2026-2027

Deeper Root Academy Handbook

Deeper Root Academy is a private Christian-based School and subsidiary of Phoenix Tree Educational Foundation, Inc. We offer classes for Preschool which includes Infant/Toddler, Pre-K 2 and 3 year olds, Voluntary Preschool (VPK) and Kindergarten through 8th Grade. The academy provides character education with an emphasis on multiple intelligences. Our school focuses on academic achievement with attention to how children are smart rather than how smart children are.

At Deeper Root Academy**,** students are empowered to be their best selves—as leaders, learners, and caretakers of our world. We encourage students to discover and cultivate their innate abilities and intelligence while nurturing Christian virtues that encourage outstanding living and leadership. The educational focus is based on the study of Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligence. At the core of this theory is the recognition that people think and learn differently and that intelligence can be expressed in a multitude of ways. This approach differs from the traditional education provided in public, and private schools in Florida. Using the Common Core State Standards and Nationwide benchmarks, our teaching will incorporate each of the eight major intellectual domains defined by Dr. Gardner and provide opportunities for each student to use his or her unique intelligence to understand the subject matter.

In addition, we help students understand their strengths and challenges using Multiple Intelligence as a tool. Students learn to use strengths to acquire new information and work on more fully developing their knowledge in areas that are a challenge for them. Our Christian values and character education will also foster the sound qualities that should be at the core of humanity. We seek to rule out any chance of failure and teach our students to embrace their God-given abilities and talents in order to develop their understanding of how they can positively impact our world. This opportunity is extended to those who qualify for scholarship based on academic or developmental needs as well as provide scholarship opportunity for those who may not otherwise be able to afford to receive this type of quality education.

We recognize the need for a nurturing environment where children are treated as individuals. We understand that each child is different, and we look for ways to allow each one to become who God intends them to be. It is our goal to provide a comfortable and safe place where each child is encouraged to learn and grow.

ENTRANCE POLICY:

No child will be refused admission to Deeper Root Academy for reason of race, religion, color or creed.

Parents will receive a notification letter after all enrollment forms have been submitted and reviewed. Please allow 5-7 business days to be notified if your child has been enrolled or placed on our waiting list. A preview day will be scheduled for your child to visit the school for observation and pre-screening assessments. This will be used as a final determination of acceptance.

HOURS OF OPERATION:

School Dates: August 11, 2026 – May 26, 2027
School Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00AM – 3:15 PM; Wednesday Early Release 2:15PM
Optional Before School Care: 7:00AM – 8:00AM and After Owl Care 3:15PM – 6:00PM
(Wednesdays) 2:15PM - 6:00PM

Infant/Toddler and Preschool have a slightly different schedule. Please see information provided for details.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

It is expected that students will attend school regularly and arrive on time in order to benefit from the learning experience. If your child is absent from school, it may be excused if it is for the following reasons (samples):

• Medical appointments
• Counseling
• Legal appointments
• Funeral of family member or closely related friend (school may request proof)
• Family emergency (school may determine if valid)

Students should not be absent more than 10 days within a three-month period (marking period). This includes absences that result from tardies. If attendance guidelines are exceeded, a parent/teacher conference will be requested by the director.

Our Preschool (Infant/Toddler. K2, K3, &VPK) students may arrive as early as 7:00AM and may remain in care until 6PM. Students enrolled in our VPK ONLY program can arrive at 8:30AM and MUST be picked up by 12Noon at no cost. The State Program covers 3 hours per day ONLY. There is an option for Extended Care with VPK that will extend until 6PM at an additional cost. Students in Preschool are to be escorted and signed in by a parent/guardian to their classroom no later than 8:30 AM each morning. Students will be considered tardy if they are not in place by 8:30AM. If a student arrives after 8:30 AM, parents should escort the student to the office to receive a tardy slip. Students will be escorted to class by a staff member. Parents should understand that Deeper Root's attendance policy states that five (5) tardies are equivalent to one (1) day absent. A student may not exceed more than 10 absences (resulting from tardies or absences) in a marking period. The "tardy count" is reset every nine weeks.

Students in grades Kinder thru 8th, are to report by 8:00 in the morning to participate in the breakfast program. Each classroom teacher will pick students up at 8:15 AM each morning. Students will be considered tardy if they are not in class by 8:30 AM. If a student arrives after 8:15 AM and their class has already left the area, parents should ensure the student is in class by 8:30AM. If arrival is after 8:30 AM, students must be escorted by a parent/guardian to the office to receive a tardy slip. Students will then be escorted to class by a member of the office staff. Parents should understand that Deeper Root's attendance policy states that five (5) tardies are equivalent to one (1) day

absent. A student may not exceed more than 10 absences (resulting from tardies or absences) in a marking period. The "tardy count" is reset every nine weeks. The "tardy count" is reset every nine weeks.

DROP OFF POLICY:

• Kinder thru 8th grade students should arrive no later than 8:15 am; classes begin promptly at 8:30AM.

• Check-in with a Parent/Guardian is **required after 8:30 AM** (Tardy pass needed); 5 tardies = 1 unexcused absence. Tardy passes are issued after checking in at the school office.

• Parents of Pre-K/VPK students, please park in designated areas and walk your child into the building. This is optional for all other grades as they can be dropped off at the designated sidewalk entrance at the building.

• If possible, please give the school a courtesy call if your child will be absent or arriving late.

• Extended day services are available from 7:00am – 8:00AM and 3:30PM – 6:00PM (2:30PM - 6:00PM on Wednesdays).

• Students arriving before 8:00AM and not enrolled in Before Care, will be charged **$1 per minute/per child** and required to enroll in the before school care program.

PICK UP POLICY:

• The School office hours are from 8:00am-4:00pm.
The school day ends at 3:15 PM. (Early pick up cutoff is 2:45 and student must be signed out from the front office.)

• If your child is not enrolled in aftercare and is not picked up by 3:30, you will be charged an extended care fee of $1 per minute of after care services and required to enroll in the after-school enrichment program.

• NO CHILD WILL BE RELEASED TO ANY PERSON NOT ON THE AUTHORIZED PICK-UP LIST AND WHO FAILS TO SHOW PROPER PICTURE IDENTIFICATION.

• Additional pick-up persons must be added in writing and signed by the parent or legal guardian, verbal authorization is not acceptable. Written notices must be submitted to the front office. Be sure to notify us of any changes in advance.

• No child will be released to a minor (persons under 18 years of age).

AFTER SCHOOL ENRICHMENT POLICY:

• The after school enrichment program closes promptly at 6:00PM

• Please contact the school if you are going to be late. A late fee of $1 per minute will be charged for every minute past 6:00PM. Late fees are billed directly to the account.

PAYMENT POLICY:

The payment portal we use is FACTS. By taking advantage of the security and convenience of payment processing and information technology offered by FACTS, we remain committed to this goal. You will realize these benefits by using FACTS for your tuition payment plan:

1. **Payment Dates:** You may choose either the 5th or the 20th of each month as your payment date. Automatic payments can be made from a checking or savings account or from a variety of credit cards, if applicable
2. **Convenience & Security:** Along with multiple payment plan options, your payments are processed securely through a bank to bank transaction. There is a $55.00 one-time fee for this service if billed monthly. If you choose to pay by semester(2 payments August/January) or make a one-time payment, the fee is reduced to $20 and you receive a 5% - 10% discount on your tuition.
3. **Peace of Mind Insurance:** FACTS offers this optional benefit for only $20 per year per family. In the event of death of the Responsible Party or spouse, the remaining tuition balance owed for the current school year is paid to the school.
4. **Consumer Account:** You may check your personal account or make payments online from the convenience of your home or office anytime.

• If it becomes necessary for your child to take a leave of absence, tuition must continue to be paid in full to reserve his/her place in the class.

FEES:

2026-2027 Fee Schedule

*New Student Application Fee (1st time enrollment) $100.00 **Non-Refundable**

Preschool Infant/Toddler (6 weeks – 2 yrs.) Annual Enrollment $100.00 **Non-Refundable** Tuition $12,500 ($250 per week)	**Preschool** (3yrs.) Annual Enrollment $100.00 **Non-Refundable** Tuition $10,750 ($215 per week)	**VPK** (4yrs.) Annual Enrollment $100.00 **Non-Refundable** Tuition $9,750 ($195 per week full day) VPK 3 hours only - Free	**Kinder thru 8th** Annual Enrollment $100.00 **Non-Refundable** Tuition $9,000 annual

****Preschool has 2 vacation weeks that are optional and can be reimbursed if used****

2026-2027 Annual Activity Fees Due by August 1st

Preschool Infant/Toddler - 3 yrs. $140.00	Preschool VPK (4 yrs.) $170.00	Kinder thru 5th $287.00	Middle School $365.00

Applies to Academy Students Only

• Before School Care - $15/wk After School Enrichment Program - $60/wk

Scholarship Opportunities:

Step Up For Students

Step Up For Students offers three scholarships in Florida for students who are five years old and entering Kindergarten through 12th grades, with the exception of the Gardiner Scholarship that includes preschool age students with special needs. Below is a brief description of each scholarship:

- The **Florida Tax Credit Scholarship (FTC)** and the **Family Empowerment Scholarship for Educational Options (FES-EO)** are based on **financial need**. Both scholarships allow parents to find new learning environments for their children.

- The **Family Empowerment Scholarship for Unique Abilities (FES-UA)** allows parents to personalize the education of their pre-K-12 children with **certain special needs** by directing money toward a combination of approved programs and providers.

AAA Scholarship

Families with children struggling in their current school and cannot afford to put them into a good private school, this scholarship is here to help! They have state-approved scholarships to help pay for tuition, books, and fees at private k-12 schools for income-eligible students.

Child Care Aware

Child Care Aware of America is a non-profit program designed to help families, including military families, who need help with childcare. The agency provides referrals, tools and resources nationwide.

Voluntary Prekindergarten

Children must live in Florida and be 4 years old on or before Sept. 1 of the current school year to be eligible. If their birthday falls Feb. 2 through Sept. 1 in a calendar year, parents can postpone enrolling their child in VPK that year and wait until the following year when their child is 5. Eligible parents must apply to the state of Florida and submit their voucher to assist with preschool applicable tuition.

School Readiness

The Florida School Readiness Program offers financial assistance for early education and care to low-income families. It is meant to encourage and aid families in becoming financially self-sufficient. Also, so their young children can be successful. Services vary based on individual needs and range from extended daycare to after-school and school-age care in some instances.

Deeper Root Academy participates with all these programs to assist families who desire to apply to our programs.

Deeper Root Academy (DRA) Scholarship

Deeper Root Academy is our "in house" scholarship program for families who need financial assistance and do not otherwise qualify for any of the other scholarship programs we currently participate with. We currently offer over $30,000 each year for students from infant/toddler through 8th grades that apply and demonstrate financial need. It is our goal to continue to give the gift of D.R.A. and rely on the generosity of our partners and community.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY:

WITHDRAWAL BEFORE CLASSES BEGIN

- All Enrollment Fees (New Student Application, Annual Enrollment, and Activity Fees) are **Non-Refundable.** The Enrollment Process requires these fees for processing the applications, assigning licenses for instructional support platforms, supply/material/curriculum purchases, etc. Please see a detailed breakdown of costs on the Admissions Page. If a family/parent chooses to not move forward with enrollment before the enrollment process is initiated (email notification received), fees may be refunded. However, once the enrollment process has been initiated and/or supplies, materials, and curriculum are purchased, refunds of the enrollment fees **will not** be granted.

WITHDRAWAL OR ABSENCE FOR MEDICAL AND HARDSHIP REASONS

• 50% of the unused annual tuition balance may be waived, provided the student's injury, sickness, mental health or financial hardship forces the student to withdraw from school or medical absence lasts for 31 or more consecutive days. Documentation will be required.

WITHDRAWAL FOR OTHER THAN MEDICAL REASONS

(Examples include: relocation, change of objective, and voluntary withdrawals.)

• 25% of the annual tuition balance may be waived, provided the student has withdrawn from school after attending more than fourteen consecutive calendar days beginning with the student's first class day of attendance in the academic year. A two week notice in writing is required and the full remaining balance will

be due upon its receipt to Administration. *Failure to withdraw without providing notice will result in the remaining balance being due immediately. Student records will not be released until all financial obligations have been satisfied*. **The student will not be eligible for re-enrollment.**

*If it becomes necessary for your child to take a leave of absence, tuition must continue to be paid in full to reserve his/her place in the class.

DISMISSAL FROM THE SCHOOL

• Deeper Root Academy reserves the right to dismiss any student at any time in accordance with the discipline policy and/or unresolved delinquency of Financial Agreement.

VISITORS:

• If you would like to observe your child's class, we encourage you to do so. Please schedule a time with the director. Any parent or visitor who arrives between the hours of 8:00am and 4:00pm will be required to sign in at the Front Office. This is a precautionary measure to keep your children and our staff as safe as possible.

LOST & FOUND:

• Please label your child's bags, jackets, lunch boxes, and any other personal belongings with a permanent marker.

• Deeper Root Academy staff will do our best to make sure your child is responsible for his/her personal items. All unclaimed items will be placed in lost and found for a two week period. After which, any remaining items will be donated.

• Students are not allowed to bring personal toys from home. Deeper Root Academy Staff will not be responsible for damage or loss of these items.

PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION:

• Parents and teachers will communicate through Daily Binders completed by the teacher and sent home with your child's belongings. We will also utilize the Parent Portal and emails to ensure proper documentation of contact.

• Please address any concerns you have with your child's teacher through a written request. This may result in a scheduled parent/teacher conference. During pick-up and drop off, it is not appropriate to discuss specific student information.

• During the school day, you may leave messages for your child's teacher through the office or through email. Please be advised that teachers will be able to return calls and

emails after the school day ends. Please refrain from texting to minimize distractions during instructional time.

• If it becomes necessary to meet with the teacher or director to discuss major concerns, please make an appointment either through the school office or by contacting the teacher directly.

• Updates and other school and class related information can also be accessed online through the Parent Portal, website, and Remind 101 System.

HOLIDAY/VACATION SCHEDULES:

*******Kindergarten – 8th grades Only*******

-**August 7, 2026** Meet the Teacher
-**August 11, 2026** First Day of School
-**September 7, 2026** Labor Day **(No School)**
-October 12, 2026 Student Holiday/Teacher Workday**(No School)**
-**November 23-27, 2026** Thanksgiving Holiday **(No School)**
-**December 21 – January 1, 2027** Winter Break **(No School)**
-**January 4, 2027** Teacher Workday/Student Holiday
-**January 18, 2027** Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday **(No School)**
-**February 15, 2027** Presidents Day **(No School)**
-**March 12, 2027** Student Holiday/Teacher Workday
-**March 15 – 19, 2027** - Spring Break **(No School)**
-**March 26, 2027** – Good Friday Observance **(No School)**
-**April 23, 2027** Student Holiday/Teacher Non Workday **(No School)**
-May 26, 2027 Last Day of School
-May 27 - 28, 2027 Teacher Post Planning
-**May 31, 2027** Memorial Day Holiday**(No School)**

*******Preschool Only (Includes Infant/Toddlers thru VPK)*******

-**August 7, 2026** Meet the Teacher
-**August 11, 2026** First Day of School
-**September 7, 2026** Labor Day **(No School)**
-October 12, 2026 Student Holiday/Teacher Workday**(No School)**
-**November 26-27, 2026** Thanksgiving Holiday **(No School)**
-December 21 - 25, 2026 School Vacation Week
******December 28 – 31, 2027 - Winter Break School Vacation Week (Optional)**
-January 1, 2027 New Year's Day **(School Closed)**
-**January 4, 2027** Teacher Workday/Student Holiday
-**January 18, 2027** Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday **(No School)**
-**February 15, 2027** Presidents Day **(No School)**
-**March 12, 2027** Student Holiday/Teacher Workday
******March 15 – 19, 2027 - Spring Break School Vacation Week (Optional)**
-**March 26, 2027** – Good Friday Observance **(No School)**
-April 23, 2027 Student Holiday/Teacher Non Workday **(No School)**
-**May 31, 2027** Memorial Day Holiday**(No School)**
-June 18, 2027 Juneteenth Observance **(No School)**
-July 5, 2027 Independence Day Observance **(No School)**
-July 30, 2027 End of Summer Session

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS:

In the event of a natural disaster, such as a severe storm or hurricane, the Academy will follow Orange County School's guidelines and will close per their recommendations. Please listen to your radio or television for such announcements. It is unlikely that we will be able to contact each parent to notify of emergency closings. However, every effort will be made to make contact.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

We strongly believe in the importance of security and safety for all of the children, parents and staff at Deeper Root Academy. We have strict policies in place that must be followed in order to protect the children in our care. We make every effort for teachers in each classroom to have current First Aid and CPR certification and be familiar with proper medical emergency procedures. We strive to provide a safe environment by conducting safety audits, monthly emergency storm/fire drills, and teaching children safety rules. If a child does experience an injury, an accident report will be completed by the staff and signed by the parent/guardian. Despite our efforts, an emergency may arise. For this reason, Deeper Root Academy requires that parents/guardians complete emergency contact information and sign a release for emergency medical treatment.

EMERGENCY DRILLS & EVACUATIONS

Evacuation procedures for fire and other emergencies are practiced monthly to ensure our children are readily prepared in case of an actual emergency. Severe weather drills are also conducted every month. When severe weather is in the area, the director monitors weather reports and alerts staff to be prepared to quickly move children to safety. Emergency procedures are posted in each classroom.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY AND ACTIVITIES

Our staff understands that our decision to open, close or delay school opening during inclement weather often disrupts family schedules. We also understand that our children are better served – academically, emotionally and socially – by being in school. But, as always, our top priority is the safety of our children and staff, so the decision to close or delay opening is not an easy one. The process is complex and involves many people. Below is a list of activities that may be implemented when normal outdoor time is restricted:

- Music and Activity CDs
- Story Telling
- Indoor Board Games (Bean Bag Toss, Bowling, Four Corners, etc.)
- Floor Puzzles

VISITOR POLICY

All visitors must sign in and out on our visitor log located in the front entrance and state the purpose of their visit. To ensure the security of all involved, picture identification is required for all unfamiliar visitors. In addition, visitors are required to be accompanied by a staff member and are never to be left alone while in the school.

DISCIPLINE:

The goal of Deeper Root Academy is to provide an environment that encourages respect for others. We DO NOT participate in corporal punishment but rather a more positive approach to discipline. We encourage a strong relationship between parents, students and teachers. We believe consistent communication with all parties is the key to discipline.

Disciplina*ry Action Policy*

Classroom Discipline Plan

1. Positive Reinforcement
2. Redirection
3. Reflection Time/Self Evaluation
4. Removal of Privileges
5. Parent/Teacher conference requested
6. Sent to Director's Office

Students who are repeatedly sent to the Director's Office for behavior correction will be required, along with the parent/guardian to adhere to a Behavior Management Plan.

Director I*ntervention Procedures*

1. Written Warning requesting Director, Teacher, Parent conference in order to establish a Behavior Improvement Plan
2. In-School Suspension
3. Sent Home for 1 Day *(includes date of incident if sent home prior to 12:00pm)*
4. Sent Home for 3 Days
5. Expulsion

****Please refer to Student Code of Conduct for more specific information****

Preschool Behavioral Policy

Conscious Discipline

The heart of Quality Child Care Early Learning Center's Discipline Philosophy is to encourage self-control, self-esteem, and respect for all children and adults. For this reason, we are training our staff to implement the principles of "Conscious Discipline" by Dr. Becky Bailey. This program takes a different approach to traditional classroom management. It is based on the basic idea that developing discipline with children instead of applying discipline to them, will help them become more emotionally healthy and happy adults.

The program is designed to help teachers take everyday discipline issues and turn them into teachable moments that convey the importance of impulse control, anger management, and conflict resolution. Conscious Discipline gives children the tools to understand that their emotions are not only important and deserving of attention, but they are also controllable and the power to control them lies within the child. We are striving to teach children how to progress from physical or verbal aggression to calm self-regulation, how to make better choices with cooperation and compassion, and the importance of respecting and empathizing with others.

We would encourage you to check out the website www.consciousdiscipline.com to see how Dr. Bailey's brain research is changing the way we think about discipline and classroom management.

Discipline Philosophy

We believe that all domains of learning are supported during play and through strong, positive interactions with adults. Promoting healthy social and emotional development, including self-control, is one of the fundamental responsibilities of our program.

The preschool period is a critical time for children to learn to control their thoughts, feelings, attention, impulses, and behavior. They are learning how to get along with others and how to be a friend. Children are not born with these skills. Teachers and caregivers must teach social and emotional skills just as they teach washing hands or learning colors and shapes. We know that when children are given the opportunities and support to develop (learn, practice, discuss, etc.), self-control and other social and emotional skills, it gives them the foundation needed for academic and life success.

When any child in our program presents with challenging behavior, teaching staff shall follow the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):

- Observe the children, and then identify events, activities, interactions and other factors that predict and may contribute to challenging behavior.
- Rather than focus only on eliminating the behavior, teaching staff shall focus on teaching the child social, communication, and emotional regulation skills and using environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support and other teaching strategies to support the child's appropriate behavior.
- Teaching staff shall respond to challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that provides for the safety of the child and the safety of others in the classroom. Our response will be calm, respectful and provide the child with information on what is acceptable behavior and what is not.
- We will document the challenging behaviors and the intervention methods that were attempted in a behavior tracking log.

- Teacher-parent discussions regarding a child's behavior shall be held in private and shall focus on working as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

- If necessary, intervention shall ensure each child has access to professional services, such as referrals to the educational cooperative behavioral specialist and/or local programs.

WE SUPPORT THIS DEVELOPMENT THROUGH:

Our Environment

- We provide children with interesting materials and engage them in activities that are appropriate for their age to keep them focused and attentive.
- We develop schedules that meet the needs of young children by avoiding long periods of wait time without activity.
- Our schedule is flexible enough to follow the children's interests as well as their cognitive, physical, and biological needs. We do our best to not let any child get bored or disinterested.

Our Teachers

- We work to develop a relationship with each individual child, including those needing higher levels of support.
- Teachers always speak to children in a calm tone, especially during redirections.
- We help children put words to their emotions. (For example, "Billy, I can tell you were mad when James took your block.")
- We use stories about young children in social situations to teach healthy social skills.

Our Families

- Communicate regularly with staff to ensure consistency in guidance between home and school
- Partners with us and allow us time to work with all children, including those needing higher levels of support
- Understand and acknowledge that we do not expel children as they are learning these skills. We strive to serve individual needs while ensuring the safety of young children
- To best serve children, we may need to partner with social and emotional experts to help give a child the best foundation for academic and life success

Our Children

- We ask parents to communicate regularly with staff to ensure consistency in guidance between home and school.

- Parents understand and acknowledge that we do not expel children as they are learning these skills. We strive to serve the individual needs of each child, while ensuring the safety of young children.
- To best serve children, we may need to partner with social and emotional experts to help give a child the best foundation for academic and life success.

Discipline Procedures

We have found that behavior concerns usually indicate that a child needs more time, support, and practice to develop their social and emotional skills. When serious concerns arise, we will partner with parents and professionals who specialize in supporting children's social and emotional health.

When a child continues to be unable to control their actions, one method we use is called "safe place." When children are upset, angry, or being disruptive, they may be sent to or asked if they would like to go to the "safe place." This is a quiet spot in which they can allow themselves to take the time to relax, breathe, and try to get their emotions under control. Teachers will continue to watch children while they are in the "Safe Place" to make sure they are not hurting themselves or others. They will encourage the child to talk about their feelings and help with calming techniques so the child will be able to return to the classroom setting.

If a child is unable to use these calming techniques and continues to be disruptive, the teacher will then notify the office and the director will be called in to help the child. We might also reach out to parents so they can speak with the child and/or be notified of the circumstances.

If further guidance is required, actions taken will always be individualized, consistent, and appropriate to each child's level of understanding. **No physical punishment of any kind will be administered on our property. This policy restricts parents and staff from using physical punishment on their own children while on our property. In addition, staff may not yell at, shame, or humiliate a child in any way.** Our goal is to correct children's behavior in a way that will help mold and perfect a child's mental faculties or moral character. The terms "bad" or "naughty" shall not be used about a child.

The following steps will be completed when a child must be removed temporarily for challenging behaviors that constitute an imminent danger to the child or others:

- Make a referral to the agency responsible for early childhood special education services in the local area. If a child's behavior is such that it necessitates temporary removal on a repeated basis, there should be sufficient documentation for consideration of special education services.
- Maintain documentation on file of the outcomes of the incident, subsequent parent conference, and plan developed that includes appropriate intervention strategies. The purpose of the parent conference is to develop a plan jointly with the family and available resources, to address the specific behaviors.

Biting

Biting is a normal part of early childhood development. Babies and toddlers bite for a variety of reasons, such as teething or exploring a new toy or object with their mouth ("mouthing"). As they begin to understand cause-and-effect, they also might bite a person to see if they can get a reaction.

Biting also can be a way for toddlers to get attention or express how they're feeling. Frustration, anger, and fear are strong emotions and toddlers lack the language skills to deal with them. So if they can't find the words they need quickly enough or can't articulate how they're feeling, they may resort to biting as a way of saying, "Pay attention to me!" or "I don't like that!"

Biting tends to occur most often between the first and second birthday. Biting is a normal part of early childhood development, however, biting that continues past two and a half to three years of age is not appropriate. Parents may be called to pick up their child from school and may be excluded for the day if he or she continuously exhibits this behavior past the age of two and a half. Please note that refunds/credits shall not be issued for days in which the child was sent home for behavior issues.

We reserve the right to dismiss any student whose behavior is an immediate threat to the safety of themselves, staff, or other students or is disruptive to the operation of the school.

BIRTHDAYS:

Birthdays are an exciting time and we encourage birthday parties. If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday at school, please make arrangements with your child's teacher three (3) days in advance. We suggest you keep your snacks simple and individualized. Parents are encouraged to attend but are not required. The staff will NOT be responsible for distributing invitations to select students. However, if a parent would like to invite an **ENTIRE** class (no exclusions) then it is okay for the teacher to put an invitation from the parent into every students' binder from that class. If only select students are being invited to an outside event, the family will have to make those contacts outside of the classroom to avoid any student feeling excluded.

DAILY ACTIVITIES:

A daily schedule will be posted in each classroom and provided for parents.

• Schedules are subject to change periodically.

NUTRITIONAL PRACTICES:

Breakfast

Breakfast will be provided to all students. In order to participate in the Breakfast program, you MUST have a completed Lunch Application on file. Students must also arrive no later than 8:15AM.

Lunch

• Parents may *choos*e to send their child to school with a complete cold lunch or have the school lunch that is provided in the tuition cost.

• If bringing lunch, it is the parent's responsibility to make sure the child arrives to school with a complete meal including drink and utensils needed for consumption. The lunch should require NO HEATING and be easily disposable.

Snacks

• Snacks are provided through our current Food Program. Snack is provided for all students enrolled in the afterschool enrichment program and given during the Afterschool Enrichment time (3:15 – 6:00pm).

DRESS CODE:

• Uniforms are **REQUIRED** for all students (this does include Preschool)

Tops

-White, Black, Green, and Gold Polo with school embroidered logo.
-All blazers/sweaters must have school monogram
-Oxfords or polo shirts worn under embroidered sweater vests or jumpers do not have to be embroidered.
-Tops need to be neatly tucked into bottoms.

Bottoms

-Khaki, black, uniform plaid (girl skorts)
-Skorts, skirts, shorts, pants
-All bottoms must be longer than the tips of your fingers when hands are placed at your sides.
-All jumpers must be embroidered.
-Girls wearing skirts *must* wear shorts underneath.

Belts-Black, Brown

Shoes

-Black or Brown preferred or Sneakers (must be closed-toe)
All should have non-marking soles. No brightly colored writing or laces.
*Dress shoes are required for chapel

Socks

-White/Black/Brown/Green
(Single color socks may be worn in a style appropriate for the shoes being worn.)
-Undershirts-White (Boys may wear all white undershirts)
-In colder weather, all-white long-sleeved shirts may be worn underneath monogrammed shirts.
-Sweaters, vests, jackets, blazers and pullovers should reflect school colors/logo.

Approved attire can be ordered through the school website at www.deeperrootacademy.org

HEALTH/MEDICATIONS/SICK POLICY:

• NO Medications will be dispensed by the Academy Staff. Please make arrangements to administer your child's medication before or after school. If there are special circumstances, please communicate this to the school director.

• If your child becomes ill while in our care, you will be notified immediately.

• Any child with an elevated temperature over 100 degrees must be picked up immediately.

• Any child suspected of having measles, pink eye, chicken pox, lice or any other contagious, communicable or infectious disease or virus which includes vomiting or 2 incidents of diarrhea MUST BE PICKED UP IMMEDIATELY.

• Children sent home with above mentioned symptoms must present a doctor's note and be free from all symptoms for 24 hours to be readmitted. (48 Hours for Strep Throat)

• NO CHILD WILL BE ADMITTED WITH A FEVER.

• In the event of a minor injury, an incident report will be completed for your signature when you Pick-up your child. If a serious injury occurs, parents will be notified immediately.

STUDENT ACCIDENT, INJURY AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE POLICY

Deeper Root Academy | Phoenix Tree Educational Foundation, Inc. | 2026–2027 Parent/Student Handbook

Applicability: Infant/Toddler, Preschool, VPK, Kindergarten–8th Grade, extended care, and school-sponsored activities. This policy supplements the Safety and Security and Health/Medications/Sick Policy sections.

Purpose and commitment
Deeper Root Academy (DRA) is committed to providing developmentally appropriate supervision, prompt assistance when a student is hurt, timely family communication, and accurate incident documentation. Even with appropriate safeguards, accidents may occur during ordinary childhood play, athletics, classroom activities, and other school programs. Every reported or observed injury will be treated seriously and assessed based on the circumstances and symptoms, without presuming fault or minimizing a later diagnosis.

1. Supervision and prevention

- Staff will maintain active, age-appropriate supervision, follow applicable staffing and ratio requirements, enforce playground and activity rules, and promptly intervene in unsafe conduct.

- Staff will check activity spaces and equipment for apparent hazards, report unsafe conditions to administration, and restrict use until concerns are addressed.
- Children will be taught safe play expectations. Accidental contact during appropriate play will be evaluated separately from intentional aggression, prohibited roughhousing, or other misconduct.

2. Immediate response and first aid

- The supervising employee will promptly stop the activity, secure the area, stay with the student, request trained assistance, and assess observable symptoms without attempting to diagnose an injury.
- Call 911 immediately for a suspected life-threatening emergency or serious injury, including difficulty breathing, unresponsiveness, uncontrolled bleeding, suspected spinal injury, seizure requiring emergency response, or other urgent warning signs. Do not delay emergency services while trying to reach a parent.
- Do not move a student with a suspected head, neck, back, or significant bone injury unless needed to prevent immediate danger. Follow dispatcher directions and provide first aid/CPR only within training and authorization.
- For nonemergency injuries, provide appropriate first aid, monitor for changing symptoms, and contact administration. Staff must not compel a student to demonstrate movement to prove that no injury occurred.
- A student reporting significant pain, reduced movement, dizziness, worsening symptoms, or possible fracture must be removed from activity and referred for prompt medical evaluation.

3. Parent/guardian notification

- For emergencies or potentially serious injuries, notify the parent/guardian immediately after activating emergency response; if unavailable, contact authorized emergency contacts.
- For injuries involving head impact, significant force, suspected fracture, persistent pain, visible swelling, or other concerning symptoms, promptly call the parent/guardian even if the child appears comfortable.
- For minor injuries, notify the parent/guardian the same day and provide the written incident report at pickup or electronically through an approved school channel. Preschool notifications and required records will also follow applicable DCF licensing rules.
- Document notification attempts, times, recipient, method, and any directions given. Parent signature acknowledges receipt, not agreement with findings or waiver of rights.

4. Incident documentation and witness accounts

- The supervising employee will promptly notify administration and complete an incident report before the end of the workday whenever practicable, recording date, time, location, activity, observable symptoms, student statements, response, first aid, notification, and follow-up.
- Record objective observations and direct quotations where relevant. Distinguish what an employee personally observed from what was reported by others; do not speculate about medical diagnoses, causation, negligence, or blame.
- Collect separate factual witness statements when the circumstances warrant them. Preserve relevant photographs, video, communications, and other records according to the Academy’s retention procedures and any legal hold.

- Administration will review the report, identify needed safety measures, and ensure required regulatory, licensing, insurer, or child-protection notifications are made when applicable.

5. Delayed symptoms or later medical diagnosis
Some injuries are not immediately apparent. If a parent later reports pain, a fracture, concussion, or other diagnosis, DRA will document the new information, promptly review the original report and witness accounts, consider whether additional notification or investigation is required, and discuss any medical restrictions or school accommodations. The absence of visible symptoms at the time does not establish that an injury did not occur. Families are encouraged to provide relevant medical documentation; emergency response and student safety will not depend on the family first supplying records.

6. Administrative review and student conduct
Administration will assess available facts fairly, including supervision, activity rules, equipment conditions, witness statements, and student conduct. Ordinary play, unsafe behavior, bullying, and alleged supervision failures will not be treated as interchangeable. If misconduct is substantiated, DRA may respond under the Student Code of Conduct while protecting the privacy of all students. Conclusions may be updated when additional evidence becomes available.

7. Medical follow-up and return to activity
Parents/guardians are responsible for informing DRA of medically advised restrictions. Following a fracture, concussion, significant injury, surgery, or emergency evaluation, administration may request appropriate medical clearance or written activity restrictions before the student resumes physical education, recess, sports, or other affected activities. DRA will work with the family on reasonable temporary accommodations and a safe return to participation.

8. Insurance, expenses, and liability
Families may submit injury-related documentation to administration for review and possible referral to DRA's insurance carrier. The carrier, not school personnel, determines whether a claim is covered and whether payment is due under the applicable policy and law. Submission of a report or claim is not an admission of negligence or a promise of payment. This policy does not require families to waive legal rights or prevent them from seeking medical care or independent advice.

9. Confidentiality, reporting, and staff compliance
Student medical information, incident reports, and witness statements will be shared only with persons who have a legitimate need to know or as required by law. Records will be maintained securely under applicable record-retention and licensing requirements. Staff must complete required safety and first-aid training, report incidents without delay, cooperate with reviews, and follow all applicable Florida child-care licensing and mandatory reporting obligations. Suspected abuse or neglect must be reported through legally required channels, not handled solely as an internal accident investigation.

10. Family cooperation and questions
Families should maintain current emergency contacts and medical information, promptly report symptoms that arise after dismissal, and communicate restrictions or changes in

the student's condition. Concerns may be directed to the School Director for review and, when appropriate, a scheduled conference.

Implementation note: This policy is intended as a schoolwide standard. DRA will apply any stricter or additional requirements governing its licensed child-care/preschool operations, VPK program, transportation, field trips, and mandatory reporting. Administrative procedures and forms are maintained separately.

STAFF INCIDENT RESPONSE CHECKLIST

☐ Secure scene; supervise remaining students; provide appropriate first aid.
☐ Call 911 when indicated; contact administration.
☐ Notify parent/guardian within required timeframe; document attempts.
☐ Record observable symptoms and student's exact words where useful.
☐ Complete incident report; obtain separate witness statements as appropriate.
☐ Preserve relevant evidence; identify any immediate safety correction.
☐ Provide report/notification to family; document receipt or delivery.
☐ Escalate later-reported diagnosis or changing symptoms to administration.
☐ Follow applicable DCF, VPK, insurer, and mandatory-reporting requirements.

Thank you for choosing Deeper Root Academy for the care and education of your precious child. We count it as a blessing and a privilege to be able to serve you. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our Director, Dr. Angela Kennedy. We believe and pray that your child's experience at Deeper Root Academy will exceed your expectations.