



NORTHERN EXPOSURE

The Newsletter of Village Academy North, Inc.

Its the Holiday Season already! This school year is certainly speeding by. We hope you are all having a wonderful Thanksgiving weekend. It is a great time for friends and family. Many of our classes had

Thanksgiving parties, and there will be a number of other family-oriented activities between now and Christmas. We look forward to having you join your child at the school for all the fun.

VILLAGE
ACADEMY NORTH

PRICES

HANDWASHING

FOOD
ALLERGIES

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PRICING AT THE VILLAGE

When we have a 3- or 4-day week because of a holiday, some parents ask why there isn't a partial-week rate. Good question, and here's the answer.

The pricing for most of our programs is calculated based on a 50-week year. (The other two weeks are assumed to be vacation.) After-School and VPK-Wrap are based on the public school year, and Summer Camp is based on a 10-week summer.

Each year we review our total costs of operation - staff, mortgage, utilities, food, repairs, curriculum, etc. We forecast what is going to happen to those costs based on the best available data, and then set prices based on 50 attendance weeks. We could charge by the month or by the year, as some private schools do, but we think it is more convenient for our parents to pay by the week.

So when we have a holiday-shortened week, please understand that the price is the same as a 5-day week be-

cause that "smoothing" effect gives you a dependable price and provides us with a dependable revenue stream to pay our bills.

FDLRS

So what is that acronym? Pronounced 'fiddlers', it stands for "Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System". FDLRS provides free screening services for parents who have "concerns about a child's speaking, understanding, moving or playing, seeing, hearing [or] getting along with others." For more information, please go to www.nefec.org/fdlrs, and select the Child Find option.

HANDWASHING

Do you know that we can fail a DCF or accreditation inspection if there is not sufficient handwashing by the children? Our children wash hands on arrival (if the children are inside), after outside play, before snack or a meal, after potty, and any messy activities. We strongly encourage you to emphasize handwashing at home the way we do here. It is proven

that it is the single best thing you can do to help prevent the spread of colds and flu. Remember to wash yours often, too!

Food Allergies

We pay close attention to students with food allergies. Those range from simple to complex - perhaps even dangerous. But we need parents to provide medical validation of the allergy.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have stated that blood and skin tests are not sufficient for diagnosing and treating suspected food allergies.

The guidelines state that a food allergy should be suspected when a reaction occurs within "minutes or hours" of eating a particular food. "Physicians should then take a detailed medical history, conduct a thorough physical exam and confirm the allergy with a skin prick test." None of these steps is definitive by itself, the recommendations say, "which should lead to fewer misdiagnoses."

THE NEXT LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Last year's Session for the Florida Legislature was brutal. The Legislature had to deal with a \$4 billion decrease in available funds, and the cuts to education - including preschool VPK education and School Readiness - were very damaging. In our county, that damage was exacerbated by the Early Learning Coalition, which focused all its School Readiness cuts on those few schools that were nationally accredited and provided the highest quality education! (That decision was willful, lazy, short-sighted, and contrary to state and federal policy *and* the availability of real alternatives.) This year there looks to be another \$1.5 billion cut in funding for the state, due to reduced tax revenues from the long-lingering recession. Plus, the Legislature has to deal with redistricting in a special Session.. We will keep you informed of what is going on in Tallahassee, and will likely ask for your help when we need to demonstrate to our elected officials what the public really wants.

	DEC 23	DEC 26	JAN 2	JAN 16
DATES TO	Christmas Eve	Christmas Day	New Years Day	Martin Luther King
REMEMBER	Observed	Observed	Observed	Holiday
	Village <i>North</i> Closed	Village <i>North</i> Closed	Village <i>North</i> Closed	Village <i>North</i> Closed

Schedule Changes With Weekend Holidays

Please recall from your parent contract that Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Years' Day are 3 of our 9 closing days at Village Academy *North*. Those are all weekend days this year! Again, referring to the parent contract, we take off either a Friday or Monday when a holiday occurs on a weekend, so that our staff can still get their time off. That's why the Dates to Remember above show us taking off Friday the 23rd for Christmas Eve, Monday the 26th for Christmas Day, and Monday the 2nd for New Years Day. (Please note that St Johns County Schools are also closed on Monday, January 2.)

Chicken Pox - The Shot or the Party?

When we were kids, it was fairly common practice for parents to organize a chicken pox party if one kid in the neighborhood got the chicken pox. All the children who hadn't had chicken pox went to the party to get infected. I think that might sound barbaric to our young parents now, but there was no vaccine and chicken pox wasn't considered to be all that serious. Recent studies have demonstrated that children who had chicken pox as children are more likely to get shingles as adults and, conversely, children who were vaccinated against chicken pox are less likely to get shingles. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now recommend a booster shot between the ages of 4 and 6 to provide greater protection as adults.

RECALLS

It is good practice to regularly check with the Consumer Product Safety Commission to see if there have been recalls that affect you. (You can also sign up for automatic emails.) Some of the more recent ones:

- Build-a-Bear is recalling nearly 20,000 sets of swimwear with inflatable inner tube because of a strangulation hazard
- 12,000 Kiddieland Disney-branded Fairies Plastic Trikes due to a laceration hazard
- 439,000 B.O.B jogging strollers recalled due to choking hazard

ADMIN NOTES

Did you remember to change the batteries in your smoke alarm(s) when Daylight Savings Time ended?...VPK parents, make sure you clock your child in and out each day and sign the attendance book at the front desk once each month. It is a state of Florida requirement....Don't forget to put your child's name in their clothing...There is no smoking anywhere on the school campus, including the parking lot. We can be written up by DCF if you smoke on our property!...we still have openings in our Enrichment programs.