



## **Parent Handbook 2025-2026**

### **Goal of this Handbook**

To equip parents with the “how to” of daily operations at Quest Academy so they may support their children’s Hero’s Journeys.

### **Philosophy of our Operations**

There are three underlying values that drive every policy and system created for our community to function and achieve our mission:

1. Freedom for families. We believe parents, not schools, are in charge of their families and trust you to make your own choices for your families.
2. Sanctity of studios as learning spaces for Eagles only. This includes basic safety as well as protection against interruptions, distractions, and the threat of lowering standards of excellence.
3. Sanctity of parent/child relationships: We will not come between you and your child.

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## **Contact Information**

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Website address: [www.questacademyni.com](http://www.questacademyni.com)

Contact info: Elementary studio: [guide@questacademyni.com](mailto:guide@questacademyni.com)  
Spark studio: [sparkguide@questacademyni.com](mailto:sparkguide@questacademyni.com)  
Studio administration: [admin@questacademyni.com](mailto:admin@questacademyni.com)

## **Staff**

Matt Gooch – Head of School & ES Lead Guide

Mimi Allred – Spark Lead Guide

Sammie Krieg - Studio Administrator

## **The Purpose of Acton Academy**

### **Mission Statement**

Quest Academy's mission is to inspire each person who enters our doors to find a calling and change the world.

### **Our Beliefs**

- We believe that emulating the examples Jesus set provides a solid path for learners to follow.
- We believe each child has a gift that can change the world in a profound way.
- We believe in learning to learn, learning to do, and learning to be.
- We believe in a closely connected community of lifelong learners.
- We believe that the American Experiment, with all its faults, is the best hope on earth for protecting human liberty.

### **Our Promises**

We promise your children will:

- Begin a Hero's Journey
- Learn to learn, learn to do, and learn to be
- Discover their most precious gifts, along with the dedication it takes to develop real talent
- Understand the importance of strong character
- Cherish the arts, the wonders of the physical world, and the mystery of life
- Treasure economic and political freedom

### **Accountability: Covenants/Contracts**

Creating clear, consistent expectations for Quest Academy families is an important part of our school. As such, the parents, students, and staff will reaffirm this commitment by signing a contract each year that describes the roles and responsibilities to which we are agreeing.

The purpose of this living document is not to promote rule-following or bureaucracy but rather the opposite: to draw clear boundaries to encourage innovation between children, parents, and guides who through commitment and action show support for the creation of a world-class school.

## **Daily Life: Schedules and Lunch**

### **School Hours**

Quest Academy's school hours are 8:00am until 3:00pm.

### **Arrival/Dismissal Procedure**

Arrival starts at 8:00am. From 8:00 to 8:25am, students engage in free time, reading, socializing, and getting organized for the day. When you arrive at school, the guide will be at the door to greet each student.

Clocks are prominently displayed in the studio so Eagles know when to arrive to their studio's morning launch discussion circle.

### **If your child arrives after 8:25am:**

The front desk of New Life Church is staffed Monday through Thursday. If your child arrives late on one of these days, please wait until your child is let in by the front desk worker before leaving.

If your child arrives late on a Friday, you will need to call the Quest phone and wait for Matt or Mimi to get a chance to step away from morning meeting to come open the door, as all doors to the building will be locked.

*\* Security Clarification: The exterior doors of the front entrance are unlocked during church business hours to allow for deliveries, but there is an interior set of doors that remained locked during all Quest hours. While it may appear that your child is inside the building, that second entrance is where they are waiting for either the front desk worker or Matt or Mimi to come let them in; this is why it is important to ensure they are able to get into the building all the way before driving away.*

In order not to interrupt the others who will be focusing on the morning launch discussion, a latecomer is required to wait at a desk until the discussion concludes at 8:45am. In addition to learning the life skill of showing up on time every time, these discussions are critical parts of the daily learning at Acton. *For this reason, being on time is part of our contract to each other.*

If an Eagle is chronically late, it will impact the quality of his or her learning journey at Quest as well as the culture of the studio community. In the rare case this occurs, we will contact you to discuss a plan to support your family being fully onboard with this commitment.

Dismissal is at 3:00pm sharp. You are in charge of being clear with your child about who is driving him or her home if it is someone other than yourself. Your child should be confident and knowledgeable about the people who are allowed by you to drive him or her home. This is not a guide's nor Quest's responsibility, but a family responsibility. If your child is ever confused by who is there to drive them home, he or she should go immediately to the guide to request help.

If you are picking up your child at any time other than dismissal, please park and walk up to the studio to get your child. Please do not ask a guide to watch for you and send your child out. This is up to you and you are free to come into the studio at any time to pick up your child. It is most helpful if you inform your child so he or she can be mentally prepared to stop working and leave the group without hesitation.

### **Weekly Schedule**

In general, the schedule consistently includes the following activities:

- Socratic discussions
- Individual work time – math, reading, writing
- Collaborative work time in projects/quests and civilization (our term for history because it includes studying economics, politics, art, geography, and philosophy)
- Lunch and free times
- Art, music, PE, and process drama
- Town meetings and running partners

### **Lunch and Snacks**

In order to keep our tuition costs low and support each family's healthy food choices, Quest does not provide standardized lunches. Each child brings his or her own lunch. We have a refrigerator and microwave for use by students.

Students choose to eat at desks or picnic-style on blankets inside or outside. Cleaning up after themselves is an important part of our community culture. Snacks and water are also important for healthy refueling. Please pack healthy snacks and a water bottle each day for your child.

## **Quest Academy's Property, Chromebooks, and School Supplies**

An integral part of our learning program is using technology for students to learn math, reading, and writing skills at their own pace. We provide one laptop per student as needed to use during the day on campus. *They are school property. If one is damaged or lost by a student, the family is responsible for reimbursing the school in the amount of \$250 that will be added to your tuition bill.*

In addition, if any part of the school campus is intentionally damaged by a student, he or she will assist in the repair.

Included in your tuition are also the basic necessary school supplies such as pens, paper, pencils, and project supplies.

Your child is welcome to bring his or her own laptop and books to read. He or she is responsible for the care of any personal items brought to school.

***Please note:*** All devices we provide on our campus have SafeSearch, AdBlock, and firewalls installed. It is a requirement that all laptops/devices brought into the studio from home have at least the same level of safety measures enabled. It is up to parents to verify that SafeSearch, AdBlock, and firewalls (or equivalent) is enabled on incoming devices before they arrive at school. If you fail to equip your child's devices as such, he or she will lose internet privileges until you have installed protective software.

## **Health Policies/Absenteeism/Internet Safety and Social Media**

### **Health Forms**

Before the first day of school, it is necessary (per the State of Idaho) to have a copy of your child's immunization records or waiver from your pediatrician's office. You may email, mail, or hand deliver this information. Please visit the State of Idaho's website for questions and more information (<https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/providers/immunization-providers/school-and-child-care-information>).

### **Medication**

Students may not carry medicine into the school. Parents must give the medicine and written instructions to a guide. For prescription medicine, please send the medicine in the original container from the pharmacy with the child's name on it and a dated note listing the times and amounts to be given that day. Include whether refrigeration is required.

### **Illness Policy**

If your child is not feeling well in the morning, please observe them carefully before sending them to school and risking the health of the others.

A student with any of the following symptoms must be isolated and the parents notified and asked to remove the student from school as soon as possible:

- Fever of 100.5 degrees Fahrenheit
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Severe cough
- Unusual yellow color to skin or eyes
- Stiff neck or headache with one or more of the symptoms listed above
- Difficult breathing or wheezing
- Complaints of severe pain

### **Children must be free of symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school.**

If your child develops any of these symptoms while at school, we will call you immediately to come pick up your child.

If a student expresses that they aren't feeling well in the studio (but does not have any of the symptoms above), they will be given a series of options depending on the situation which usually include finding a quiet spot and resting, having a snack or drinking some water, or



calling home. A call home does not necessarily mean that you need to come get them, it simply means that they chose to speak with you, and you can make the decision as to what is going to be best for your family and your child.

### **Substance Misuse and Abuse**

Quest Academy has a zero tolerance for chemical and substance misuse and abuse. Disregarding this policy may result in immediate dismissal.

### **Internet Safety and Social Media**

*Please read the last paragraph under Quest Academy's property (above).*

At Quest Academy, we have found excessive gaming, video watching, and social media can have a negative impact on work habits and respect for others in general and in the studio in particular. As such, an immediate strike will likely result for:

- a. Any non-work use of the internet or texts during the school hours. (Parents are often the cause of such violations when they expect their children to answer emails and texts during the school day.)
- b. Searching for or displaying inappropriate material.
- c. Rude, unkind, belittling, or inappropriate remarks sent through social media or by email or text at any time.

**Attendance/Absenteeism**

Quest Academy does not have an attendance policy that specifies a required number of days that your child must be in school. It is the school's philosophy that traveling with family and engaging in experiences with family is fruitful and educational.

At the same time, consistent attendance will help your child be fully engaged with the community and with the project/quest learning. In fact, most projects depend on the participation of all team members. If you know in advance that you will be taking your child out of school, it is helpful for the other Eagles in the studio to be informed so they can make alternative work plans.

While away from school, your Eagle will be able to access his or her online programs and Journey Tracker for studio assignments.

## **Staying Informed: How do I know what is going on and talk with my children about their learning?**

### **SMART Goals and Journey Tracker**

We trust parents to take the initiative to understand and support their child's weekly goals and badge plans. This is a large part of your journey as a Quest parent and takes an intentional effort. Your Eagle will be able to share login and password information with you so you have access to the online programs as well as the Quest "Journey Tracker." Ask your child to give you a tour of their work and explain the Tracker to you. Talking through the programs with your child (with you as "student" and your child as "teacher") is the most effective way for you to feel equipped. Most importantly, we encourage you to talk with your child about SMART goals. Asking questions about where they are feeling challenged, frustrated, and excited can help you encourage them with growth mindset praise and celebrate achievements with them. Remembering that learning is hard and struggling is part of the journey will help you stress less and share patience with your child.

Note: Please read the attachment on growth mindset praise to be equipped with the language that can best motivate your child toward progress in learning.

### **Quest Academy Blog/Website**

There is no better way to stay informed on the details of the classroom than to read our blog. Our guide regularly writes about the happenings in the studio and the unique ways our Heroes see the world: <https://www.questacademy.com/blog>.

### **Quarterly Surveys**

As part of our commitment to families, each family will receive a survey via a Survey Monkey or Google Forms each quarter. We ask that you guide your child to provide helpful input rather than anything personal about another student; the survey is a place for constructive input. In the spirit of transparency, your responses are not anonymous. We will regularly publish the results to both parents and Guides. By sharing the results, we uphold our shared value of transparency and accountability to you.

For reporting purposes, all non-responses will be counted as "excellent" by parent and learner by default.

### **Contacting Guides**

Our general philosophy is that guides must not come between a parent and child. You are the main authority and shepherd of your child's education and we are here to support you but with

limitations. Be prepared: guides are Socratic, and rather than answering questions, they may ask you questions and refer you to resources to help you.

Please understand that we will not be available to talk with you during the morning drop off, during school or afternoon pick up times; and will respond to messages between 3:30pm and 4:45pm.

Email is the most effective communication. Guides have phones only for emergencies and are not able to take calls or texts during the day.

Matt may be reached at: [guide@questacademy.com](mailto:guide@questacademy.com). Mimi may be reached at [spark@questacademy.com](mailto:spark@questacademy.com).

For any emergencies, you may call Matt at (208) 889-8040.

In case of an emergency at school, you will receive a group email with instructions. Please add [admin@questacademy.com](mailto:admin@questacademy.com) to your address book to ensure you receive all correspondence.

## Feedback/Assessing Learning

### Parent Involvement in Tracking Learning

We encourage parents to find a healthy involvement in their child's learning that works for their family.

You have many tools available (see below). Documentation of weekly goal achievement is available for children to share with their parents at any time. Your child can show you how to log into Journey Tracker to see the work accomplished and in progress. In addition, you are encouraged to become familiar with your child's online learning sites. Simply ask your child to teach you how to log in and to give you a tour.

As a minimum, we encourage parents to ask their children about their goal setting at the beginning of the week; and follow up at the end of the week. It is helpful to ask: What would you do differently? Do you feel that your work this week was the best you can do? Where are you feeling most challenged? What was your greatest achievement this week? What was your greatest failure? When did you have the most energy today? When did you serve as a guide to someone? Who guided you? Everyone has an off-week now and then. Is there something you need a break from to get back to a strong start for next week? How is your badge compiling going? Do you save time to compile badges? Where do you feel behind? Is there a way I can support you?

### Tools to measure learning:

- **Points:** Weekly points measure time/effort on task.
- **Badges:** Badges represent several weeks of work compiled and reviewed. They are similar to "courses" completed in a traditional school. Badges are significant milestones of learning and represent excellence and progress in learning.
- **360 Reviews/Full Circle Feedback:** Given each session, these survey measure growth in an Eagles' leadership and citizenship in the studio. Warm and cool feedback, also called "warm-hearted" and "tough-minded" feedback helps Eagles grow in their character and relationships to others. Eagles "own" their scores and we encourage them to share with their parents.
- **Exhibitions of Learning:** Each session concludes with a public exhibition for parents on a particular area of learning. Eagles demonstrate their learning through debates, speeches, presentations, and demonstrations. They discuss their lessons learned and show their portfolios of work. Your guides will advise you of each session's exhibition date and time at the beginning of the session.

- **Portfolios/Learning Plans:** These portfolios contain learning goals, achievements, reflections, and experiences over a period of years. Portfolios may be taken home or viewed at exhibitions at any time.

### **Badges versus Grades**

At Quest Academy, we do not use letter grades, nor do we give written reports from a guide. Eagles will receive feedback on the work they produce from their peers, guides and from other sources as appropriate. Their progress will be documented through their achievement and mastery of badges in the Core Skills of writing, language arts, Civilization, math, reading and Socratic discussions. The software programs in language and math track the progress of learning and can be accessed by parents at any time. Simply ask your child to walk you through their programs and to share their passwords with you.

At the beginning of the year, you will receive details about Freedom Levels (on Journey Tracker and the Systems Handbook) and Badges (on Journey Tracker) in the studio. While the studio is self-paced and there is room for each kid to move through the material as quickly or slowly as they need to, badges like the writing badges will need consistent progress throughout multiple years in order to achieve each level. Ignoring progress on these badges will delay graduation into the middle school studio. While your guide will have conversations about all of these things and help your kids set goals in the studio, it is important that you also stay involved in your students' progress, encouraging them and helping them set goals toward their next important milestone.

A typical trajectory is working your way through the Discovery Studio badges in 4-5 years.

### **Studio Observation**

We welcome parents to visit and observe the studio experience to gain further understanding of the learning journey. The studio, however, is an incredibly special environment for the Eagles and we want to protect their personal space and privacy. The following guidelines will help ensure that the studio experience does not become diluted by interruptions.

Please inform a guide 24 hours before you plan to observe. Include the time of your arrival and your expected length of stay. Please inform your child that you will be visiting to observe and that you will just be watching the group at work.

During your observation time, you may quietly greet your child, and then find a comfortable place to sit. Enjoy taking it all in and then depart quietly.



**Tuition**

Discovery tuition is \$5,670 per student annually; Spark is \$6,300 per student per year. *This amount will be billed in 9 equal installments.* You will receive a monthly invoice to your email address. This will arrive around the end of the month and is due by the fifth of the next month. You may set up your invoices to be paid by credit card, debit card, or ACH. Payment can also be made by check or cash for a 3% discount.

*\*If you have any questions about your tuition bills or payments, you may contact the Studio Administrator, Sammie Krieg, at [admin@questacademyni.com](mailto:admin@questacademyni.com).*



## **Special Events – Mark Your Calendars**

### **Quest Google Calendar for events each month**

You will be sent a link to the Quest Google Calendar. This calendar will help you manage field trips, Parent Meetings, parent coffees at campus, end of the year celebrations, PE days, Open Houses, and other Quest events.

### **Parent Meetings**

Each year we host three parent meetings. Part of the Parent Contract includes the commitment for one parent from each family to attend at least two of these meetings each year.

The purpose of these meetings is a far cry from a typical “P.T.A.” meeting. Rather, they are created to inspire you to find your own calling and to be better equipped to help your child maneuver the landscape of his or her own, unique journey. The meetings are held at the elementary studio. Each meeting starts at 6:00pm and concludes at 7:00pm. The dates are:

- Tuesday, October 7, 2025
- Tuesday, January 13, 2026
- Tuesday, April 14, 2026

### **Other Details:**

- Parent Coffees happen the last Friday of each month. These are casual gatherings on campus during morning arrival for you to get to know other parents and learn more about the Quest learning experience. We encourage you to arrive at 8am, drop off your Eagle and stay for an easy cup of coffee and to observe a morning launch in the studio.
- Keep reading the suggested books. The more you learn about why we opened Quest Academy and why our systems work, the more enjoyable this journey will be for you. Feel free to email Sammie for this reading list.
- Tuition invoices are sent by email before the end of each month. Our admin is Sammie Krieg and she can be reached with invoice questions at: [admin@questacademyeni.com](mailto:admin@questacademyeni.com).