



THE VILLAGE'S VOICE

The Newsletter of The Village Academy

2011 is off to a smooth start, which is always a comfort. The only negative so far has been the near-relentless cold which moderated only slightly last week. (We just paid the FPL bill and it was scary.) Hopefully, the children can get back to their normal outdoor play periods. Soon it will be time for the legislative session and the annual fight for funding for VPK, and for less regulation. Hang on - it will be summer very soon!

THE VILLAGE
ACADEMY

SECURITY

PRICES

FOOD ALLERGIES

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NEW SECURITY PROCEDURES

The changeover to the new security procedures for check-in and check-out seem to be going very well, and we certainly thank you for your cooperation.

As a reminder, it is essential that there be no "tail-gating" through the door.

For other than minor children, people who are not on the authorized pick-up list may not accompany parents beyond the security door.

The two-factor identification process allows us to satisfy DCF's requirements for positive attendance records. That's a major help to us.

Protecting your child is our most important job, and the new security procedures really help us do that.

PRICING AT THE VILLAGE

When we have a 4-day week for a holiday, some parents ask why there isn't a 4-day rate. Good question, and here's the answer.

The pricing for most of our programs is calculated based on a 50-week year. (The other two weeks are assumed to be vacation.) After-School is based on the school year, and Summer Camp is based on a 10-week summer.

Each year we review our total costs of operation - staff, mortgage, utilities, food, repairs, curriculum, etc. We forecast what is going to happen to those costs based on the best available data, and then we set our prices. We take the revenue we need to operate, divide it by 50, and that's the price. We could do it by the month or by the year, as some private schools do, but we think it is more convenient for our parents to pay by the week.

So when we have a 4-day week, please understand that the price is the same as a 5-day week because that "smoothing" effect gives you a dependable price and provides us with a dependable revenue stream to pay our bills.

We haven't raised prices in over 2 years, and that is not sustainable. We are in the

middle of our pricing analysis, and anticipate a price increase by March 1st.

FOOD ALLERGIES

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have decided that blood and skin tests are not sufficient for diagnosing and treating suspected food allergies.

The new guidelines state that a food allergy should be suspected when a reaction occurs within "minutes or hours" of eating a particular food. "Physicians should then take a detailed medical history, conduct a thorough physical exam and confirm the allergy with a skin prick test. None of these steps is definitive by itself, the recommendations say, which should lead to fewer misdiagnoses."

SUMMER CAMP

It's not too early to start thinking about Summer Camp. We have a new Camp Director this year, and we are developing an all-new program of activities. More information to follow - but we think you will be as excited as we are!

COLDS AND FLU

We are in the prime season for colds and flu. (Just about everyone we know has had (or now has) some kind of upper respiratory infection that persists for two or three weeks. DCF requires us to monitor your child's health, and to send a child home if they have a severe cough, a fever, eyes that are irritated and discharging, and/or green discharge from the nose. (The complete list can be found in your Parent Contract.) For each of those symptoms, your child cannot return to school without a doctor's note unless they have been symptom free for 24 hours. We know you have to go to work, but we do have a responsibility to protect all of our children and keep them healthy. In addition, we must abide by DCF regulations.

	FEB 14	FEB 18	FEB 21	MAR 25
DATES TO REMEMBER	Valentine's Day	St Johns County Schools Closed Village <u>Open</u>	President's Day Holiday Village <u>Closed</u>	St Johns County Schools Spring Break Begins

GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

Last year was more bizarre than usual in the area of government regulations. The Legislature removed child care centers from the jurisdiction of the Health Department and gave the responsibility for kitchen and related inspections to DCF.

DCF decided that statute gave them the power to set nutritional standards; impose training requirements on everyone who "touches" the food, including spooning it out on your child's dish; and to create new punishment's for infractions that used to be treated as learning and improvement opportunities. Now a bill has been introduced in the Legislature to undo that. It may end up somewhere besides the Department of Health.

Meanwhile, on his first day in office, Gov. Scott signed an Executive Order stopping all new rule-making activities. There is also a move to create a Department of Commerce and a Department of Professional and Business Regulation, which will change the structure of many of the agencies which currently have some jurisdiction over us.

The Feds want to make sure they are involved, too. So Congress passed a new child nutrition law - another unfunded mandate, of course - that will probably drive up our food costs by about 25%.

5 HEALTH TIPS FROM DR OZ

The ubiquitous Dr. Oz has published his "five ultimate health tips" for children. You can find them on the Men's Health web site, but we have summarized them for you.

- 1) Off foods that are "fun, colorful, and interactive". Children hear too many "don't's" and food should be a positive.
- 2) Eat "healthy" fat. The brain is 60% fat, so the Omega 3s found in things like salmon is very important to healthy brain development.
- 3) Be a copycat. He really is saying lead by example. Don't tell your kids to go outside and get exercise when you won't get off the couch. Also, getting outside for at least 15 minutes a day helps maintain adequate Vitamin D levels.
- 4) Put down the homework. Oz says children between ages 3 and 12 need 10-11 hours of sleep a day. So stop doing homework late, turn off the TV, and go get some sleep.
- 5) Talk to your children. Oz says: "I believe the most important predictor of success and happiness as an adult is whether you know that your parents loved you. Not whether your parents loved you, but whether you knew it."

ADMIN NOTES

We need books! Please donate any unwanted children's books... Parents, please don't leave siblings in the car when you come in to pick up your child - especially not with the car running! Its not safe...Speaking of which, don't leave your cars running when you come in; its not safe and its an invitation for a joy ride...Make sure your child's jacket has their name in it. That will help keep their clothes from "disappearing"...If you are leaving a car seat at The Village, please put it on the new shelf just inside the Security Door.