



## **LiFT Academy Student & Parent Handbook 2025-2026**

## Handbook Purpose

The handbook was designed to provide each family with the rules, guidelines, and procedures for the students and the school community. We want each family and student to be informed and prepared before attending.

Please read this handbook in its entirety with your student before the first day of school. LiFT families and students are expected to be familiar with the handbook to follow the rules and regulations as previously stated in the enrollment application.

LiFT reserves the right to interpret, add, delete, or modify all rules, guidelines, and procedures contained in this handbook as deemed necessary at any time with parent notification. Parents/Guardians should direct any questions concerning the information contained in this document to their student's teacher and/or for clarity.

### Please Note:

- The handbook does not serve to contractually bind LiFT in any way.
- The handbook is subject to change without notice by the LiFT Board of Directors.

### Meet:

- Executive Director: Matt Spence
- Director of Finance & Administration: Phil Hubbell
- Development Director: Julie Brecher
- Director of LiFT Academy: Eric Kozlowski
- LiFT University Transition Program Director: Ashley Hill
- Assistant Director of Learning & Teaching: Kristen Sebetic
- Assistant Director of Student Success: Shari Coplin
- Senior Operations Manager: Kelley Brickfield
- Administrative Assistant: Ericka Kuzmanovic

### School Address:

1005 S. Highland Avenue South, Clearwater, Florida 33756

### School Hours:

Elementary Students (grades K-5): 8:00am to 2:30pm

Upper School Students (grades 6-12): 8:30am to 3:00pm

### Extended Care Hours (School Days Only):

**Before Care:** 7:00 – 8:00 Elementary School

7:00 – 8:30 Middle and High school

**After Care:** 2:30 - 6:00 Elementary School

3:30 – 6:00 Middle School

### Office Hours:

Monday through Friday 7:00am to 3:30pm

**Contact Information:**

Phone: 727-258-7659

Email: [Info@liffll.org](mailto:Info@liffll.org)

School Website: [www.liffll.org](http://www.liffll.org)

Parents/Guardians Web: [www.FACTSmgmt.com](http://www.FACTSmgmt.com)

Uniform Ordering: Uniform Orders should be placed on [www.liffll.org/uniforms](http://www.liffll.org/uniforms).

School Shirt Colors: Royal Blue, Black, White, Navy, and Heather Grey

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### **The Mission of LiFT**

To inspire and empower people with neurodiversity to learn, thrive and succeed.

### **Our Vision**

A world where independence is possible for the neurodiverse.

### **Our Values**

Our Values at LiFT begin with a fervent belief that each learner comes to value and view their individual uniqueness and diversity as a gift that will be celebrated. Equally important is for each learner to respect the differences found in one another.

### **Our Motto**

Change a Life, Change the World.

# The LiFT CODE:

## COMMUNITY

***"There is no 'them' and 'us'. There is only us."***

Greg Boyle

This element of the Knights CODE is about how we see ourselves as a group – who is welcome here and what kind of place we want to build. Open, inclusive, bridge-building.

## OPPORTUNITY

***"Look at the possibilities and not the problems. Be part of the solution, not part of the problem."***

Eunice Kennedy Shriver

This element of the Knights CODE is about how we see our role in the world – what we can accomplish and what we are willing to try. Brave, hopeful, open to possibility.

## DIGNITY

***"Knowing that we can be loved exactly as we are gives us all the best opportunity for growing into the healthiest of people."***

Mr. (Fred) Rogers

This element of the Knights CODE is about how we treat ourselves and each other – how we interact and how we carry ourselves. Kind, thoughtful, accepting of differences.

## EXCELLENCE

***"Believe in yourself, learn, and never stop wanting to build a better world."***

Mary McLeod Bethune

This element of the Knights CODE is about what we expect of ourselves and encourage in others – our effort, the quality of our product. Pride, diligence, pushing to be our best.



# Admissions Policies and Procedures

## Admission Statement

LiFT Academy is a non-profit private school serving grades K-12.

## Non-Discriminatory Policy

LiFT admits students of any race, color, and national ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate based on race, color, or national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarships, and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. , however, reserve the right to dismiss or refuse admission to anyone unwilling to comply with the school's regulations or meet academic or behavioral standards.

## Accommodations

Accommodations allow for a change in how a student learns or demonstrates knowledge, without altering the expectations or curriculum standards. They are designed to provide equal access to instruction and assessments-supporting students in reaching the same goals as their peers. Accommodations may include:

- Work with fewer items per page or line and/or materials in larger print size.
- Verbal presentation of items and answer choices.
- Verbal presentation of instructions/prompts.
- Give responses in a form (oral or written) that is easier to understand.
- Take more time to complete a task or test.
- Take frequent breaks, such as after completing a task.

## Modifications

**Modifications Represent** a change made to what a student is expected to learn and demonstrate. Modifications alter content, performance expectations, or assessment criteria to better match the student's individual learning needs. Modifications may include:

- Complete fewer or different homework problems than peers.
- Write shorter papers.
- Answer fewer or different test questions.
- Learn different material (such as continuing to work on multiplication while classmates move on to fractions).
- Get graded or assessed using a different standard than the one for classmate.

## Enrollment Requirements

### **Elementary- Grades K-5**

- Age: Applicants for kindergarten must be five (5) years of age on or before September 1 and at least six (6) years old for first grade by September 1 of the school year in which the student is applying.
- Applicants must present evidence of readiness, including remaining seated for long periods of time, and independently using the restroom.
- Applicants must not have significant behavioral concerns. For additional details click on
- [Behavioral Expectations](#) (page 16)

### **Middle School and High School- Grades 6-12**

- Applicants must not have significant behavioral concerns. For additional details click on
- [Behavioral Expectations](#) (page 16)

## Student Enrollment Procedures

All LiFT students must be re-enrolled annually. All forms must be completed, and all fees paid before a student can enroll, re-enroll, and is accepted.

Enrollment will take place by the following steps:

### **New Families**

- Contact the school to schedule a tour through an on-line inquiry.
- If all parties agree to move to the next step, a shadow day for the student will be scheduled.
- Students are required to show readiness during their shadow day.
- After the shadow day, a team member and the family will sit down to review all data to determine if LiFT is an appropriate fit for all parties involved.
- All new students have a 45-day trial period to make sure LiFT can meet the students' needs and the student is a good fit for LiFT. During this time staff and families will address any issues that occur.

### **Accepted and Returning Families**

- Parents/guardians and students must complete the application each year (located on [www.liftacademy.org](http://www.liftacademy.org)) and pay the enrollment fees. The enrollment fee holds your spot for the following school year. Along with the application, the following must be submitted for new students: a copy of the student's most recent report card, copies of standardized test scores and any special testing the applicant has received, a copy of the student's birth certificate, social security card, immunization records, and all the acknowledgment pages attached to the application packet and handbook.
- Key personnel may admit or choose to deny the applicant and will notify as appropriate.
- For students with a FES-UA or other state scholarship (Step Up for Students), the Award ID must be provided to the school prior to the first day of school. Failure to do so will result in parent responsibility for monthly payment plans at the full tuition amount.

## Student Shadowing Policy

Families that have taken a tour of LiFT and are interested in pursuing admission may be invited to complete a shadow day. A member of the enrollment team will email a link. All

student visitors must agree to adhere to the discipline and dress code policies of LiFT while they are under our care. The parent(s) must complete a Student Emergency Card for the visiting student with contact information, any additional care instructions, and signatures. If the student visitor becomes ill, or is struggling with following LiFT expectations, the parent will be contacted to pick them up.

### **Grounds For Reversal of Acceptance**

Acceptance to LiFT may be reversed if there is evidence that the information provided to the school has been falsified. If an attempt has been made to gain acceptance by falsifying information, the student will not be permitted to attend school even if prior acceptance has been granted.

### **Confidentiality**

LiFT is committed to protecting personally identifiable and proprietary information in compliance with all applicable laws. We collect only necessary information to support educational and operational needs.

Student information may include, but is not limited to, name, birth details, contact information, and medical documentation. This data is stored securely in FACTS SIS, where families are responsible for adhering to the Technology Acceptable Use Policy.

Families may opt in or out of sharing personal information in directories, websites, and social media during registration.

LiFT also manages internal company information (e.g., schedules, directories, records) for operational use only. Distribution of such information is limited to internal purposes as needed.

### **Release Of Student Records**

LiFT requires a signed and dated Records Release Form before disclosing any student information, unless an exception under law applies. The release must specify the records, purpose, and recipient.

#### **Standard Release Process:**

- Records must be picked up in person by authorized parties.
- Schools may submit requests via email with a parent-signed release if the student is under 18.
- Requests from the Florida department of Health or Social Security Administration are accepted.

#### **Exceptions (No Release Required):**

Records may be disclosed without prior consent to:

- Federal or state education authorities for audits or program compliance
- Financial aid purposes
- Accrediting organizations
- Emergency personnel to protect health and safety
- Compliance with court orders/subpoenas (with notification unless prohibited)
- Parents/guardians of students (ages 18–21) regarding substance violations
- The student or their parent/guardian if over 18

## Tuition And Fees

All fees, including enrollment fees, must be paid prior to the first day of school. The school operating budget is maintained by tuition. Families are required to sign up through FACTS and select their payment date and method of payment. Past due payments will incur an automatic \$25.00 late fee if not paid by the monthly due date. A processing fee of \$40.00 will be charged for all returned checks.

- The enrollment fee includes a yearbook, FACTS SIS, MAP assessments, technology fees, and other miscellaneous fees.
- Tuition includes textbooks, e-textbooks, consumables, assignment agenda book, and any other classroom curriculum.

## 2025-2026 Tuition & Enrollment Rates:

- K-8th Grade: \$13,000
- 9th – 12th Grade: \$15,250
- The FACTS tuition management system processes payments for tuition **and** before-school care; this account needs to be set up by families prior to August 1.
- Step Up for Students scholarship award amounts will be subtracted from total tuition before the parent/guardian payment plan is created. We are a private school, and thus parents/guardians are responsible for all tuition not covered by a scholarship.
- In the rare instance that your scholarship covers the full tuition, families are still required to have an account set up with FACTS to ensure proper accounting of scholarship funds received.

## Scholarships

LiFT accepts Step Up for Students (SUFS) Scholarships such as FES-UA and FES-EO, along with Florida Tax Credit and AAA scholarships. These scholarships fall under the Parent Choice program of the Florida Department of Education and are **not** based on financial need. See below for more information regarding the LiFT scholarship which is based on financial need.

To ensure continuation of scholarship funding, both from LiFT and the state of Florida, daily attendance is expected. Excessive absences and/or a GPA in any class lower than 2.5 may result in the scholarship's removal

## Fees That May Be Applied by SUFS Include:

- Scholarship recipients may be charged a \$250.00 administrative fee for those whose scholarship may be used for therapies for ordering/invoicing/payment and items needed to support therapy. This applies to those who receive \$500.00 more than the tuition and registration amounts or those who have a 254 matrix or higher.
- FES-UA recipients may be charged a \$50 fee for the yearly audit required by the state of Florida.

## Deadlines:

Step Up for Students' scholarships require parent/guardian enrollment approvals on EMA (the SUFS system) before the start of each school year, and quarterly approvals of fund disbursements.

In order to ensure the timely receipt of funds to cover the operation of the school, **vigilance on the part of parents/guardians in approving these requests is paramount.**

The parent **approval timeline** is as follows"

- **Prior to the start of school, after providing your child's Award ID:** enrollment approval
- **Q1 invoice approval:** generally, in August
- **Q2 invoice approval:** generally, in mid-October
- **Q3 invoice approval:** generally, in mid-February
- **Q4 invoice approval:** generally, in early April
- Parents/Guardians should immediately approve all requests listed above. Late approvals can result in late receipt and even non-receipt of scholarship funds.
- Parents/guardians are ultimately responsible for each year's full tuition, so timely attention to the required approvals is in everyone's best interest.

LiFT also offers a LiFT Board Scholarship. Applications for these financial-need based scholarships are submitted in the Grant & Aid section of the FACTS tuition management system, as long as funds remain. The FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment team conducts the financial need analysis for those scholarships, and the specifics are not disclosed to LiFT staff.

**We expect all families to participate in the funding of their child's education and therefore LiFT Board Scholarships will not cover 100% of tuition.** Additionally, because funds are limited, they are awarded on a needs basis as long as funds remain.

As part of the application process on FACTS, the following information must be submitted.

- Copies of your most recent Federal Tax forms including all supporting tax schedules.
- Copies of your most recent W-2 forms for both you and your spouse, if applicable.
- Copies of supporting documentation for Social Security Income, Welfare, Child Support, Food Stamps,
- Workers' Compensation and TANF.

**FES-UA, FES-EO, FTC, and AAA scholarship recipient's families assume financial responsibility for any unpaid portion of tuition.**

### **Withdrawals, Refunds, and Tuition Balances**

LiFT asks parents/guardians to make every effort to complete each semester before making changes regarding enrollment. If a family chooses to unenroll their student all accounts must be paid in full to receive release of records, report cards, and/or transcripts. This includes pro-rated tuition, service hours, extended care payments, and outstanding textbooks, or other fees.

When changes in state-funded scholarships occur during the school year, tuition charges will be pro-rated monthly. For inquiries regarding pro-ration, please contact LiFT Academy.

### **Student Academic Policies**

LiFT Academy provides a nurturing setting where students of all levels are supported through small class sizes, personalized accommodations, and evidence-based teaching practices to foster academic, emotional, social, and behavioral growth.

- **LiFT Support Plan (LSP):**

While LiFT is not bound by IDEA or Section 504, each student receives a LiFT Support Plan within 30–45 days of enrollment. The LSP is a non-legal internal document used to guide accommodations and modifications that support each student's learning.

- **Academic Honesty:**

Students are expected to maintain integrity in all academic work.

- **Grade Placement:**

Grade placement is determined individually based on shadow day observations, assessments (MAP and in-class), and collaboration between families and key personnel to meet each student's needs. Students will not be moved between grade levels without consultation with the student's family.

- **Assessments:**

Assessments help guide instruction, evaluate progress, and identify needed support. Data is used to inform accommodations, curriculum adjustments, and LSP development. All students are expected to actively and appropriately participate in these assessments.

- **Report Cards:**

Students receive report cards quarterly. Progress can be monitored anytime via the FACTS SIS Parent Portal.

## Grading Scale:

A: 90-100

B: 80-89

C: 70-79

D: 60-69

F: 59 or below

## Homework:

LiFT desires excellence for our students both on campus and off. Homework allows the student to learn how to become an initiative-taking individual. LiFT provides at home assignments to be completed according to the instructions given by each teacher. These assignments should be completed by the student to develop academically, promote responsibility, and help reinforce learning.

## Tests And Quizzes:

LiFT will incorporate testing based upon curriculum maps. Preparing for tests helps students to hone their organizational skills, improve their memory skills, and learn through practice and repetition. Taking tests helps students improve their ability to work under pressure and analyze and synthesize material.

## Make Up Work / Request for Assignments

Parents/Guardians must call the office to report absences or tardiness. To request homework, please contact the student's teacher(s).

- **Excused Absences:**  
Students are responsible for making up missed work and tests. They have the same number of days as they were absent to complete all assignments.
- **Anticipated Absences:**  
Notify the office and teachers in advance. If work is provided before the absence, it is due upon return. Any additional assignments must be completed within one week. Missed tests will be given within the first week back.

### **Standardized Testing:**

LiFT Academy will administer the MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) in grades K-12, three times a year. The first MAP assessment will be given within the first 4 weeks of school, the second in the month of December, and the third during April or May. Students' test results will be shared with parents/guardians.

### **Physical Education:**

LiFT students are required to participate in a physical education class unless they have a reasonable exception in writing from the parent/guardian signed by a physician. All new students must have a yearly physical examination submitted within 30 days of starting school.

### **Florida State Standards**

LiFT has chosen to establish the use of the Florida State Standards. LiFT students will be assessed using the Florida State Standards as well the MAP assessments throughout the year.

### **Graduation Requirements:**

- **Standard High School Diploma**  
Awarded to students who have completed the 24-credit program with a passing grade and can demonstrate independent mastery of the grade level rigor of the Florida State Standards, as required by the state of Florida.
- **Standard High School Diploma With Different Course Numbers**  
Awarded to students who have completed the 24-credit program with a passing grade through the use of adapted content, methodology, and below grade level rigor of the Florida State Standards.

### **Promotion, Retention, And Re-Enrollment Criteria:**

LiFT determines grade placement for students on an individual basis to decide which academic plan best suits their needs. If a student receives unsatisfactory marks in the core subjects (English, Social Studies, Science, and Mathematics), and the MAP assessment reveals concerns a discussion may occur concerning the student's promotion or retention. The final decision lies with the Key personnel and families.

## **Student Conduct Policies**

### **Positive Culture at Lift Academy**

LiFT Academy makes a continuous effort to strive for positive relations and interventions with its team members and students. We will continue our commitment to focus on positive academic, social/emotional, and behavioral growth. We have the same expectations for



our entire school family and rely on the support and participation of our parents/guardians and ABA teams to ensure consistency. We firmly believe there is nothing more important than encouraging a positive school culture that is built around meaningful and appropriate relationships within our classrooms, school, and community.

## Behavioral Expectations

At LiFT, our goal is to foster academic and personal growth within a positive and supportive environment. To maintain this atmosphere, students are expected to demonstrate consistent respect for authority, peers, and the learning process. Students who exhibit ongoing behavioral challenges that significantly impact the classroom environment may not be suited for this setting and could be dismissed from school if efforts to support their success are not effective.

Students receiving behavioral support services are still expected to meet LiFT's behavioral expectations. While ABA strategies may be used to help shape appropriate behavior, consequences and disciplinary measures may still be implemented when needed. ABA support does not exempt a student from accountability.

While it is not possible to list every rule or behavior, students are guided to develop appropriate conduct, emotional regulation, and self-control. LiFT staff will determine acceptable behavior and the necessary consequences when expectations are not met.

LiFT attempts to ensure students are evaluated properly prior to admission for their behavioral diagnosis as well as their social/emotional temperament. LiFT understands the challenges its students may face in abiding by the code of conduct and will allow for behavioral interventions, accommodations, modifications, and related services to be provided by the staff and/or parent/guardian of the student to help to enforce positive behavioral management. A student's continued failure to abide by LiFT's code of conduct will lead to disciplinary actions such as detention, suspension, and possible expulsion from the school.

## Our Approach to Behavior

We focus on a proactive, team-based framework for creating and sustaining a safe and effective school. Emphasis is placed on the prevention of problem behavior, development of pro-social skills, and the use of data-based problem solving to address existing behavior concerns. Some of the key components we focus on are:

- Defining and teaching school wide behavioral expectations.
- Addressing problematic behavior using the Knights CODE.
- Using behavioral data to assess progress.

The goal is to increase student academic performance, decrease problem behaviors, maintain safety, and establish a positive school climate through research-based strategies and systems while focusing on increasing independence

## Behavioral System Response Chart Levels 1-3

**Level 1:** *Junk behaviors which include talking out, getting out of seat and making rude comments.*



- Teachers and Classroom Assistants are the first responders to any behavior happening with their students in the classroom or school environment. Teachers will address the day-to-day behaviors that arise.
- If Level 1 behaviors are repeated and the student is not responding to intervention, a meeting with teachers and the family will be scheduled to discuss.

**Level 2:** *More serious behaviors which include teasing, lying, disrespect and misuse of school property.*

- Teachers and Classroom Assistants are still managing these behaviors. If the behavior persists, the teacher will submit a behavior report in FACTS which may include consequences. Consequences will be decided by key personnel.
- Repeated Level 2 behaviors that significantly disrupt the learning environment or pose safety concerns may result in disciplinary actions up to suspension and/or expulsion.

**Level 3:** *Serious Behavioral Infractions which include purposeful harm to another individual, repeated verbal or non-verbal harassment, use of profanity directed at staff, ongoing or excessive use of profanity, inappropriate or obscene gestures, destruction of school or personal property, theft, physical altercations, academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism or cheating), possession of weapons or dangerous objects, possession use or distribution of drugs, alcohol, or related paraphernalia, sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual behavior.*

- The Director, Assistant Director, or Student Success Specialist will be called to speak with the student and family. Level 3 behaviors may result in suspension/s and/or expulsion, in alignment with LiFT policies.
- LiFT does not implement physical restraint. If a student requires physical intervention for safety reasons (e.g., to prevent harm to self or others), this falls outside of our scope of training and policies. In such cases, the family will be advised to seek support from a provider trained in crises response and management.

## **Bullying Policy**

LiFT takes any report of bullying seriously. Bullying will be defined as unwanted, aggressive behavior which is repeated, over time, and involves an imbalance of power. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose. Bullying will be responded to swiftly by all acting authorities in our discipline process. LiFT holds a Zero Tolerance for bullying, and it may result in suspension and/or expulsion.

## **Attendance And Tardiness**

Attendance is taken every day in each one of our classrooms by 8:30 am. The families of the students who did not send any communications of expected absence will be marked as *Unexcused Absence*.

Parents/Guardians may e-mail or call the office the morning of an absence or tardy and it will be recorded as excused.

## **Late Arrival or Early Release**

Students are expected to be present and ready to learn during the entire class period. Any student who is tardy or leaving early must check in and out at the front office.

## Dress Requirements

The school's philosophy is that both dress and appearance should be clean, neat, and modest. Students should not dress in such a way that would detract from the educational process or mission of LiFT. Parental review and support prior to leaving for school are important aspects of meeting dress code standards. Students who are not properly dressed will not be allowed to attend class without permission from key personnel. Further, students in non-compliance with the dress code may be asked to change, or if necessary, to call home for a clothing change to be brought to school or dismissed early.

### Dress Code for Grades K-12 Includes the Following:

- **Shirts:** Royal blue, black, white or grey. All students are required to have at least one royal blue shirt with the current LiFT logo. This is ordered through the school website. Hoodies are allowed if they are free from offensive graphics or text and hood must be kept off head.
- **Pants or Shorts:** Khaki, navy or black. Girls may wear khaki, navy, or black colored skirts or dresses **with shorts underneath**, skorts, or capri pants. No jeans, leggings, or baggy or sagging pants allowed.
- **Shorts or Skirts:** Hemline should be slightly above the knee or longer.
- **Shoes:** Closed-toe shoes only. No combat or steel-toed boots, slides or slippers. For all students, heels must be one inch or shorter.
- **Accessories:** Girls may wear pierced earrings. No other visible body piercings are allowed.
- **PE:** Students taking PE are encouraged to wear a LiFT PE shirt, which can be ordered through the school website. Students may either wear their PE shirt underneath their uniform or change prior to class. Students may wear their khaki shorts to PE or change into black or navy-blue athletic shorts. Shoes must be sneakers and socks must be worn with the sneakers. No jackets will be worn during PE unless the weather dictates.
- **Backpacks:** Backpacks with or without wheels are acceptable.

## Technology Acceptable Use Policies

### Purpose

LiFT provides students, faculty and staff access to its computer network and internet for educational use.

### Responsibilities

Users must access LiFT's electronic resources responsibly, ethically, and in line with handbook rules.

### Unacceptable Activities

Violations include, but are not limited to:

- Using malicious or invasive software

- Unauthorized access to LiFT systems or networks
- Copyright infringement (software, files, etc.)
- Sharing or stealing passwords
- Plagiarism
- Accessing or altering others' files
- Using personal devices without permission
- Viewing or sharing offensive, explicit, or degrading content
- Misusing cameras or devices inappropriately or in private spaces
- Sharing harmful, discriminatory, or harassing messages or images

## Personal Safety

Listed below are precautions considered paramount by LiFT to ensure the safety of students, employees, and other individuals.

- **Personal Contact Information:** Students will not post or email personal contact information about themselves or others unless it is with a specific staff member/teacher approved assignment.
- **Inappropriate Messages:** Students will promptly disclose to an administrator, teacher, or team member any message they receive that is inappropriate or makes anyone feel uncomfortable.

## Expectation Of Privacy

Individuals should not have an expectation of privacy in the use of LiFT's email, equipment, or Internet access points.

## Limited Liability

LiFT makes no guarantee that the functions or the services provided by or through the LiFT Network will be error-free or without defects. LiFT will not be responsible for any damage suffered, including but not limited to loss of data or interruptions of service. LiFT is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of the information obtained through or stored on the system. LiFT will not be responsible for financial obligations arising from the use of the system. You are responsible for your activities.

## Telephones:

There are school telephones in every classroom that may be used by the adults in the room.

## Cell Phones:

Students may have a cell phone on campus; however, cell phones will be turned in during homeroom (1<sup>st</sup> period for Middle and High School students) and remain there until dismissal. Cell phones may not be used in extended care, unless given permission by the teacher or key personnel. Cell phone misuse will result in confiscation and the parent/guardian will be called to pick up the phone in person.

In the event of an emergency, parents/guardians should call the school office at 727-258-7659.

## Electronics Policy:

- All electronics are to be used for educational purposes only.
- Students may not listen to music on any device with headphones unless it is on their LSP or they have been given permission by a team member.

- Students may not surf the web on any electronic device unless directed by a team member.

### **Internet Usage:**

Please read the Internet Usage & Technology Acceptable Use Policy found at the end of this document. The form must be signed, dated, and returned to school prior to the beginning of school.

## **Health and Safety**

LiFT works diligently to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all students. Parental cooperation with school health and safety policies is necessary to avoid accidents and properly care for students. Safety rules for students are posted throughout the school. These rules are discussed with students for the health and safety of all concerned. Students must report any unsafe conditions or talk of potentially hazardous conditions to the teachers or key personnel.

### **Student Relationships**

LiFT Academy is co-educational, operating on the premises that it is wholesome for any gender to develop many friendships during school. We discourage the practice of "going steady," or dating at school because it can be a distraction and may cause dissention among the student body.

Outward shows of affection such as holding hands, having arms around one another, and body contact will be prohibited during school and all school activities. To discourage temptation, it is not permissible for young people to pair up and linger or meet in halls, rooms, or out-of-the-way places. Any students dating or going steady will be expected to keep that relationship at home with parental supervision.

Dating is reserved for home time, not school time. This allows everyone to become friends and learn to socialize and communicate appropriately. Avoid inappropriate displays of affection on campus or at any school-sponsored activities. All students need to respect personal space.

### **Transportation: Approved Pick Up List**

A parent/guardian must list the family members and/or friends they would like to be able to pick up their child(ren) from school within their Enrollment Packet. A parent/guardian can also add individuals to their list throughout the school year by sending a signed letter or email to the school email address ([info@liffil.org](mailto:info@liffil.org)). An unknown individual may be asked to park and/or show proper identification prior to the student being released. Those who are not on the approved list will not be allowed to pick up your child. This is for the safety of all LiFT students.

### **Ride Share Services**

LiFT abides by the policies upheld by rideshare companies and/or mobility on demand services.

### **Carpooling**

No staff member at LiFT may drive any student and/or family member to or from school. Carpooling arrangements can be made amongst LiFT Families provided that a carpool

permission form has been filled out by the family and returned to administration before beginning to carpool.

### **Student Drivers**

Any student who holds a current, valid Florida driver's license and has a safe driving record may park in the designated campus parking area. The campus speed limit of 5 mph, traffic flow patterns, and student parking designations must all be observed.

Vehicles may not be visited or driven during school hours without prior permission. All vehicles are subject to search at any time without prior notice.

### **Birth Certificate**

A parent/guardian must submit an official copy of the student's birth certificate upon enrollment.

### **Immunizations**

A parent/guardian is expected to submit as well as keep their children's immunizations and health records up to date with LiFT. Immunization records must be submitted upon initial enrollment (especially those entering kindergarten) and maintained annually thereafter until all required immunizations are complete. These requirements for submission are in accordance with the Florida Statutes. Failure to ensure these records are current will result in temporary dismissal until your child's records are updated. Immunizations should be updated using the current Florida State HRS 680 –blue card or an exemption for religious circumstances certificate. These records must be sent to the school before the student can be admitted.

The Pinellas County Department of Health requires the following immunizations for all Non-Public Schools in grades K-12:

- 4 or 5 Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis
- 3, 4 or 5 Polio (final dose after fourth birthday)
- 2 Measles, Mumps and Rubella
- 3 Hepatitis B
- 2 Varicella (kindergarten effective school year 2008-2009, then each year an additional grade)

### **Additional Requirements:**

Children entering, attending, or transferring into sixth grade in Florida schools are required to have a Scoliosis screening. Families will need to have the provided Scoliosis Screening Form completed and signed by a physician.

Children entering, attending, or transferring to the seventh grade in Florida schools are required to complete the following: one dose of tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis vaccine (Tdap), then each year the next highest grade is included.

More information can be found at <http://www.floridahealth.gov/programs-and-services/immunization/immunization-faq.html#question6>.

### **Physical Examinations**

A parent/guardian is expected to submit and keep their children's physical health examinations up to date with LiFT. Physical health examinations must be submitted upon

initial enrollment into LiFT Academy, upon entrance into kindergarten, or if there are any changes in an LiFT Academy enrolled student's health status. Physical health examination records, complete with the proper immunizations, on the proper examination form provided by the physician or religious or medical exception certificate, must be submitted as required by Florida Statute. LiFT will accept the proper health forms from the student's previous school (if they are current within 1 year).

A statement concerning the students' physical fitness for school, a record of immunization or exemption and a statement regarding any currently known or suspected potentially infectious diseases must be filed with the school. Re-enrolling students must be prepared to update their medical records to reflect on any health status changes. Failure to ensure these records are current will result in temporary dismissal until your child's records are updated.

In summary, physical health examinations must be provided to LiFT in the following circumstances:

1. Entrance into kindergarten.
2. Initial enrollment at LiFT Academy.
3. Change in existing students' health status in either LiFT Academy.
4. Initial enrollment at LiFT University Transition Program.

### **Communicable Diseases**

LiFT desires to maintain a healthy school environment by instituting controls designed to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. This policy covers diseases like head lice, chickenpox, etc.

Any team members who suspect that a student or employee has a communicable disease will notify a member of the key personnel and the student or employee may be sent home. It is a school policy to notify families when students have been exposed.

Any student or employee with a communicable disease, for which immunization is required by law or is available, shall be temporarily excluded from school while ill. If the nature of the disease and circumstances warrant, LiFT may require an independent physician's examination to be completed to verify the diagnosis of communicable disease. LiFT requires that a release be signed to return to school/work. LiFT reserves the right to make all final decisions necessary to enforce its communicable disease policy and to take all necessary actions to control the spread of communicable diseases within the school.

### **Sickness, Health, And Accidents**

Sick children should not attend school. If your child is exhibiting any of the following symptoms, they should be kept home from school.

- Fever
- Rash
- Flu-like symptoms (runny nose, sore throat, coughing, etc)
- Excessive nasal discharge
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting

Additionally, if your child develops symptoms at school such as those listed above, the student will be brought to the nurse's office and the parent/guardian will be notified to pick up the child as soon as possible.

While every precaution is taken for proper supervision for the prevention of accidents at school, accidents do happen. We will be diligent in attempting to contact a parent/guardian when accidents occur, and we will document it. If you are not available, we will attempt to contact your designated emergency contacts for information/instructions.

A parent/guardian must complete and sign the Emergency Card (return to office prior to the beginning of the current school year) in its entirety so that we can obtain the best medical interventions for your child in a timely manner. The Emergency Card gives LiFT permission to seek treatment at the designated emergency facility and/or physician to administer treatment and to transport by ambulance if the situation is so warranted. If your child incurs medical expenses due to an accident at school, please file with your own insurance. LiFT does not provide student insurance.

### Head Lice Return Policy

LiFT may do head lice checks randomly throughout the school year. LiFT has a No-Nit Policy that calls for the exclusion of a student from school until the removal of all lice, eggs, and nits has been accomplished. A parent must accompany the child to the office when they return to school after being treated. Students must be free of nits to return to class.

### Medications

LiFT is incredibly fortunate to have an onsite nurse during school hours, provided through a community partnership with Evara Health. The nurse will administer any medications required to be taken during school hours and will handle any medical needs as they arise during the day.

The Florida Educational Code requires a parent/guardian to submit an annual Medication Authorization Form (included in your registration packet and available on our website) granting permission to administer medication on campus. All prescribed medications must be brought to the office by the parent and signed in. The medication will be kept locked in the Health Office. Medications that require refrigeration will also be kept in the Health Office. Evara Health staff will complete all administration of medications and when applicable, count the pills provided with the parent/guardian present.

Students may not keep ANY medications anywhere on campus except in the Health Office with the appropriate paperwork completed. The only exception to this will be inhalers for immediate relief from asthma attacks or certain diabetic supplies, or epi-pens, after discussion with the Evara Health Care Provider on campus and a note from the student's physician. Medications will be disposed of if left at LiFT after the end of the current school year.

#### **The following criteria must be met for personnel to dispense medication:**

- **ALL medication must be in the ORIGINAL, LABELED CONTAINER** The label must contain the following:
  - The student's name
  - The name of the medication



- The dosage and frequency
- The prescribing physician's name
- The date the prescription was filled (antibiotics and prescribed cough syrup cannot be over 14 days old).
- Information and records relating to positive test results, drug and alcohol dependencies, and legitimate medical explanations will be kept confidential to the extent required by law and maintained in secure files.

## Allergies

LiFT is not a peanut free or tree-nut free environment. It is our policy to establish measures to ensure a safe environment for students with different allergies, based on individual needs. However, LiFT is not considered an allergy free environment.

## Bag Checks

Should the need arise, all students are subject to random bag searches by any school personnel at any time, without prior notification. This includes backpacks, bags, purses, binders, and lunchboxes.

## Emergency Procedures

### ***See Something, Say Something***

If you see something, say something is an initiative LiFT has adopted by Homeland Security aimed at encouraging students and staff to be the eyes and ears for a safer school. A safe school requires the joint effort of all members. If we are all watching for and reporting suspicious activity, we reduce the areas where crime can occur. LiFT has an open-door policy and welcomes students and staff to boldly share their concerns.

## Emergency Response Team

LiFT's emergency response team selects team members who respond to any emergency incident, such as natural disaster or an interruption of operations. Emergency response team members ideally are trained and prepared to fulfill the roles required by the specific situation. Depending on the emergency, one person may be able to perform multiple assignments.

- Information Technology Safety/Security Operations (ITSO)
- The Executive Director
- Director of LiFT Academy
- Assistant Director of LiFT Academy
- Senior Operations Manager

## Emergency Drills

Fire, tornado, and other emergency drills will be conducted throughout the school year in accordance with city, county, and state regulations. Directions are posted in each classroom. Instruction for each drill will be given at the beginning of the school year and will be reinforced each time a drill is performed.

It is against the law to give a false alarm. Any student giving a false fire alarm or bomb warning will be answerable to civil authority in addition to school discipline.

## Emergency Notification Procedures



The safety of our students is a top priority; if any emergency were to arise, we utilize the Emergency Alert system in FACTS. The Emergency Alert System allows us to notify all the families within minutes of an emergency or incident occurring.

Messages sent may be used to alert parents/guardians and other emergency contacts of a situation and to give emergency response procedures instructions. Messages may also be sent using FACTS, such as early closing due to weather conditions, early release days, or other important reminders.

The successful delivery of messages is dependent upon accurate contact information, so please make certain that the most current contact information is in FACTS. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to update all contact information in FACTS, and on all school materials.

### **Emergency Procedures: School Closures**

An early closure may result from severe weather conditions, extended loss of power, heat, water, fire, or other emergency conditions.

If it becomes necessary to close school early, a Parent Alert will be sent out via FACTS to notify parents/guardians. Emergency Early Dismissal Responsibilities:

- Make sure your student's FACTS account lists all the emergency contacts and individuals approved to pick up your child(ren).
- When severe weather conditions or other emergency situations occur that could result in an early dismissal, follow typical traffic flow patterns as if it were a regular dismissal. Do not park and block the flow of traffic.
- Call the school immediately if you are unable to pick up your child and make other necessary arrangements.
- When LiFT has closed due to weather conditions, all other activities including before and after school programming, sports, and student activities will be cancelled.

PLEASE NOTE: LiFT does not necessarily follow the Pinellas County School system for emergency school closures. Pinellas County Schools' assessment of conditions will be considered; however, a large school district has concerns and logistical problems that do not necessarily apply to a single campus.

## **Parent Involvement**

### **Parent/Guardian Web: FACTS**

FACTS is a powerful web-based school management software program. \*This program is our main method of communication with students and their families, our grading and attendance system, our tuition management program, and much more. Therefore, it is critical that parents/guardians maintain current contact, transportation, medical information, payment information, etc. in FACTS.

### **Parent And Visitor Guidelines**

We welcome our families to visit. Parents/guardians must assist us by complying with our written guidelines and/or verbal instructions given throughout the school year or at events. Any act of non-compliance will be treated as an unnecessary risk or threat and will be managed accordingly.

To maintain an orderly, respectful, and secure educational environment for the students and staff, it is essential that everyone be aware of their responsibilities and adhere to the expected code of conduct as set forth in our Student Handbook and our comprehensive school safety plan.

### **Public Conduct on School Property**

Schools are a place of work and learning. Certain limits must be set for parents/guardians and others who visit our schools and classrooms. All people on school property or attending a school function must behave respectfully and orderly. Key personnel is responsible for all the people in the building and on the grounds.

#### **Visitor Rules:**

- Anyone who is not a regular staff member or student at the school will be considered a visitor.
- All visitors to the school must report to the office upon arrival. They will be required to sign the visitor's log and be issued a visitor's badge, which must be visibly worn while in the school or on school grounds. The visitor must return the badge to the office and sign out prior to leaving the building.
- Teachers cannot take class time to discuss individual matters with visitors.
- Any unauthorized person on school property will be reported to key personnel and will be considered a trespasser. Unauthorized people will be asked to leave. The police may be called if the situation warrants.
- All visitors are expected to abide by the rules for public conduct on school property.

### **Conduct Prohibited on School Property**

No person shall:

- Intentionally injure any other person or threaten to do so.
- Intentionally damage or destroy any property, including graffiti or arson.
- Disrupt anything occurring on campus.
- Distribute or wear materials on school grounds or at school functions that are obscene, advocate illegal action, appear libelous, obstruct the rights of others, or are disruptive.
- Intimidate, harass, or discriminate against any person on the basis of race, ancestry, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, legally protected medical condition, genetic information, religion, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, citizenship status, protected activity (such as opposition to or reporting of prohibitive discrimination or harassment), or any other status or classification protected by applicable federal, state, and/or local laws.
- Enter any portion of the school premises without authorization or remain in any building or facility after it is over/closed.
- Obstruct the free movement of any person in any place.
- Violate the traffic laws, parking regulations, or other restrictions on vehicles.
- Possess, consume, sell, distribute, or exchange alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, be under the influence on school property, or at a school function.

- Possess or use weapons in or on school property or at a school function, except in the case of law enforcement officers.
- Loiter on or about school functions.
- Gamble on school property or at school functions.
- Refuse to comply with any reasonable order of identifiable school officials performing their duties.
- Willfully incite others to commit any of the prohibited acts.
- Violate any federal or state statute, local ordinance, or board policy while on school property or at a school function.

### **Persons In Violation of the Code of Conduct**

The authorization of a visitor to remain on school grounds or at any school function shall be governed by key personnel. Depending on the severity of the violation or the number of violations, a verbal and or written warning may be given, or the individual may be denied access to school property indefinitely and they will be directed to leave the premises. Any refusal shall be subject to ejection by law enforcement.

LiFT reserves the right to pursue a civil or criminal legal action against any person violating the code.

### **Communication**

- Daily Planner/Agenda-All students in grades k-12 are required to keep an agenda. This agenda is an integral part of the communication process between parents/guardians, students, and team members. Parents/Guardians can write a note in the planner if needed. Teachers can use the agenda to make comments regarding behavior and performance. LiFT provides each student with one agenda at no cost
- Teachers will email monthly newsletters including grade level or subject standards, information about special projects, rubrics, important upcoming dates, and reminders. Please check your email frequently to stay informed on important LiFT information.
- Parents/guardians Web ([www.Factsmgt.com](http://www.Factsmgt.com)) - All parents/guardians must sign up to become a user to receive school and class information, lesson plans, grades, behavior incidents, attendance, progress reports, and report cards.
- Families will also receive a weekly LiFT newsletter, highlighting key information about the school as a whole.

### **Financial Management**

LiFT will utilize FACTS as the point of collection for all tuition costs, enrollment, and school fees. Families will automatically have any LiFT-related payments and credits from scholarships entered in [www.Factsmgt.com](http://www.Factsmgt.com) (payment Plans/Financial Aid Portal). Families will need to register their Facts payment plan/financial aid portal to select their payment choice of auto payment with a checking account or credit card.

### **Lift Support Plan: Family Involvement**

LiFT does not underestimate the importance of parent/guardian involvement in the LSP process. The parent/guardian can provide a wealth of information useful in LSP development. Parents/guardians are encouraged during the LSP meeting to share information about the abilities, needs, and desires of their student, what has and has not worked in the past, present and discuss relevant evaluations and documentation, and ask

questions. Parents/guardians will function as the coordinator of services and accommodations/modifications not offered through LiFT such as therapies and/or the acquisition of devices. They will also function as reinforcement during the implementation of the services and accommodations/modifications provided at LiFT. Parents/guardians will be informed of the LSP process upon touring. They will be contacted to provide input and to determine a date convenient for everyone, within reason.

### **Service Hours**

LiFT requires each **family** to complete fifteen service hours each year. Service hours can easily be fulfilled throughout the year by chaperoning, serving on committees, helping with campus beautification projects, attending PTO meetings, helping PTO fulfill their mission, and many other tasks. Parents/guardians may bring their ideas for fulfilling their service hour requirements to key personnel for approval. Service hours help keep the cost of attending LiFT as low as possible. For this reason, we require that if a family does not fulfill their required fifteen service hours, they must pay \$25.00 per hour not completed. (Service hours are per family and not per student).

## **General Information**

### **Arrival And Departure Procedure**

Please review the schedule below for arrival and departure on school days. LiFT respectfully requests that parents/guardians adhere to the scheduled times and procedures outlined. Parents/guardians should follow all on-site personnel directions during the arrival and dismissal process.

### **Car Line / Student Drop-Off & Pick Up**

Students should be dropped off and picked up in accordance with the schedule below. LiFT staff will be in the parking lot during these times assisting parents with the process.

#### **Morning Car Line/Drop-Off:**

- 7:40 – 8:00 Elementary School
- 8:10 – 8:30 Middle and High School

#### **Afternoon Car Line/Pick-Up:**

- 2:30 – 3:00 Elementary School
- 3:00 – 3:30 Middle and High School

### **Traffic Safety**

All drivers must adhere to the five mile per hour speed limit while driving on campus and stop at all crosswalks. The safety of our students is a top priority. Do not leave your vehicle running and unattended at any time. Refrain from using your cell phone while driving on campus. Park only in designated spaces.

### **Approved Pick Up List**

It is the policy of LiFT not to allow our students to leave with anyone other than those indicated on the student's file. If a family would like to add someone to the approved pick-up list, even on a short-term basis, they can update this information on their registration packet annually in FACTS or it can be given to the front office in writing with a parent/guardian signature to be added to FACTS.

## Students Remaining on Campus

Once students arrive on campus, they are not allowed to leave campus until dismissal time unless authorized by key personnel. Students may be checked out of school by a written note or email supplied by parent or guardian for appointments. This communication is to be given to the office and is subject to verification and approval. A parent/guardian must sign each student in and out in the office.

## Extended Care

Extended Care begins at 7:00 am until the start of school and ends at 6:00pm after school.

Aftercare will be provided by the YMCA and students are expected to be picked up no later than 6:00pm. Students picked up late will be charged an additional late fee paid to the YMCA. If a student is picked up later than two times the family may not be able to use aftercare for the remainder of the school year.

- **Before-school care** is provided by the LiFT team at the cost of \$100 per month. It's important to remember that any child dropped off at school before car line for their grade level starts will be placed into before-care and parents/guardians will be charged.

## Lunch Procedures

LiFT does not provide school lunch or snacks. Students will have a scheduled lunch period and will eat in a supervised lunch area. Soda is not permitted unless permission is given by key personnel for special events. Students are expected to eat lunch each day and sit with peers during that time. Students are expected to clean their lunch area before leaving the area.

## Beverages In the Classroom

Acceptable beverages include water, juice, and sports drinks; however, water is preferred. Beverages must be kept in a plastic or metal bottle or container with a lid. No glass at school.

## Celebration/Party Limitation

No student may pass out or verbally discuss invitations to a party at school unless the entire class is invited. If you plan to bring/send in a food item for a celebration in class, it must be purchased from a store, unopened, and permission must be given by your child's teacher in advance. Please be cognizant of students with allergies.

## Media

Throughout the year, LiFT may reproduce or participate in videotaping, motion pictures, audio recording or still photography productions that involve the use of student names, likenesses, or voices. Such productions may be used for advertising, trade, promotion, exhibition, or any other lawful purpose in any manner or medium throughout the world an unlimited number of times in perpetuity.

News media, including representatives of school publications (e.g., yearbooks, newsletters, social media pages), television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and websites also often are permitted on school property and may take notes, still photos, sound recordings, and/or moving pictures that may include your child. These items may appear or be used in news or feature stories by print, television, radio, or social media.

Parents/guardians are required to indicate their preferences during their initial registration by signing the LiFT Media Consent and Release form, which is good for five years. The selected preferences will be entered into FACTS SIS and disseminated for reference when media sources are present, or photos, videos, or audio recordings are being taken.

### **Student Recording Devices During the School Day**

Students are prohibited from making audio or video recordings during the school day on school grounds; when being transported to and from school activities or programs in a vehicle owned, leased, or contracted and being used for a school purpose by a school employee or his/her designee; or at a school-sponsored activity or athletic event, unless the recording is made in a manner permitted by the school for members of the public. In such an instance, the students remain subject to LiFT's acceptable use and discipline policies.

- In no event shall photographs or video recordings be taken on or off campus, in restrooms, locker rooms, or other areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy.

### **Permitted Classroom Recordings by Students or Teachers**

- Students and Teachers may make audio or video recordings of classroom lectures or discussions:
- For the benefit of a student who is absent after providing notice to the classroom and receiving the parent's/guardian's permission.
- If the recording is necessary to accommodate the student's disability and is required by the student's LiFT Support Plan.

LiFT may revoke permission to record if the recording distracts from or disrupts the learning environment.

### **Lost and Found**

Lost and found is in the fishbowl. Items will be kept for one month before being donated.

**Parent and Student Acknowledgements and Agreements are completed, signed, and submitted online through the FACTS Registration Portal at the time of each school year's annual enrolment**