



# **The Lionheart School**

## **Parent Handbook**

**Academic Year 2019-2020**

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## **THE BASICS ABOUT LIONHEART**

### **History**

The Lionheart School was founded by some of the Southeast's leading Early Childhood Education professionals and a group of parents unable to find a school or program which fit the needs of their children. Lionheart opened its doors in the fall of 2000, to provide an educational alternative for children with special needs. The mission was to create a new type of learning environment - one which combined the area's finest special education teachers; speech, occupational therapy professionals; and concerned and active parents. At The Lionheart School, a child's development becomes a cooperative inter-disciplinary approach with teachers, therapists, consultants, parents, and, of course, children, all actively involved.

Lionheart is a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization. In 2008, The Lionheart School became an accredited member of the Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), and our accreditation was renewed by AdvancEd/SACS/SAIS in 2018. Lionheart is also a Member of the Georgia Independent School Association (GISA), as well as the Georgia Association of Schools for Exceptional Children (GAPSEC).

### **Vision**

Lionheart is dedicated to the education of children, working closely with families to provide an integrated and innovative learning environment. Added to our mission is the commitment to extend our reach beyond the children that we serve full-time; to develop training for educators and parents, and address the lifespan issues that families and children encounter as they transition into adulthood.

### **Mission**

To provide a developmentally appropriate education for children who need a specialized learning environment, therapeutic interventions, supported social interactions, and strategies to accommodate their individual profiles.

### **Organization**

The Lionheart School is governed by a Board of Directors which delegates the management of the school program to the Executive Director, Head of School, Head of Therapeutic Services, Director of Operations and Director of Advancement. The role of the board of directors is to establish the philosophy, the broad goals, and the overall policies of Lionheart, and to preserve and enhance Lionheart's assets, including land, buildings, endowments and regular income. The Head of School and Head of Therapeutic Services oversee the daily operations of the school and all fundraising efforts. They are responsible for increasing development efforts, community outreach, public relations, and the acquisition of educational materials and equipment. The Head of School and the Head of Therapeutic Services oversee all the educational and therapeutic needs of the children, process all admissions, supervise and mentor staff and develop programs that continually address the needs of the individual students.

## LIONHEART'S EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

### **The Developmental Approach**

Lionheart has a developmental relationship-based approach to learning. At Lionheart, teachers, therapists and support staff work throughout the day on developing and implementing strategies and accommodations to address the individual profiles of each student. Lionheart believes that utilizing traditional curriculums combined with high-affect activities and experiences, enables the student to build intellectual capacity. Two principles for academics, that extend from the DIR® philosophy and are implemented at Lionheart, are multi-sensory exposure and emotionally meaningful interactions. Taking opportunities that arise to explore and expand the range of emotional experiences for a child is critical for the learning process of our students. We believe that healthy social-emotional development is the key to success in the social realm, the academic realm, and in the so-called “real world.” It is important to realize that the DIR® model is a broad framework for understanding how development occurs, how emotions relate to learning, and how one can best interact with a child to foster growth in academic, cognitive, and social-emotional areas.

Most traditional school settings rely on rote learning as the primary means of building intellectual capacity. The Lionheart School builds intellectual skills by focusing on the building blocks of intelligence: communication and thinking. For example, we don't try to build up vocabulary by memorizing dictionary words. Students at Lionheart get involved in the real world, and in the classroom we start with things that are emotionally meaningful for the student. Every opportunity for expressive thought and communication is taken throughout the day. Instead of presenting un-emotional facts about an event, such as a visit to the Nature Center, at Lionheart we ask questions like “How did it make you feel to see a snake?”, or “Who thought it was scary, who thought it was cool?” or “What did you think when you saw one of your classmates fall out of the canoe? Do you think he was mad, angry or was he scared?” We know that when there is an emotional thread associated with a topic, children's ability to relate and communicate becomes more intricate and meaningful. The reason for this is that the emotions propel a child to be more connected to the world and people around him.

Individual profiles are addressed from an inter-disciplinary approach, hence all professionals involved in the education and success of your child work together as a team to deliver the best comprehensive educational plan to fit each individual profile while concurrently working on each child's ability to grow and be part of a group. We offer the students a rich and challenging curriculum, but we do it in the context of what is meaningful to each of them, and we use the content of the curriculum primarily as a means to develop their ability to engage and interact with others in sustained, flexible, abstract ways. A key starting point is found in the ability of each student to self-regulate—that is, to calm themselves (or be calmed), to repair logical and emotional breakdowns, and to remain organized and communicative under stress of varying kinds. This ability to self-regulate is under-developed in most of the kids we work with, but in every case that we have seen, it can be improved.

By focusing on each child's individual differences, and maintaining the highest possible staff to student ratio, The Lionheart School crafts a program suited to each child's developmental profile. This results in a nurturing and supportive environment, directly addressing the child's social, emotional and intellectual growth. At Lionheart we view the family as central

to a child's success and encourage all important members in a child's life to contribute to the team effort of building a successful plan, one that focuses on critical developmental, emotional and relational aspects of their growth. Lionheart relies heavily on the participation of each child's family to integrate the philosophy of the program into their home life. It is essential that Lionheart serves as part of an integrative approach to a child's whole comprehensive program. This requires a cooperative effort with teachers, therapists, outside professionals, parents and of course, the children, all actively involved.

*We will help you to find resources for learning, including conferences, discussion groups, workshops and books. You can start with the appendix in this handbook. We look forward to working with parents in a collaborative way to understand and address the needs of the students.*

### **Classroom Assignments & Individualized Education**

Classroom assignments are determined by senior staff through careful consideration of the student's needs based on their individual profiles. Classroom assignments will be released at the beginning of the school year.

Individual Differences (the "I" in DIR®) are evaluated to identify a student's strengths in order to maximize learning potential. Students primarily work in small groups. The ability to address the individual differences while in a group setting is a primary objective at Lionheart. Students are challenged and supported in developmentally appropriate ways. By grounding the educational lessons in a student's interests, we help your child to develop both their social and emotional intelligence.

Regular analysis of each student's profile allows teachers and therapists to address the needs of a student and to make accommodations as necessary. Every opportunity is taken to work on objectives critical to a student's profile. Traditional interventions are utilized in an integrated approach towards learning.

The fact that students all learn differently and having different strengths and challenges is not unique to Lionheart. What is unique is the focus of our professional staff to develop and comprehend a student's profile and to address the challenges from an inter-disciplinary approach - which uses the best of what each discipline can offer. Staff regularly consult with each other, review each other's goals and implement inter-disciplinary goals in all settings during the day.

### **Specific Teaching Strategies and Curricula**

One of the main reasons why Lionheart has such a favorable teacher-student ratio is to be able to address the individual needs of each student. Although students need to be able to function in small groups for most of their day in order to be successful, it is true that most students learn best when the material and the teaching approach matches their individual profile. We use a variety of recognized and innovative strategies and specific curriculums and programs to help our students learn in meaningful, connected ways. Some of these strategies and curricula include (but are not limited to):

- *Lindamood-Bell's Visualizing and Verbalizing (V/V)*: V/V provides a framework and activities for strengthening a student's ability to generate internal visual images, a

critical component of reading comprehension, multi-perspective thinking, and emotional flexibility.

- *Michelle Garcia-Winner's Social Thinking Curriculum*: Perspective-taking, or the ability of one person to consider the point of view and motives of another person, is a crucial skill for successful interpersonal relations and is one that anyone with a social cognition disability will struggle with.
- *Georgia Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) Resources*: The Georgia Department of Education provides tremendous resources online, from lesson plans to entire sequenced curricula in a variety of content areas. We make frequent use of the QCC for content, but also as a guide for understanding what students “should” be learning at each grade level.
- *Portfolio-based Assessment*: Students accumulate work throughout the year, revisiting and editing certain assignments and building new assignments off of others. Rather than create an over-focus on grading individual assignments, we help students look at their entire body of work, seeing what they do in a larger, more meaningful context.
- *Project-Based Learning*: Students work on several projects during the year that integrate many of their learning goals. These projects may include an analysis and writing component, an art component, math, social studies, and/or science components, a social-cognitive/interaction component (e.g., interviews, community exploration), or a range of other elements.
- *Sensory-Based Activities to Foster Sensory Integration*: Activities in the classrooms and during the electives all incorporate specific sensory elements designed to help students use their senses in more organized, integrated ways. We use a range of resources in this area, from occupational therapy activities to modified PE games.
- *Reading Curriculum*: Various developed curriculums are selected based on the individual profiles of the students. Reading Mastery (SRA); Reading for Understanding (SRA); Sing, Spell Read and Write; Explode the Code (EPS); Wordly Wise (EPS); Touch Phonics; Wilson Reading Curriculum; Orton-Gillingham and Great Leaps are samples of the curriculums that we may use.
- *Math Curriculum*: Selected curriculums include Saxon Math and Right Start Math. We also integrate math concepts and ideas in other ways as opportunities to do so present themselves such as the school’s coffee shop and outdoor learning labs.
- *Technology-Assisted Learning*: Students and teachers use a variety of tools to assist their learning. All classrooms are equipped with Promethean whiteboards, computers, tablets and/or iPads. Teachers consider individual profiles in order to select appropriate and effective tools.
- *Gardens and Environmentalism Curriculum*: Students participating in the experiential learning Gardens Program use a modified LifeLab Curriculum program. In addition, Lionheart staff members are actively developing our own gardens curriculum from other resources to better tailor the lessons to our students’ individual profiles.

## **Homework Policy**

Homework expectations are based on a student’s individual profile. The amount and complexity of homework is determined via collaboration between the parents and teacher.

## LOGISTICS, SUPPLIES, & MISCELLANEOUS

### When Your Child Is Absent

*Please call, text or email the office by 9:15 am* to let us know that your child will be absent for the day. If you know in advance of the date of an absence or family trip/vacation, please let us know as soon as possible, as it helps to inform our planning for activities and lessons.

### Inclement Weather

In the event of extreme weather, Lionheart may close the school for all or part of the day. If Fulton County closes school, Lionheart usually closes. If this decision is made, we will notify you through the following methods:

- 1) An email to our parent group
- 2) A text message via GroupMe to our parent group

### Drop Off/Pick Up and Other Driving Issues

The school day runs from 9:00-2:30 pm Monday through Thursday and 9:00-1:30 pm on Friday. We make it a policy for staff to greet and escort all of our students to class. Drop off is from **8:50-9:10 am Monday-Friday**. Pick up is from **2:20-2:30 pm Monday-Thursday**. Please make special mental note that pick up is from **1:20-1:30 pm on Fridays**. We have a specific schedule in place for each student that kicks off right away, so please make every effort to be on time. Be sure to call the office (770.772.4555) if you are running late. Please do not drop your child off before 8:50 am unless special arrangements have been made. Although there may be staff on campus, they are preparing for the day and need that time to get ready.

### Security on Campus

Lionheart keeps the front door locked at all times. Visitors to the building, including parents, must have an appointment and sign in at the front office when arriving on campus for any reason. Visitors, including parents, must be accompanied by a staff member to proceed past the foyer during the school day. Classroom observations should be set-up with the classroom teacher who will inform the office when a visit has been scheduled.

### Microwave Policy

Please plan to use thermoses for school if your child requires a hot lunch. This school year we are continue to implement a long-standing policy of not allowing student lunches to be microwaved. Please help us by planning accordingly.

### Field Trips and Other Outings

Lionheart uses off-site facilities. Lionheart buses are used to transport students on most occasions. Additionally, a van and/or private transportation is used to transport Lionheart WORKS participants. However, there may be times when there is not always sufficient room for everyone. This means that your child may be in situations where they will be riding with a staff member in a private vehicle. In these instances, a Lionheart staff member will operate the vehicle and all rules for safety will be followed. A second responsible adult must be in any vehicle when transporting a Lionheart student. (NOTE: Lionheart WORKS participants often travel in cars alone with their job coach, and are an exception to our

transportation policy.) Please reinforce rules at home regarding proper behavior and consideration of others so that traveling in school groups can be a successful experience.

We will have small group field trips several times throughout the year. As opportunities arise, to tie in curriculum theme objectives to external events, we will plan “big” field trips. For many field trips, we will ask parents to participate as volunteers. We encourage parents to volunteer for these events as it is a wonderful opportunity to participate in your child’s education. We welcome any ideas or suggestions for field trips that you may have.

### **After School Program**

The Lionheart School operates an After School Program recommended for those 12 and over three days per week – Monday, Wednesday and Thursday if there is enough interest. Lionheart operates an After School Program 2 days a week for children under 12 based on art and movement if there is enough interest. Both programs maintain the same quality of professional supervision provided during the school day at Lionheart to ensure each child has a safe, fun and educational after school environment. Details about both programs will be sent out to our families prior to the start of school each year.

New students will be permitted to join the program after staff, in consultation with parents, have determined whether the program is an appropriate fit based on the individual student’s profile. We should be able to make a determination within the first few weeks of school.

### **School Supplies**

We ask parents to bring in a stock of school supplies or gift cards for select stores at the beginning of the year. The School Supply Request List is in your enrollment packet. We will make additional requests for supplies and special materials throughout the year. Students’ primary binders (or portfolios) will be provided by Lionheart, since much thought has been put into our method for helping students to manage and learn organizational skills. We have a system in place to help all of the students strengthen their ability to get and stay organized and to improve their executive function skills.

### **Textbooks and Work Materials**

Given the individual variability in our students’ abilities and interests, the staff will be acquiring academic materials for each student on an as-needed basis. Most costs will be included in tuition, but parents may occasionally be asked by the teacher to purchase books.

### **Planning Social/Non-School Events for Children**

Please be thoughtful when planning non-school events involving Lionheart students. This is particularly in regard to birthday parties, but should be applied to all non-school play-dates and events. Many of our children are sensitive to feeling excluded in social situations. Where possible, please try to include your child’s whole class in any celebration or event. If your child has specific friends that they want to play with, please be considerate in your planning. Remind the children participating that it can be hurtful to discuss their activities with children who aren’t invited.

## COMMUNICATION & PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

### Regular Forms of Communication

Lionheart has incorporated a variety of methods to keep you informed about your child's education. \*Please note that Lionheart staff members are not allowed to accept phone calls, emails, or text messages while working directly with a student. Please send any urgent messages through our front office.

- ✓ **Phone:** For any issues that need to be addressed immediately, we will call you. Please be sure to keep your contact information, especially cell phone numbers, updated with the school.
- ✓ **Email:** Group notices and requests will generally be sent to families via emails through Constant Contact to our parent email list. Families will also receive individual emails as appropriate. Lionheart maintains various email lists for various fundraising events, GOAL, & general information and sends group emails occasionally. Parents will receive all of these emails. Please commit to checking your account on a regular basis and reading all Lionheart emails to keep informed and up to date. Parents should let the front office know if they want grandparents, babysitters, etc. included on this list.
- ✓ **Group Text Messages:** Group text messaging will only be used by Lionheart for urgent messages, emergencies or in the event of a school closure. Lionheart uses the *GroupMe* app for group text communication.
- ✓ **Social Media:** Lionheart has a presence across all social media platforms. These accounts are kept current with information, shared experiences, and other topics of interest regarding the school. If you are a social media user, please like or follow us and share the experience. We encourage you to comment on and forward our posts frequently, as this extends our reach.
- ✓ **The ROAR:** This is our email newsletter for parents and staff, and the majority of school news comes this way. It is distributed weekly and has important school news updates for Lionheart. ***We encourage you to make it part of your weekly reading!***
- ✓ **Newsletters:** Lionheart produces an annual newsletter. We include articles and stories about what is going on with the school and the students. We encourage parents to read the newsletters when they come out and also to pass them on to friends and family. Newsletters are sent to our individuals and organizations in our current database. Submissions for additions to our mailing list, or ideas and articles for the newsletter, can be submitted to Tracy Burke, [tburke@thelionheartschool.com](mailto:tburke@thelionheartschool.com).

### Parent Meetings

Lionheart holds Parent Meetings about important topics periodically during the school year. At least one family representative should commit to attend. All meetings will be held on campus. Meeting dates/times are to be determined and parents will be notified via email and the ROAR.

### Curriculum Night

Each fall we hold an event to explain our schedule structure and academics to parents and to provide them with an opportunity to speak with Lionheart teachers and therapists regarding their thoughts/concerns for their child. This year's curriculum night is set for 7:00pm on Thursday, September 12, 2019. This event is only for the parents, and is mandatory. Please arrange for childcare for that evening to ensure you are able to attend.

### **Progress Reports**

Progress reports are based on each student's goals in academic and therapeutic areas. They will be provided every quarter throughout the academic year. All parents will receive an academic report tracking the student's goals in the fundamental areas of reading, writing and math. Students receiving additional therapies will receive progress reports for each of those subject areas as well. Progress reports will be discussed at the parent-teacher conferences (see below).

### **Assessments**

During the course of the year, more comprehensive assessments may be needed in specific subject or therapeutic areas. The necessity of additional assessments will be discussed with the parents prior to any testing. Every effort will be made to embed the assessment into the daily schedule. In some cases, we will only be able to provide these assessments for an additional fee, since they may require one on one time with the respective evaluator. In the event that a fee will be charged for an assessment, parents will be notified of the expense prior to completion of the assessment. We may ask you to arrange for independent assessments to be done with professionals outside of Lionheart as well.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Parent-Teacher Conferences are held twice a year. Attendance is optional. If you choose not to meet, your child's progress notes will be sent home in backpacks. The conference format establishes the important parent-teacher relationship and offers the opportunity for a rich exchange of information. When necessary, additional conferences are arranged to handle concerns, special issues or communication with outside specialists.

## **LIONHEART'S POLICIES & PROCEDURES**

### **Admissions**

Lionheart seeks students from all ethnic, cultural, racial, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds who will benefit from the program and who will make positive contributions to our community.

Students are admitted on the basis of individual profiles and professional assessments. Medical and school reports, student visits, and feedback from parents and professionals combined to determine the appropriateness of the Lionheart program for a specific child.

Students are initially enrolled for a three month trial period, during which time the Lionheart team will work diligently to determine the suitability of the program for the child. Parents are informed about the child's progress throughout the trial period. After the trial program is complete, the Lionheart team will inform the parents as to the appropriateness of the full-time program for their child's continued development. In some instances, families will be asked to extend the trial period for an additional three month period for further evaluation before a final decision concerning ongoing placement at Lionheart will be made. Lionheart reserves the right to shorten the trial period if Lionheart determines that appropriateness of fit doesn't exist.

## **Admission Procedures**

1. The first step in considering Lionheart for your child is to review the website [www.thelionheartschool.com](http://www.thelionheartschool.com) in full and to familiarize yourself with our philosophy and model.
2. Prospective families should then schedule an information session and tour of the campus by calling the office. Set admissions-related tour times and dates are posted on Lionheart's website. You may also call the school for information on upcoming tours. Prospective parents are asked to come without their child/children for the initial tour and presentation.
3. After touring the school, parents should complete an application if they are interested in Lionheart for their child. (Applications are available on the school's website or you may request an application via postal mail, email or fax.)
4. After having received a completed application and the \$100 application-processing fee, a file is established on the applying student. The completed application is reviewed and evaluated by the Head of School and the Head of Therapeutic Services. Previous school records, teacher evaluations, professional assessments such as speech pathology report, occupational therapy reports and psychological assessments are all required prior to review of the application.
5. Once the application is reviewed, the Head of School will contact the family to discuss the specifics of the case, and if appropriate, to schedule an interview with the child.
6. The student meets independently of his/her parents with the Head of School and/or the Head of Therapeutic Services.
7. If the program is found to be appropriate for the student, the student may be asked to stay and interact with other students at the school. If this is not possible, a scheduled visit will be made so that the child will have an opportunity to visit the school during regular hours to interact with other students. Additional meetings may be requested as necessary.
8. After review, Lionheart will inform the parents of its decision by phone or by mail.
9. If admitted, an initial enrollment contract is mailed to the family. If families decide to enroll, the signed contract, along with a \$2650 non-refundable deposit fee, is required to secure placement in the program.

While enrollment normally takes place before the beginning of the school year, a student may be admitted during the school year if a vacancy exists. In this case, tuition would be pro-rated.

The payment of tuition is a condition of enrollment. Lionheart has two payment options available: a monthly pay option (March 1<sup>st</sup> through Dec 1<sup>st</sup>) and tri-pay option (June 1<sup>st</sup>, Sept 1<sup>st</sup>, Dec 1<sup>st</sup>). All tuition payments received after the established due date will incur a \$100 late fee. Non-payment of tuition will jeopardize the status of the student in the Lionheart program. All payments should be made directly to The Lionheart School in accordance with the contract. If money is due from other sources (grants, school districts or others), a payment schedule needs to be proposed, in writing, to the Director of Operations.

## **Additional Support**

Lionheart accepts students who are able to work in small groups. However, there are instances when a student may need additional support to be able to participate in the daily

program. Lionheart may require parents to provide financial support to hire an aide to help during the school day. This may occur at any time during the school year.

### **Re-enrollment**

Students are re-enrolled on an annual basis subject to re-evaluation of progress, conduct, influence on others and, when appropriate, parental involvement.

### **Termination**

Lionheart reserves the right, at its sole discretion to terminate a student's enrollment by written notification to the parent(s) at any time. In the event of such a termination, Lionheart will provide a pro-rated refund of tuition fees (other than the nonrefundable registration fee) to the family.

### **Financial Assistance**

There is a limited amount of financial aid available for families based on need. Financial information is processed independently by School & Student Services (SSS) by NAIS. Any families intending to apply for Financial Aid should complete the Parent Financial Statement (PFS) Form on the NAIS website at [www.sss.nais.org/parents](http://www.sss.nais.org/parents). Please be sure to complete the application NO LATER than April 15, 2020 for the 2020-2021 Academic year. Financial assistance awards are made at the discretion of the Executive Team with the approval of the Board of Directors.

### **Instructional Materials and Objections**

The staff of The Lionheart School works to select classroom, instructional and library materials that enrich and support the individualized educational program for the student. Materials must serve both the breadth of the curriculum and the needs of individual students. Lionheart is obligated to provide for a wide range of abilities and to respect the diversity of the students. To this end, principles must be placed above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality and appropriateness. Occasional objections to instructional materials will be made despite the quality of the selection process; therefore, this procedure for handling reconsideration of challenged materials in response to questions concerning their appropriateness establishes the framework for registering a complaint.

All complaints to staff members shall be reported to a member of the Executive Team, whether received by telephone, letter, email or in personal conversation.

A member of the Executive Team shall contact the complainant to discuss the complaint and attempt to resolve it informally by explaining the philosophy and goals of the school.

If the complaint is not resolved informally, the complainant shall issue a request in writing to the Executive Team to review materials for appropriateness. The request should include specific information on material considered inappropriate, when it was used, and why the complainant deems the material objectionable.

The Executive Team will review the written request and render recommendations on disposition of the matter. The reasons for removal or non-removal of the specific work will be sent to the complainant, and discussed with appropriate staff members.

Access to questioned materials can be denied to the child (or children) of the parents making the complaint, if they so desire.

If the complainant is still not satisfied, he or she may ask the Executive Director to present an appeal to the Board of Directors, which shall make a final determination of the issue.

### **Parental Involvement in Fundraising and Development**

Because tuition only covers 60% of the cost of each student's education, Lionheart depends heavily on fundraising in order to sustain its existence. Additional funds from individuals, corporations, foundations, events and other sources are necessary for Lionheart's continued survival. It is essential that all parents contribute to our fundraising efforts. All parents are expected to contribute to our annual fund, the GOAL Scholarship Program, and any capital fundraising efforts.

#### **Additionally, our three major fundraising events include:**

- 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Grilling & Gridiron: Saturday, September 14, 2019
- 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Heart + Soul Auction: Saturday, February 1, 2020
- 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Heart + Sole 5K: Saturday, April 18, 2020

Please put these on your calendar now, and plan around these dates as all families are required to purchase tickets, attend, volunteer, assist with sponsorships, and encourage friends and family to attend as well. Parents are also expected to volunteer in our development efforts by offering lists of contacts to invite to participate in our fundraisers, assisting with corporate sponsorships, identifying potential grant and foundation sources and/or assistance with public relations events on behalf of Lionheart.

***Please fill out the parent involvement sheet that is included with your packet.  
20 VOLUNTEER HOURS ANNUALLY ARE MANDATORY OF ALL FAMILIES.***

### **Parent Help at Lionheart**

There are many ways in which you can participate with your child's school life. A few are listed below. Please review the Parent Involvement Form for additional ways to volunteer.

#### *School Activities*

Experiential learning opportunities may require additional support. Parents will be asked to participate, reinforce lessons at home when appropriate, and supply materials as needed.

#### *Library, OT Room, Multipurpose Room and Kitchen Support*

These areas are heavily used by students, and we have a need for parents to come in once or twice a week to straighten, dust and clean these areas, tasks that are beyond the scope of our cleaning contract. If you are interested, please coordinate with the Director of Operations to schedule a weekly commitment to one or more of these areas.

#### *Lionheart Gardens Support*

Lionheart Gardens needs maintenance year round. Parents and families may be invited to participate in group and corporate volunteer days at the garden, or may arrange their own periodic, weekly, or monthly commitments with the garden coordinator.

## Sick Child Policy

If your child exhibits any of the symptoms listed below, *they may not attend Lionheart until the symptoms are no longer exhibited or unless you have obtained a statement from the child's doctor stating that the child is not contagious and may attend school.* The final decision as to whether a child will be admitted to school will be made in the sole discretion of Lionheart.

- Fever of 100.5 degrees F
- Must be fever free for 24 hours
- Irregular breathing
- Rashes
- Vomiting or persistent diarrhea
- Yellowish color to the eyes or skin
- Swallowing difficulty
- Lice
- Pinkeye
- Strep

If your child exhibits any of these symptoms while present at the school, you will be notified and will need to pick your child up from school. The child may be isolated from the other children at the program facility until you arrive.

## Seizures

If a child has a seizure at school, Lionheart will call the parents, and the child needs to be picked up. If a child has a seizure that last more than three minutes, it is the school's policy to call 911. We will honor seizure plans but may also require professional backup in the case of a prolonged seizure. A staff member will always accompany a child should they need to go to the hospital via ambulance. Lioncrest Farms' policy for seizures is "24 hours' seizure free to ride a horse". If your child has a seizure disorder, Lionheart requires a note from your doctor that states your child is allowed to participate in the hippotherapy program at Lionheart. A side walker will be provided based on availability of volunteers. The note should be renewed every year. If a seizure occurs at home prior to 24 hours of riding, please notify the office in the morning.

Lionheart is not responsible for arranging for alternate care if your child is unable to attend school due to illness. Program fees will not be adjusted for the days a sick child does not attend school.

The school will notify our families of any contagious diseases that your child may have been exposed to while at school. You are also obligated to inform Lionheart of any illness or problem with your child that might affect other children at the program facility.

## Nut Policy

The Lionheart School is a peanut free zone throughout the building. No snack or lunch items containing peanuts are allowed. There may be additional nut/food restrictions in other individual classrooms based on additional student allergies. Your classroom teacher will notify you directly of any other food related restrictions.

## Immunization Records

All required health immunization records (Form 3231) or official medical/religious exemptions and an eye, ear, dental certificate (Form 3300) are required to be submitted and on file before your child starts school. A student will not be allowed to start school if forms are not provided. **Please note that Medical Exemptions must be updated every year.**

## **Medication**

Many children are on different medications for various reasons. We understand the need at times for a controlled 'blind' study to determine effectiveness of a certain medication. However, it is imperative that there is specific knowledge of medication and dosage noted in case of an emergency. Therefore, if it is necessary to get 'blind' feedback from members of the team, the School requires, in writing, that the Head of School is informed of the medication and dosage(s) being given and of the fact that other members of the team are not aware of such medication and dosage(s).

Any prescription or nonprescription medication that is to be administered at school must be given directly to the front office. Prescription and nonprescription medications should not be given to teacher. All prescription medicine must come in clearly labeled with the child's name and information and the medicine must be stored in a child-safe bottle as provided by the pharmacy with the label clearly marked. (Any pharmacy can supply extra bottles if requested.) Non-prescription medication should also be provided by the parent(s) and instructions clearly labeled. Prescription and non-prescription medication is administered only as authorized in writing by a parent or guardian. **A new authorization form must be signed every time there are any changes in the medication, dosage(s) or other instructions.**

*It is the responsibility of the parent to make sure that required medications are at school for prescribed times.*

## **WHEN A STUDENT IS HAVING DIFFICULTY**

### **Basic Procedure**

Teachers will share concerns with parents as problems arise or when special attention is needed beyond the normal expectations of the school. This discussion may occur at one of the two annual parent-teacher conferences or by calling a special meeting, depending on the nature of the concerns. After areas of concern are outlined, parents and teachers will work together to gather more information and formulate plans to help the child progress. In some instances, outside help may be necessary. Suggestions of outside help will be communicated to the parents who would be expected to seek counsel with appropriate professionals to help define the issues and strategies for intervention. Lionheart staff, teachers or therapists may make referrals to recommended specialists.

### **Behavioral Expectations of Students**

Lionheart seeks to maintain a secure and nurturing atmosphere. Safety of every student is the first priority. Any student who is struggling with challenging behavior that may cause harm to themselves or others will be addressed immediately, by removal of the student from the group and a phone call to a parent for the student to be picked up from school. In such cases, the staff and parents will discuss the problem and collaboratively determine what measures need to be taken (and what progress shown) before the child can return to school. Depending on the severity of the incident, outside professionals may need to be consulted before the child returns to school.

Behaviors that are challenging but do not cause concern for safety will be addressed using a combination of sensory input, social story-making, redirection and individualized instruction to modify or control the behavior. If our methods are not successful, information will be communicated to the parents by notes, telephone or email. If behavior persists to the point where it becomes disruptive to the other children, the parents will be notified and asked to meet with staff to discuss how to further address their child's behavior. In certain situations, outside consultation may be necessary to help formulate a plan. If a plan cannot be executed within Lionheart, the parents and the staff will re-evaluate the suitability of Lionheart to meet the needs of the child.

In any case where a student has exhibited disruptive behavior, Lionheart reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to determine whether and under what circumstances the child may return to the school.

### **Procedure for Resolving Problems**

If a family has concerns with any of the professional staff or Lionheart programs and is unable to resolve an issue, they should notify the Head of School either by phone, email or writing. The Head of School will collaborate with the family to meet with two members of the executive team to hear concerns, and determine appropriate actions and/or how to resolve the issues.

### **Confidentiality Policy**

All information provided to the school regarding an individual child remains confidential. The following exceptions apply: (a) All staff shall have access to student files, including information that has been provided by the parents, other staff and outside consultants, specialists and medical personnel, and (b) staff may discuss a child with outside professionals and specialists who consult with Lionheart, but only as is relevant to that child's treatment and development, and only with permission from the family.

### **Nondiscrimination Policy**

The Lionheart School admits students of any race, color, religious faith, national origin and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

## **LIONHEART'S OBSERVATION POLICY**

### **Enrolled families**

Parents of enrolled students may observe their child at any time. We ask that parents coordinate with the office regarding when they would like to observe, in what manner, and for how long. Observations can be done by video camera or in person. Parents who wish to be physically in the classroom for their observation will need to set up a time with the Head of School. We ask that you make your request at least one week prior to your preferred observation time.

### **Outside Professionals working with Lionheart Students or as Consultants to Lionheart**

Non-staff professionals need to call the office at 770.772.4555 to set up a time to observe. Either the Head of School or the Head of Therapeutic Services will accompany the observing professional throughout the duration of their visit. We ask that the observation and conversation be limited in time and only to the specific child being observed. Lionheart staff that work directly with the child may be available to answer questions either by phone or email. Generally, during the observation time, teachers and therapists will not have time to consult. If an in-person consultation is necessary, please notify the office when scheduling your visit so that we can attempt to incorporate this into your existing appointment. Parents of a child being observed will be notified as to the time of observation, but will not be expected to be present. Documentation on the child will not be shared with outside professionals unless a release is signed by a parent/guardian. Student observations are limited to one professional at a time.

### **Other Professionals that do not work directly with families but need to observe a child**

Other professionals that are not Lionheart consultants, or professionals working directly with enrolled families, will only be allowed to visit the school if the following criteria are met:

1. A written request to observe is submitted to Lionheart, and specified parents, with details regarding ideal date, duration and the reason for the visit. Requests should be submitted at least 10 days prior to suggested observation date.
2. Permission for visit is authorized by the Head of School and specified parents.
3. Visitor needs to report to Lionheart office upon arrival.
4. Visitor needs to be accompanied by a Lionheart staff member at all times.
5. Observation is limited to specified child.
6. Observation time is limited to 30 minutes.
7. Observation may be limited to remote/video observation only; this decision will be made solely at the discretion of Lionheart.
8. Observation will be limited to one person at any one time, unless other arrangements are approved by Lionheart.
9. Lionheart reserves the right to change or cancel the observation at any time.
10. A maximum of three visits per year will be allowed in observation of any one child.
11. No student files or documentation will be shared unless requested/approved by the parents.

### **Families who are seeking placement, but not currently enrolled at Lionheart**

Set admissions-related tour times and dates are posted on Lionheart's website. You may also call the school for information on upcoming tours. Confirmed appointments are required for all tours. Prospective parents are asked to come without their child/children for the initial tour and presentation.

*Every effort is used to minimize interruptions of the classrooms. Please follow the instructions provided by Lionheart staff. Lionheart reserves the right to cancel an observation at any time.*

## APPENDIX A

### **Suggested Reading about our Approach**

We recommend several books that may help you to better appreciate Lionheart's approach:

*Building Healthy Minds*, Stanley Greenspan

How early development relates to learning, and what needs to happen in order for children to develop. This is a fairly broad and philosophical book, but with incredible richness and many thought-provoking ideas.

*The Child with Special Needs*, Stanley Greenspan

How to intervene with children who have trouble relating and communicating. May not seem relevant to older kids, but in fact it is the best source for understanding how to interact with your kid of any age. Less abstract than *The Growth of the Mind*, but covers similar ground.

*The Challenging Child*, Stanley Greenspan

Focused on school-age children. Not as deep as the others, but also not as dense.

*The Out-of-Sync Child*, Carol Stock Kranowitz

Provides a basic understanding of sensory integration, and what happens to kids when their bodies don't interpret sensory information correctly.

*Engaging Autism*, Stanley Greenspan and Serena Wieder

Much easier to read and we would recommend this as the first choice for parents who want to get more insight into the DIR® model and its principles.

*Autism Solutions*, Ricki G. Robinson

Provides a greater understanding of each child's unique learning, sensory and medical profile.

*Thinking Goes To School*, Hans G. Furth and Harry Wachs

Proposes to show how children can be prepared to develop their full potential as 'thinking' human beings.

*The Block Book*, Elisabeth S. Hirsch

Will help you discover exciting possibilities of block play. Details the rich contributions of blocks to creative and dramatic play as well as to science, math, social studies, etc.

*Visual/Spatial Portals to Thinking, Feeling and Movement*, Serena Wieder and Harry Wachs

Redefines the building blocks of development and the challenges that derail a child's functioning and learning.

\*\*We can also provide some handouts and other ways of guiding you. Please do not hesitate to ask. We are always happy to provide you with direction and resources that will help you to connect with and support your child.