



RENNER
ACADEMY

Family Handbook
2023-2024

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Introduction

As the only specialized school for children with dyslexia and other language-based learning differences, Renner Academy places great emphasis on building the best possible educational experience for its diverse learners. When students are given the right tools to best support their physical, emotional, social, and academic needs, they are able to spread their wings and soar.

We believe that it truly takes a village, so we strive to maintain a strong connection between school and home.

Parent awareness and support for school policies are essential to the running of the school, and we invite parents to join with their children in discussing this handbook.

Mission Statement

As the only specialized school for children with dyslexia in the Brazos Valley, Renner Academy takes great pride in maximizing the potential of children with dyslexia and other language-based learning differences. With small class sizes, caring and knowledgeable teachers and staff, and an environment that allows students to feel safe and supported, **Renner Academy empowers students to reach their fullest potential as learners, thinkers, and leaders.**

Core Values

The core values of Renner Academy are:

- Our ultimate goal is to create lifelong learners that are equipped with the skills and tools needed to thrive in our ever-evolving world.
- Attaching negative intent is never helpful. Negative behaviors are usually indicators of areas of need.
- If an approach doesn't work, we must find a different approach. We must never fault a learner for learning differently than we teach.
- Learning is a journey, not a destination.

Inclusivity Statement

Renner Academy welcomes and celebrates differences, and we believe an inclusive environment fosters deeper learning. We take time for life's teachable moments to capitalize on authentic learning opportunities. We empower our students to share their voices, and we strive to cultivate an academic and social environment where diverse thoughts, ideas, and perspectives are respected. Renner Academy embraces the unique life story each person contributes to our school family.

Parents and Renner Academy

Renner Academy needs and expects the cooperation of our parents, who must understand and embrace our mission, share our core values, and support our curriculum, faculty, and staff. The school and our parents form a powerful team with far-reaching positive effects on children and the entire school family.

Understanding the School Decision-Making Processes

The greatest impediment to effective teamwork between the school and parents grows out of misunderstandings. As a young school, we continue to learn and refine our practices and decision-making processes to better serve our families, and invite you to respectfully share constructive feedback.

The Role of the Advisory Board

At Renner Academy, the policy-making authority at the highest level resides in the Advisory Board. The Board consists of 10 volunteers. The role of the Advisory Board has continued to evolve since its formation, but the ultimate goal of the Advisory Board is to ensure the long term sustainability of Renner Academy.

The Role of Parents

Parents play an essential role in the success of Renner Academy. Not only are parents advocates for a quality education for their children, they are expected to support the faculty and Administration through volunteer activities, attendance at important events, and through voluntary contributions to fundraising activities such as the Renner Academy Gala.

When parents choose to enroll their child at Renner Academy, they agree to subscribe to our mission, follow our rules, and abide by our decisions. At Renner Academy, we believe that trust and mutual respect are the most essential underpinnings of effective working relationships with parents.

Parents need to stay informed about their children and the important events in the life of the school. Renner Academy has a similar obligation to provide parents with timely and pertinent information and seeks to do so through various publications and reports. As a school we are always open to suggestions for ways we may improve our communications.

The faculty and administration of Renner Academy benefits from thoughtful questions and suggestions from parents about the ways we can improve. However, it must also be understood that there are many valid reasons why good ideas and suggestions are not immediately adopted.

Expressing Concern about a Situation or Decision

In the course of the school year there will be times when parents may have concerns

about a decision or situation that arises. Parents should feel free to ask questions or express their concern within the following guidelines:

- Civility, honesty, and respect are characteristics that we expect everyone in our community to exhibit. The fact that parents pay tuition does not give them a right to be rude or disrespectful to the professionals who are the faculty and staff.
- We all have the same goal - the education of our students to enable them to consistently achieve to the best of their abilities.
- The most effective way to get an answer is to communicate a concern openly and constructively to the teacher or administrator closest to the problem. Our teachers understand that you sometimes have questions, and they want to answer them.
- Children's perception of an event may not always be accurately retold to the parent/guardian. If your child ever communicates a situation that you have a concern or question about, please contact the child's teacher.
- We all make mistakes. Our school's procedure in such situations is to acknowledge our errors, apologize, and try not to repeat the mistake.
- In most cases school administration is not where you first take your question or concern. If possible, please contact the teacher first that is more directly involved. If your question or concern is not addressed to your satisfaction, you may contact Kim Pagach, Executive Director at kim@renneracademy.org.
- The Board of Advisory is not an appeals court that will overturn decisions made by the administration of the school.
- Our goal in dealing with problems is to find enough common ground to continue a mutually respectful relationship, even though parents may not agree with every decision by the school.

Resolving Problems

Our goal is that each school day is a positive experience for both students and teachers and parental expectations are being fully met. If a problem or conflict arises involving a teacher, another student, curriculum, or any other aspect of the school, he or she should adhere to the following process in order to seek resolution.

- Speak personally to the faculty or staff member directly responsible for the area in which the problem occurred.
- If the problem persists, consult the student's advisory teacher.
- If the parent of the student is not satisfied after speaking with the advisory teacher, he or she should contact Kim Pagach, Executive Director at kim@renneracademy.org.

Partnership

It is the philosophy of Renner Academy to enroll families, not just students. Parents, legal guardians, grandparents, and all other family members play an integral role in every child's education.

The faculty and staff members of Renner Academy are committed to providing a high-quality education for students in accordance with our mission. In addition to an

academic environment, we strive to provide for each student's intellectual, social, physical, and moral development.

By enrolling your child at Renner Academy, you as parents agree to read, understand, and endorse the school's mission and policies. No school can succeed unless families are equally committed to the mission. Please read the Family Handbook and discuss with your child the philosophy and policies contained within the document. Show your support and encouragement by participating in school activities and attending school events, especially those in which your child is involved, either directly or indirectly.

Code of Conduct

At Renner Academy, we focus on developing students both academically and socially. We are committed to creating a safe and nurturing learning environment for our students. Our aim is to help our students grow into healthy, happy, responsible citizens of the world. The primary purpose of our Code of Conduct is to develop a consistent approach to behavior management and to promote partnerships and communication, so that we can work together to ensure everyone feels safe and has the opportunity to learn. The Code of Conduct provides methods and options for managing student behavior, preventing and intervening in student discipline problems, and imposing discipline.

Rights of Students

All students have the right to learn; the right to have an environment that is conducive to learning; the right to have access to the tools and instruction needed; the right to know expectations in advance; the right to be treated with respect; the right to have a voice; the right to have a scheduled break.

Responsibilities of Students

All students have the responsibility to:

- Try their best.
- Come to school prepared.
- Respect others.
- Respect their surroundings and property of others.
- Take responsibility for the materials they use.
- Meet school standards of grooming and dress.
- Follow all school and classroom rules.

Possible Outcomes

The goal of classroom/school management is to ensure that all students are safe and the environment is conducive to learning. On many occasions, mistakes are viewed as learning opportunities and are handled by the student and staff member without cause for additional measures. In the event of serious and/or recurring incidents of the same nature, additional measures may be taken to address the behavioral concern.

Outcomes are dependent on the severity and frequency of the behavior. Possible consequences may include, but are not limited to:

- Formal verbal warnings
- Teacher set consequence
- Email from teacher, advisory teacher, and/or administrator
- Temporary removal from the classroom
- Parent/Teacher/Administrator conference
- In-school detention or suspension
- Out of school suspension
- Expulsion

Under no circumstances will corporal punishment ever be administered.

Policies and Procedures

Advisory

Each student will be assigned to an advisory teacher. The advisory teacher's main function is to serve as a resource for any help or advice the student may need in the academic, social, and extracurricular life and to act as a liaison between the student and the rest of the school. Unless you are wanting to contact a specific teacher for any questions or concerns, your child's advisory teacher should be the primary contact for any questions or concerns you may have.

School Hours

The school day begins at 8:30 a.m. Students are permitted to enter the building as early as 8:15 a.m.

The school day ends at 3:15 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 1:15 p.m. each Friday.

Arrival

All families are requested to use the carpool drop off. The drop off for carpool starts at 8:15 a.m. and ends at 8:30 a.m. Drop off takes place in the front drive, which is a drop off only area. There is no parking from 8:15 - 8:30 a.m. Parents are asked to have their child ready to exit the car at the time of drop off to make the process run smoothly.

Dismissal

Students will be released at 3:15 p.m. Monday -Thursday and 1:15 p.m. on each Friday. Parents are to use the carpool line for pick up. Students who are not picked up by 3:30 p.m. (1:30 p.m. on Fridays) must be checked out from the front office. As specified in your school contract, there will be a late fee assessed if a student is picked up late.

Families will receive a parent pickup tag on the first day of school. Please place this in your car. Even if we know you, it is hard to see into cars on sunny or rainy days: the name tag helps the pick up run smoothly. During the pickup line, please press the name

tag to the window. Alternatively, attach the name tag to the front passenger seat's visor so it is visible when the visor is flipped down.

Late Arrival

School begins at 8:30 a.m. Not only is being punctual setting the day on a positive note, our teachers utilize every second of instruction time; therefore, it is important for our students to be on time to class to benefit from the full lesson being taught. Please strive to have your child dropped off at school no later than 8:30 a.m. Doors will be locked at 8:30 a.m. Students who are not inside the building by 8:35 a.m. must be buzzed in with the parent/guardian and checked in at the front desk.

Leaving Campus

If it is necessary for a student to leave during school hours, a written request, phone call at 979-810-8100, or email at info@renneracademy.org from a parent/guardian should be submitted to the office. When picking up, the parent will have to be buzzed in and will need to sign the student out at the front desk.

Visitors

All parents and visitors must use the main entrance to enter the School. Visitors must sign in and provide a driver's license to the front desk to receive a name tag. Visitors without a tag will be asked to check-in or may be asked to leave the building. Please keep visitations to your child's scheduled lunch/recess time unless set up in advance with either the office or your child's teacher. This protocol is to ensure the safety of the faculty and students of Renner Academy.

Parking

Parking spaces are provided for faculty, staff, and parents. Please do not leave your car unattended in the driveway in front of the entrance.

Attendance

Regular attendance is an essential element for a student's success in every aspect of the Renner Academy program and an integral part of the learning process. Attending class is a right and a responsibility that students possess as a member of the Renner Academy family. We invite parents to be our partners in learning, and we ask that you make your best effort to have your child at school for the full duration of the school day. We believe that our efficiency and the integrity of our programs is often compromised when students are not present.

While we understand that there may be times when a family or personal emergency requires a student to be away from school for an extended period, it is also the case that, in order to satisfy the demands of the Renner Academy program, a student must be in attendance. We want to be as supportive as possible of family needs, and we will work in that spirit to accommodate to the degree that we are reasonably able. When a student is absent from school due to a prolonged illness or other unforeseen circumstance, teachers will work with the family to determine the most appropriate

makeup plan for the student. Due to the nature of our highly individualized and targeted instruction, many parts of students' days cannot easily be made up.

Absences/Tardies

If a student is ill or will not be attending school for any reason, parents are requested to fill out the Student Absence Google form located in the Shared Parent folder in Google Drive. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to communicate regarding the student's absence.

If a student accumulates excessive absences and tardies during the school year, this may jeopardize the student's ability to receive the full benefit of class attendance and cause disruptions to the classroom environment. Renner Academy administration will be in contact with families regarding absences/tardies and will determine what needs to be done to rectify the situation if necessary.

Communication

The school will communicate regularly with families. Advisory teachers will send out a weekly or biweekly newsletter containing important events and other important information. If more urgent matters arise involving your child, your child's Advisory teacher or other school staff will communicate with you via email, Remind, or phone. Important information about the school is also posted on the school's social media sites, Facebook and Instagram. Those sites are also ways in which parents can keep up with all that is happening at Renner Academy.

Parent communication and involvement is essential in the educational process. Email or Remind is the best way to communicate with teachers. If you wish to meet in person, please contact the teacher via email to schedule a time in advance. Scheduling a meeting with a teacher to discuss a child's progress is important for the teachers. We ask that such conversations not be initiated at arrival or dismissal times unless prearranged with the teacher. In order to receive important notifications and other key communication from the school, please make sure your contact information in RenWeb/FACTS is up-to-date and that you have signed up for Remind messages.

Inclement Weather/School Cancellation

The school will announce school closing information through Remind, Social Media, and KBTX. Families may also receive an email from the school with more detailed information.

Please keep in mind that Renner Academy has students and staff that drive in from multiple counties, and therefore may not necessarily make the same decision as Bryan/College Station schools. An excused absence is honored any time a family feels it is unsafe to drive.

Harassment Policy

It is the policy of Renner Academy to maintain an environment for all students, visitors, and employees that is free from any form of unlawful harassment. In particular, harassment of anyone on school premises or at school-sponsored events based on that person's sex, race, age, disability, religion, national origin, or the fact that such person has made a complaint about harassment or any other form of unlawful discrimination, is prohibited and will subject the offending person to appropriate disciplinary action.

Any student, visitor, or employee who feels that he or she has been harassed by any person on campus or at a school-sponsored event, or who has observed harassment of others in violation of this policy, is directed to report such conduct at once to Kim Pagach, Executive Director.

Health

All children must have up to date DPT/DTaP/Tdap, MMR, Hib, Hepatitis B series, Varicella, and Polio immunizations on file as stated by the Texas Board of Health. Documentation of these immunizations must be provided via FACTS/Ren Web or directly to the Managing Director, Jodi Renner within the first 30 days of school attendance per Texas State Law. If documentation is not provided within this time frame, the student will not be allowed to return to school until these requirements are fulfilled. Parents of new students entering Renner Academy must obtain the child's immunization record from his/her physician and provide a copy to Managing Director, Jodi Renner.

Food Allergies

Please ensure the office and teachers are aware of any food allergies prior to the first day of school. Should your child require an Epi-pen or other medication, please provide it to the office before the first day of school.

Illness

We take great care in trying to protect students from acquiring infections or illnesses at school. To protect the children and staff members, children who are ill must be kept at home. Parents should keep their child at home if he/she has any of the following:

- Fever (over 100 degrees) within the last 24 hours.
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours.
- Unexplained/undiagnosed rash.
- Red conjunctiva of the eye with discharge.
- Yellow/green mucus from the nose.
- If given a prescribed antibiotic, students must take a full 24 hours of the medication prior to returning to school.
- If your child tests positive for Covid please stay home for 5 days following diagnosis. This is subject to change based on CDC guidelines.

It is Renner Academy's policy to send children home who have visible signs and symptoms of what appears to be a contagious illness. Please have a plan in place in the event that your child becomes ill at school. If both parents are away from phone contact, please make sure that we have an alternate contact. The final decision concerning whether a child is well enough to be in school lies with Renner Academy administration.

Accidents and Emergencies

The school performs minimal First Aid and notifies the family immediately in the event of an accident or emergency. When a doctor is urgently needed, we notify the family and then go directly to the hospital. When it is impossible to locate either parent or the other approved emergency contact, a staff member will assume responsibility acting as a "prudent parent". A school employee will remain with the student until the arrival of a parent, guardian, or other approved emergency contact.

Renner Academy cannot assume responsibility for the cost of treatment or transportation of the student as a result of illness or injury.

Service Animal

Due to allergy and other safety concerns, no animals are allowed on school grounds for any reason except with prior approval by administration. Exceptions may be made for educational purposes when animals are the responsibility of staff or approved visitors such as AggieLand Pets With a Purpose. In the case of trained service animals for students with physical needs, an exception will be made. Comfort animals and pets, even when restrained, are not allowed. If your child has any animal related allergies, please be sure to communicate that with Managing Director, Jodi Renner.

Tuition

All tuition will be managed through the FACTS system. If tuition is not paid by the due date, a \$50 fee will be assessed and per each week that the tuition remains unpaid. This will be charged as an Incidental Fee in FACTS. Please see Jodi for any questions regarding FACTS, tuition amounts, payment options, and other financial matters.

Transcript Requests

Transcript requests must be made via an email request to info@renneracademy.org. Official transcripts will not be given to the student, but either sent directly to the receiving institution or given directly to a legal parent/guardian. In order for transcripts to be released, the student's account must be cleared (unpaid tuition, library fines, etc.).

Field Trips

Field trips are a valuable extension of classroom learning and are strongly encouraged when feasible and appropriate. These trips offer many opportunities to enrich the educational experiences of the Renner Academy school family. A signed consent from

a parent/guardian for transportation and attendance is required.

Every student participating in a school-approved field trip must agree to the following:

- Students must exhibit exemplary behavior on field trips. A class trip is a privilege and not a right for students.
- If behavioral concerns present, parents may be required to attend and/or the student may not be allowed to participate.

Parents may provide transportation for some field trips. The following guidelines are for parents assuming the responsibilities of chaperoning:

- Any parent automobile accident falls under the guidelines of the parents' insurance rules and regulations, not the insurance of Renner Academy.
- The primary responsibility of chaperones is to stay with their assigned students during the field trip.
- No smoking, alcoholic beverages, cursing, or other presumably inappropriate behaviors are allowed.
- If behavior concerns arise, chaperones should call for assistance from school staff.
- Chaperones must be appropriately dressed and punctual.
- The chaperone must follow the guidance provided by school staff to the best of his/her ability.

Lockers

Students in grades 4 - 7 are assigned a locker. The purpose of the locker is to store a student's materials. The assigned student is the only student sanctioned to use that particular locker. No other student or parent may inspect any student's locker. No food should be left in lockers overnight.

Electronic Devices

Student-owned iPads (6th generation or newer) are required on campus along with headphones or earbuds.

Technology must not interfere with the classroom environment and/or the learning of other students and may only be used for purposes specified by school staff. The use of electronic devices may be restricted at the discretion of the teacher and/or school administration. To set your child up for success, please restrict his/her access to recreational apps or programs during school hours.

Electronics must be charged at home every night. Renner Academy is not responsible for loss, theft, destruction, or damage of student-owned technology, nor is the school responsible for its storage or safekeeping. At no time should these valuable items be stored overnight in any school facilities.

Supplies

Students may bring a backpack (if desired), and must bring a reusable water bottle, lunch, and snack. Students are also required to bring an iPad, charger, and charged/compatible headphones. Please remind your child to have their technology charged at the beginning of each day. All other supplies are provided by the school.

Telephones/Smart watches

Students are not permitted to use their phones, smart watches, or iPads to respond to texts, phone calls, or via any other communication method unless specifically approved by a teacher/staff member. Cell phones should be placed on silent mode and should remain out of sight. If you allow your child to have recreational apps or programs on his/her iPad, please create screen time restrictions and/or review your child's daily activity log to minimize potential distraction and maintain ongoing accountability. Students that do not comply with the technology expectations may have their device removed

If you need to get a time sensitive message to your child, please call the front desk at (979) 810–8100.

Toys

Children may not bring any guns, war toys, or other items relating to violence to school. These items are not appropriate in a school environment.

At the beginning of school, children often need a comfort item; a special toy is welcome to join your child until they are comfortable leaving it at home. However, please limit toys coming to school as much as possible as they can get misplaced, damaged, cause hurt feelings, and/or cause distraction from learning.

Search and Seizure Policy and Procedures Statement

Renner Academy administration and authorized staff members may search a student's pockets, purse, backpack, gym bag, or other personal property; student lockers, desks, or other school property.

Dress Code

The purpose of the dress code is to ensure a climate conducive to learning. At Renner Academy, we allow the students some latitude in what they choose to wear to school. We feel this is important as part of training them to impact the world while still under the guidance of parents, as well as teachers. The style of clothing in stores has and always will change, but what we wish to impart to the students is how to make choices that respect themselves and those around them.

We ask all students to dress appropriately for a school environment. Inappropriate attire includes but may not be limited to the following:

- Clothing that reveals private areas

- Clothing that reveals undergarments
- Attire with offensive content such as profanity, inappropriate language, discriminatory, relating to alcohol and/or illegal drugs, etc.
- Clothing/accessories that cause distractions (at the discretion of the teacher)
- Crop tops or revealing shorts
- Pajamas/house shoes/slipper, unless on specified Pajama Day

Teachers and staff will retain the discretion to coach students around preventing classroom distractions. If necessary, dress code violations will be addressed by Renner Academy administration and the parent/guardian will be contacted.

Physical Education/Recess

Students will have physical education and recess daily. It is an integral part of a child's physical and social development. Please ensure your child wears appropriate running shoes to school each day. If a child is unable to participate in physical education, a note should be provided to the child's advisory teacher.

Lunch Policy

Lunch and drinks must be brought from home. Students have open and unlimited access to the filtered water system located in the main hall. The school also has a kitchen, with a microwave, that students may use if desired. Please send all utensils that your child will need to prepare and eat their lunch. Emergency utensils will be provided; however, You will be notified if accessing emergency utensils becomes habitual. Refrigerator access is only for staff. Lunch kits will be kept with the students' belongings throughout the day. Please clearly label your child's lunch kit, water bottle, and cold pack. Due to the number of students with food sensitivities, students will not be permitted to share food with one another.

Parents/Family members wishing to eat lunch with their children are welcome to eat lunch at the picnic tables outside. Parents will be required to check in with the front desk if joining their student for lunch. No access will be granted from the playground gate.

Snack Policy

Snacks will no longer be provided by the school. Please send a snack with your child every day. Because we have students with food sensitivities, snacks and lunch items will not be allowed to be shared.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a cause for celebration. Many students wish to share food items with the class. This year we are going to have one "birthday party" each month to celebrate all students with that birthday month at the same time. There will be a sign up form sent for families to volunteer to provide goodies for each birthday party month. To ensure that students with summer birthdays also get to celebrate with their school family, we will celebrate July birthdays in August, and we will celebrate June birthdays in May.

Academics

Assignment of Classes

Faculty and administration work together to find the best class placement for each and every child. Each class is designed with the children's needs and teacher's style in mind. A great deal of thought, discussion, and careful consideration of both the individual learner and the class as a group of learners is involved in the process.

Renner Academy does not follow typical grade classification. For the domains of English Language Arts and Math, students are assigned to a small group with students of similar abilities. For the domains of Science and Social Studies, students are taught at their age level. If you need an update on your child's progress, feel free to contact your child's advisory teacher.

Academic Marking and Reporting

The philosophy of Renner Academy is that comprehensive feedback is provided to parents and students. The school utilizes age-appropriate assessments and evaluations specific to the respective grade level with an emphasis on a growth mindset. Renner Academy operates on nine-week grading periods.

FACTS/Renweb

FACTS is the system used for billing and enrollment and checking your child's grades, school events, and important reminders. This can be done via computer, but also through the Renweb Home app.

Programs

Variations in the programs and apps used to support student learning and enrichment. Parents will be provided with login information and access to all programs utilized by their child. Any programs or apps that require individual purchasing will be the responsibility of the parent. Programs that allow for bulk purchasing and account management will be purchased by the school at no additional cost to parents. If you have any difficulty with technology, please contact Susan Myers or Rae White (see staff directory for contact information).

The purpose of the Handbook is to provide you with a convenient explanation of present policies and practices at the school. This Handbook is an overview and cannot cover every matter that might arise. The school reserves the right to modify any of our policies and procedures, including those covered in this Family Handbook, at any time. We will seek to notify you of such changes by email and other appropriate means; however, such a notice is not required for changes to be effective.