may not be allowed to return to Cornerstone Academy until immunizations are current and up to date.
- In the case of a medical emergency due to injury, illness, or other medical condition, SU/CA will assess the need to call for professional medical help (ex. 911)

Illness

To create the healthiest environment possible for the students and faculty, parents are asked to partner with us to follow the guidelines set by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services regarding the exposure of children to known illnesses. Based on these guidelines, you will be called to pick up your child if he/she demonstrates the

following symptoms. (**Your child must be symptom-free for 24 hours without the assistance of medication, before returning to school.**)

- Diarrhea (more than 1 loose stool)
- Severe coughing (turns red or blue when coughing, croupy or whooping sounds)
- Difficulty breathing or rapid breathing
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Pinkeye (tears, redness of eyelid lining, swelling, discharge or pus)
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing
- Infected skin patches (crusty, bright yellow, dry or gummy areas of skin)
- Unusually dark or tea-colored urine
- Gray or white stool
- Fever over 100°F
- Headache or stiff neck
- Vomiting more than once
- Severe itching of body
- Unusual behaviors (crying more than usual, seems to feel discomfort, loss of appetite, lethargic)

Change in Emergency Information

We ask that you provide us with information on where you, or a friend or relative, can be reached in an emergency. The emergency telephone numbers you give us are our only means of locating you if your child has an accident or becomes ill at school. It is therefore extremely important that you keep us informed of any changes in emergency phone numbers.

Safety Procedures

- Fire and tornado procedures are followed according to Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and local fire department guidelines.
- Evacuation and natural disaster drills are conducted routinely.
- Phones are positioned in every classroom.
- The building is equipped with security cameras.
- The facility doors will be always locked.
 - Parents/guardians will use a security code to get into the facility. We ask that you do not allow other people through the locked door when you are

entering or exiting the facility. This will help ensure that if someone has gained access to the interior of the building, they have done so with the code and not just “slipped in”. We ask that you do not give out the code to anyone in the facility lobby. Instead, you can advise them you will get the attention of a faculty member to assist them with their needs. Please do not worry about being rude!! We want to keep your children safe!

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Curriculum

Cornerstone Academy's curriculum is based on Missouri Learning Standards, as well as a multitude of educational resources gathered from teachers and elementary school educators.

The curriculum at Cornerstone Academy also encourages children to respect, understand, and appreciate each individual's unique personality and heritage. We will recognize and celebrate a multitude of cultures and beliefs in our classroom through many celebrations. Cornerstone Academy's curriculum and programs will explore many themes and holidays related to what we are experiencing in the classroom.

Early childhood and elementary educators have created Cornerstone Academy's curriculum based on the basic needs of children academically, socially, and behaviorally. We believe that school must be enjoyable, as well as a safe and secure environment to experience new ideas and foster learning. These qualities combined with a small class size will benefit your child's future. We believe all areas of the curriculum taught at Cornerstone Academy teach children important skills and feel strongly that children who are enrolled in Cornerstone Academy will be prepared for a future of learning and in life.

Reporting of Student Progress

Cornerstone Academy is dedicated to ensuring that students and their families receive transparent, uniform, and up-to-date communication concerning student development and advancements towards academic standards (what students are expected to know and accomplish). K-5 grades will report student progress within a standards-referenced format. Standards-referenced reporting is a research-based practice.

The foundational principles of this approach include:

- Clarifying the purpose behind students' learning
- Emphasizing problem-solving and critical thinking as crucial aspects of the learning process
- Ensuring that students take ownership of their learning and associated data
- Recognizing that students learn at varying levels and paces

- Providing students with regular, precise, and timely feedback
- Acknowledging that mistakes are essential and contribute to productive learning
- Evaluating student scores based on content knowledge related to a learning goal

Students' assessments are determined by their advancement in mastering end-of-year standards. Progress will be assessed through Academic Descriptors and non-academic Student Learning Attributes, which will be reported independently. Student learning attributes encompass factors that impact academic achievement and foster success in the workplace, although they are not directly linked to the curriculum standards.

Grading Scale:

4 = Learning and performing exceeds grade-level or course standards

3 = Demonstrates mastery of grade level or course standards independently, thoroughly, and accurately

2 = Progressing toward mastery of grade-level or course standards

1 = Limited understanding of required grade-level or course standards

Report Cards

Progress reports are sent home at the end of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarters, and final report cards are sent at the end of the year. Progress reports/report cards are sent via email.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled times set aside to discuss progress, delays, or concerns about a child. Parent/Teacher conferences for all students are held in late October/early November as a one-on-one conversation between parents and faculty. Winter/Spring conferences are also scheduled as needed. Parents are welcome to contact their child's teacher or school admin for a conference any time during the school year.

Student Records

Student records are available to parents for review at any time. Parents wishing to review the files should set up an appointment with the teacher(s) or principal to guarantee adequate time for explanation.

When transferring a student to another school, please notify the office and the child's teacher as soon as possible. The child's records will be sent to the new school upon request from the new school.

Homework

Our philosophy of "Learn, Work, and Play...that's the Cornerstone way!" includes not only daily learning in class, but at-home learning as well. Homework is a vital part of learning. There are numerous benefits of homework, including learning responsibility, time management, and independence. Homework also gives students an opportunity to review key concepts and share their learning with their families.

Students will be expected to complete and turn in quality homework and/or at-home projects by the deadline given. Homework assignments should take no more than 10-15 minutes. Students are also expected to read at home everyday.

Field Trips

Field trips are valuable instructional opportunities designed to extend learning beyond the classroom setting. At Cornerstone Academy, we believe that learning can happen anywhere and anytime. It is organic; it's student-led and sometimes happens on the fly. When our learning directs us and the opportunity arises, we like to take our learning on the go.

Parents/guardians interested in chaperoning a field trip should contact their child's teacher for more information.

Note: Students who are demonstrating unsafe behaviors at school may not be allowed to participate in the field trip. This will be at the discretion of administrators and teacher(s), in collaboration with the student's parents/guardians.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT/DISCIPLINE

Discipline will be handled according to Love and Logic and Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST), which encourages children to use language to express feelings and emotions.

We reserve the right to remove any child at any time for any unsafe physical, emotional outburst, or verbal behavior without previous verbal or written warnings.

Example of BIST Intervention

Situation: A child yells at his friend.

Teacher: “Can you tell me why you chose to yell at your friend?”

Child: “Because he yelled at me!”

T: “How did that make you feel? How do you think that made your friend feel when you yelled at him?”

C: “It made me mad that he yelled. It made my friend sad that I yelled at him.”

T: “Is there a better way of handling this rather than yelling?”

C: “Yes, asking him to stop.”

T: “And what if he doesn’t?”

C: “I could tell the teacher.”

T: “Do you think you can handle going back and playing again, or do you need a little more time by yourself?”

C: “I think I can play.”

T: “Great, now remember your other choices... have fun.”

Safe Seat

We also use a Safe Seat system. When children are having a hard time making the right choices or they just need a minute to calm down, we have them sit in an area designated as the “Safe Seat”. It is a place away from the rest of the class where they can think about what is happening and how they are going to handle it. The teacher then talks with the child to help process through the situation. After processing successfully, they may then return to their activity. If a child needs to be removed and placed in a Buddy Room or the office, they will triage back into their room when they process successfully.

Other Discipline Techniques

If BIST does not work, other discipline techniques will be explored with parents. If the behavior cannot be managed, a parent meeting will be established to determine strategies to be implemented at home and at school. If any behavior causes other children or staff physical or emotional harm, the end result can and will be termination of the child's enrollment. (Please see the "Special Note" section below as well as the "Parent Workshop" section at the end of the handbook.) We do reserve the right to refuse care or education to any child that might pose a threat to the educational environment, other children, and/or SU/CA staff.

Special Note

Steps to keep the children, teachers, and environment safe from Discipline Concerns. SU/CA is not responsible for the cost of any evaluation or intervention necessary to continue a child's enrollment status.

1. Incident reports will be completed and tracked for concerning behaviors.
2. Evaluation from local school district and/or pediatrician regarding behavioral, cognitive, or emotional wellbeing.
3. It can and may be required that another specialist is necessary to observe and/or advise for success for a child to stay enrolled at SU/CA.
4. After collective information, a meeting will be necessary with parents to decide whether SU/CA can provide the most effective environment for that particular child.

Choosing and/or refusal to comply with the policies in this handbook will be met with automatic discharge.