

# Parent Handbook



## **Mission:**

Providing high quality dual language immersion education to children in a multi-cultural Christian environment.

## **Vision:**

Forging a path for culturally diverse and inclusive bilingual education in a Christian environment.

# My Amigos Bilingual Education Center

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# My Amigos Bilingual Education Center

## Non-Discriminatory Policy

My Amigos Bilingual Education Center (MABEC) admits students of any race, sex, color, religion, nationality and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, and activities made available to students at this school. My Amigos Bilingual Education Center does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, nationality or ethnic origin in its administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, athletic and other school administered programs.

## General Information

### *Hours of Operation*

MABEC is open Monday through Friday from 7:30am-5:30pm. \*Please note our closings on last page.

### *Requirements for Enrollment*

- **Preschool Program:** Ages 30 months-4 years for preschool (Must be 30 months old by September 1<sup>st</sup> in order to enter the 2 & 3-year-old class; Must be 4 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> in order to enter the 4-year-old class).
- **Summer or Afterschool Program:** Must be ages 5-11 years.
- All children must be **fully** potty trained. Fully potty trained means that the child is able to do the following: 1) The child must be able to communicate their need BEFORE they have to go. 2) The child should be able to use the potty when asked by a teacher. 3)The child must be able to pull down their clothing and get them back up without assistance. For new students, we allow a transition period of 2 weeks - 1 month, and if the child does not adjust to the routines in My Amigos, we will be forced to withdraw them. In circumstances where a child has a speech delay or other documented medical reason why they need further assistance using the potty, allowances will be made and other forms of communication will be accepted, such as sign language.
- All students must be current on shots/immunizations. A copy of your child's immunization record must be kept on file at the center.
- Parents must sign an agreement stating that a family member will regularly attend meetings and commit to partnering with us in the child's education.

### ***Preschool Tuition (\$10 weekly discount for full-time siblings)***

5 days (Monday-Friday) Tuition: \$160/week      *Registration:* \$50      *Supply fee:* \$90 (\$45 in August and \$45 in January).

3 days (Monday/Wednesday/Friday) Tuition: \$111/week      *Registration:* \$50      *Supply fee:* \$60 (\$30 in August and \$30 in January).

2 days (Tuesday/Thursday) Tuition: \$83/week      *Registration:* \$50      *Supply fee:* \$60 (\$30 in August and \$30 in January)

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### *Afterschool Tuition (\$5 weekly discount for full-time siblings)*

5 days (Monday-Friday) Tuition: \$75/week      Registration: \$50      Supply fee: \$60 (\$30 in August and \$30 in January).

3 days (Mon/Wed/Fri) Tuition: \$55/week      Registration: \$50      Supply fee: \$30 (\$15 in August and \$15 in January).

2 days (Tuesday/Thursday) Tuition: \$45/week      Registration: \$50      Supply fee: \$30 (\$15 in August and \$15 in January)

### *Summer Tuition (\$10 weekly discount for full-time siblings)*

5 days (Monday-Friday) Tuition: \$160/week      Registration: \$50      Supply fee: \$40

3 days (Monday/Wednesday/Friday) Tuition: \$111/week      Registration: \$50      Supply fee: \$30

2 days (Tuesday/Thursday) Tuition: \$83/week      Registration: \$50      Supply fee: \$30

\*Registration fees are nonrefundable

## Payment Schedule

Tuition will be billed Monday the week before service is given and must be paid by Friday at 10AM of the week before service is given. A late fee of \$5 is applied if payment is not received by 10:00am on Friday (check , money order or credit/debit card). For families using automatic withdrawal, tuition will be pulled from your account on Fridays. For example: Tuition must be paid by Friday, September 10 in order to receive service for the week beginning on Monday, September 13. If you are unable to make the tuition payment due to extenuating circumstances, you must get approval from the director or your child will not be able to return until all payments are received including a late fee of \$5.00. \*Registration fees and tuition payments are not refundable.

A \$25 charge will apply for any returned checks. If there is a second occurrence, future payments will be required in cash.

**\*Changing Attendance** – If your child is enrolled to attend part-time in MABEC, it is possible to change him/her to full-time if spaces are available. However, you will not be allowed to return to part-time until the beginning of the next school year. Extenuating circumstances will be considered by the Executive Director or Board of Directors.

## Toys and Other Belongings

One small stuffed animal for comfort is allowed for naptime. However, children should not bring toys from home. Frequently they cause distractions and disruptions in learning. MABEC will not be responsible for lost, stolen or broken items that your child brings from home.

All coats, jackets, sweaters, bags, cups and lunchboxes should be labeled with names so that they can be identified if misplaced.

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## Vacations

Students who attend the program year-round are allowed one full week of vacation time without payment per year after the first four months of attendance (renews each August). Vacation must be taken Monday-Friday and **cannot** be divided between weeks. Vacation weeks are not offered to students who attend for the summer only.

## Withdrawal

MABEC requires a **two-week notice before withdrawing** your child from the program. This allows ample time to fill the space that will open when your child leaves. If this notice is not given, you will be billed for two weeks after your child leaves the program. If your child is withdrawn from the program and later wishes to enroll again, a new registration fee of \$50 will be required.

## Dress Code

All children enrolled in **Preschool** or **Summer Programs** are required to follow a dress code. Select clothing that allow children to be independent and is not restrictive during recreation. Please adhere to the following:

- Shoes must tie, buckle or have straps and/or fit snugly. No flip flops or open toed shoes.
- Children should wear red or navy-blue polo-style shirts (turtlenecks can be worn underneath) or sweaters. Pants, shorts/capris, and skirts should be Khaki or navy-blue, or blue jeans. Tights or leggings should be white or navy only. No holes, pictures, logos, or slogans can be worn other than a MABEC logo, and clothing should fit appropriately.
- An extra set of clothing must be sent and kept at MABEC to be used in the event of an accident; this includes socks, shoes, underwear, shirts and pants.

## Arrival/Departure Procedures

MABEC opens at 7:30am. Children will not be allowed to enter the building before this time. If you plan to do anything other than signing in/out your child, please park in a parking space so that others are not blocked behind you under the covered drive. Children must be signed in and out each day. Please end phone calls before entering our school.

Lessons begin at 8:30am. Students arriving after 8:30, will not be permitted to enter until the lesson is finished. An adult must wait in the lobby with the child until they are able to enter the class.

MABEC closes at 5:30pm. Any child picked up after 5:30 pm will have a late charge of \$2.00/minute added to their weekly tuition. After five (5) late pickups, the late charge will increase to \$5.00/minute. This should be paid along with the next week's tuition or it will be considered late and the late payment fee of \$5/day will then be applied.

## *Management of Custody Agreements*

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Legal documentation must be on file at our center in order to manage custody situations with a parent or legal guardian. Without complete legal documentation, we cannot withhold a child from a parent or legal guardian.

## Discipline Policy

Proper manners and values, based on biblical principles, will be taught and modeled for all children. Praise and positive reinforcement are effective methods of behavior management of children. When children receive positive, non-violent, and understanding interactions from adults and others, they develop good self-concepts, problem-solving abilities, and self-discipline. Based on this belief, My Amigos Bilingual Education Center uses a positive approach to discipline and practices the following discipline and behavior management techniques. Children will also learn that their actions/decisions have consequences. If a child makes the choice to disregard a rule, harm or disrespect an individual, harm or disrespect property, a consequence will be imposed. The following consequences will be implemented: (Aggressive behavior such as punching, kicking, shoving, biting or hitting, may require immediate escalation to #3 or #4)

1. **Time Out or Redirection**—Teachers use redirection, positive reinforcement (such as stickers) and/or quiet cube/safe place to correct unwanted behavior. If the unwanted behavior is more serious, a child may go directly to time out. This means the child will be removed from the group and must sit quietly for a period of no more than 5 minutes. Teacher will then remind child of the proper behavior and encourage reconciliation as needed. If unwanted behavior is minor, a child may be redirected to a different area of play.
2. **Office Visit** – Child will be removed from the classroom and taken to the director’s office. Child will sit quietly for a period of no more than 5 minutes. Director will remind child of the proper behavior and encourage reconciliation as needed. A loss of privilege may be imposed (such as no more playing with blocks the rest of the day) and written notice or email will be sent to parents.
3. **Child Sent Home** – Child will be removed from the classroom and taken to the director’s office. Parent will be called and asked to pick up child within 1 hour.
4. **Behavior Modification Plan** - A conference will be scheduled with parents to discuss the child’s behavior. In addition, a specific plan of action and time period will be put in place to modify the child’s behavior. At the end of the stated time period, the director; teachers; and parents will re-evaluate and determine if MABEC is the best place for the child.

**We reserve the right to immediately and permanently dismiss a child at any time, especially if they are at risk of harming themselves or others while at our facility.**

**Absolutely no form of corporal punishment, humiliation or abrasive language will be used on MABEC premises by anyone.**

## Policy for Referrals

Helping children meet developmental milestones and supporting their social and emotional health are some of our top priorities. We utilize screening tools such as ASQ-3 and teacher observations to ensure

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every child is successful. Because our center values family connections and relationships, our staff will help parents/guardians to start the referral process, as needed, based on results from screening tools, observations or parent concerns. A list of resources is included in this handbook for parents/guardians to access support and services as needed.

### Illness/Medication

#### *Illness*

Any child with the following conditions will be sent home and should not return until they have been symptom-free for twenty-four (24) hours:

- Fever of 100° or higher under the tongue/99° or higher under the arm
- Vomiting
- Unidentified rashes or spots on the skin
- Diarrhea
- Any other contagious symptoms

\*Note: Weekly tuition will not be reduced for absences due to illness.

#### *Medication*

No medication can be administered to a child without a written permission form, signed by a parent. This form must list the child's name, name of medication, dosage, frequency of dosage, prescribing doctor's name (if a prescription medication) and date. No prescription medication can be administered unless it is in the original container with a label. A form must be signed for each day the medication is administered.

#### ***Medical Emergency Plan (implemented by MABEC Staff):***

Upon recognizing signs and symptoms that require immediate medical attention, IF INJURY/ILLNESS IS LIFE THREATENING, call 911/EMS immediately. If you do not have access to a phone, call out for a supervisor or another adult to go call 911/EMS. Child should be sent to the Emergency Care Provider that parent selected (noted in child's file and on emergency form in class notebook).

Supervisor should call the child's parent/guardian immediately after calling 911.

Provide first aid as trained in an approved First Aid course until EMS personnel arrive.

Bring child's emergency medical information with you to the hospital.

If ILLNESS/INJURY IS **NOT** LIFE THREATENING, provide first aid as trained in an approved First Aid course and notify Management as soon as possible. If medical attention is needed, parent will be contacted to pick up the child. If parent cannot reach the child within 30 minutes or less, Management will take child, by car, to closest medical institution, Lexington Medical Center, and meet parent at this location.

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## Closings: Inclement Weather/Acts Beyond Control

If the outside temperature reaches a heat index or actual temperature of 100°, children will not be permitted to play outside. If the outside temperature reaches a wind chill or actual temperature of 40°, children will not be permitted to play outside. In these cases, a short walk outside or around the campus may be substituted for recreation time.

If MABEC must delay opening or close due to inclement weather or acts beyond control (to include health-related issues), we generally follow the same instructions and times given for the Lexington One School District. Tune in to your radio or television to hear the instructions.

Adjustment of Fees Due to Inclement Weather/Acts Beyond Control:

Should MABEC be closed for two days or fewer, the full weekly fee remains unchanged. Should MABEC be closed for three consecutive business days, weekly fees will be reduced by 30%. Should MABEC be closed for four consecutive business days, weekly fees will be reduced by 40%. Should MABEC be closed for five consecutive business days, weekly fees will be reduced by 50%.

## Emergency Evacuation Procedures

### In Place Evacuation

In the event that an emergency occurs at My Amigos Bilingual Education Center and “in place evacuation” is necessary due to events such as a tornado, chemical spill, etc. the children will be kept at the facility, but they will be moved to the inner hallway or gymnasium. The children will remain here under the care and supervision of our child care staff until dangerous conditions subside.

### Off-Site Evacuation

In the event that an emergency occurs at My Amigos Bilingual Education Center and “off site evacuation” is necessary due to events such as a brush fire, flash flood, etc., the children will be relocated to St David’s Lutheran Church Parsonage at 135 Saint Davids Church Road by staff members’ vehicles. The children will remain at this alternate site under the care and supervision of our child care staff until parents/guardians are contacted. When parents/guardians are contacted, they will be made aware of the situation and make arrangements to pick up their child or authorize that care be provided for the remainder of the day.

### Major Disasters or Emergencies

In the event that a major emergency or disaster occurs (such as major environmental hazards, tornados, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc.) and/or a mandatory evacuation is ordered for My Amigos Bilingual Education Center, children will be transported to a Red Cross mass shelter by staff members’ vehicles. The children will remain at the Red Cross shelter under the care and supervision of our child care staff while parents/guardians are contacted. When parents are contacted, they will be made aware of the situation and make arrangements to pick up their child.



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## Snacks & Lunches

Nutritious snacks will be served each morning and afternoon. A snack menu will be posted each month on the refrigerator door in the lunchroom. The elements of the snacks being provided and served consist of fruits, vegetables, and saltines. Different ethnic foods may be offered from time to time and may be new to your child. We encourage all children to taste these new foods and learn to be open to new experiences.

Your child will need to bring his/her lunch (including a drink and utensils) each day. Refrigeration is not available for lunches; therefore, ice packs should be used to keep items cool if needed. If you fail to send a drink, your child will be served water. Please do not send sodas or any glass containers. Children will be encouraged to eat nutritious foods before being allowed to have any candy/dessert that is sent.

## Nutrition Policy

Opportunities to learn about healthy eating are provided to children at least once a week during meal times or in a lesson. Staff are encouraged to model/practice health eating for children. Sugar sweetened beverages will not be served at our center. All snacks provided will be planned and served to meet the child's nutritional requirements as recommended by the USDA CACFP with no more than four hours between food services. Only skim or 1% milk is served to children age 2 and above. Food will never be used as reward or punishment at our center. \*Accommodations can be made for children with allergies, physical needs, religious or cultural customs.

## Physical Activity Policy

Media/Screen (TV, cell phone video, computer or DVD) viewing are not permitted for children age 2 and under and is limited to 20 minutes per week for children over 2 years old. Children are encouraged to be physically active indoors and outdoors at appropriate times (weather permitting). This shall include at least 60 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes in the afternoon (not including extra-curricular activities). Staff are encouraged to model and teach practices for physical activity. For inclement weather, recreation moves to the indoor gymnasium where balls and tricycles are offered. The alternate/indoor recreation time is equal to that of outdoor recreation time.

## Rest Time

All preschool children have a designated period of rest. Children do not have to sleep, but they must rest quietly so those who want to sleep are not disturbed. Parents will need to provide a plastic Kindermat, a blanket or sheet and if necessary, a security item (i.e. small stuffed animal). Please note, while stuffed animals are allowed for rest time, children should not bring other toys from home, and My Amigos is not responsible if items brought from home are lost or broken. All blankets and/or sheets will be sent home each Friday for washing and should be returned with your child on Monday. If mats are ripped or torn, a new mat must be purchased. Kindermats may be purchased on Amazon.com or at Walmart or Education Wonderland at 1623A Broad River Rd, Columbia, SC 29210.

# My Amigos Bilingual Education Center

## Curriculum & Methodology

### ***Program Evaluations***

In order to ensure high quality and allow for improvement, program evaluations will be completed annually with all parents and staff. Evaluations will be conducted through printed surveys or online surveys. Results will be recorded and shared with the Board of Directors. Areas of greatest attention will be determined and a strategic plan for addressing areas of improvement will be accessible to all staff and parents through our website.

### ***Preschool Program***

Children will be taught in a Spanish/English dual-language immersion environment. If child is addressed in Spanish, they are expected to respond in Spanish; equally, if addressed in English, they are expected to respond in English. MABEC's approach is 50% teacher-initiated and 50% student-initiated. While incorporating cultural competency and language acquisition, we meet the South Carolina "Early Learning Standards" so that every child is ready for Kindergarten. Below are some specific points that define our unique environment and Procure curriculum:

- Cognitive and language skills are developed through lessons and experiences that include letters, numbers, colors, shapes, simple reasoning, sequencing, matching/organizing objects, opposites, rhyming, patterns. Motor skills to include cutting, drawing, writing, balancing and skipping.
- Teacher-initiated lessons that follow thematic units.
- Cultural competency is taught through daily interaction in our multi-cultural environment as well as study of other countries and cultures including customs, foods and religions.
- Daily character-building activities encourage proper social and emotional development, self-help skills, nutrition, manners and values.
- Afternoon extra-curricular activities that promote physical education and spiritual development include music, dance, art, religion, sports (at no additional cost).
- Free play and recreation times allow for student-led exploration, physical development and social interaction with peers.

### ***Summer Program***

Our summer program is a partial-language immersion program; meaning half of the day is led in Spanish and half of the day is led in English. Each week follows a different theme and includes fun games and activities that teach Spanish vocabulary and simple phrases. Special points:

- Cultural competency is taught through daily interaction in our multi-cultural environment.
- Free play and recreation times allow for student-led exploration, physical development and social interaction with peers.

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- Afternoon extra-curricular activities that promote physical education and spiritual development include music, dance, art, religion, sports (at no additional cost).

### ***Afterschool Program***

Our afterschool program is a partial-language immersion program; meaning part of the time is led in Spanish and part of the time is led in English. Each day, children receive a 20-minute Spanish lesson where they practice reading, writing and conversing in the Spanish language. Special points:

- Cultural competency is taught through daily interaction in our multi-cultural environment.
- Spanish lessons offer a foundation for acquisition of more languages as well as offering increased brain function and problem-solving skills.
- Free play and recreation times allow for student-led exploration, physical development and social interaction with peers.
- 30 minutes of homework assistance allows families to spend more time together in the evenings.

***Special Note:*** We expect all children to participate in the daily activities at MABEC, with the exception of religious activities. If you do not wish for your child to participate in a particular activity other than religious activities, it is your responsibility to find alternate care for your child during that time. We do not have adequate staff to provide an alternate activity for your child.

### **Policy on Religion**

Although housed in a Lutheran Church, MABEC does not profess or claim a specific denomination. MABEC will teach/model morals and values based on Biblical principles, pray before snack/lunch, read Bible stories before rest time and tell children about God who loves them and created them. It is our belief that all individuals deserve respect regardless of his/her religion or faith. Therefore, families of all religions are welcome at MABEC and while we will not force any child to participate in religious activities (such as prayer), they will be required to respect those who wish to participate or find an alternate activity.

### **Parent & Volunteer Participation**

#### ***Family Night***

“Family night” will be held regularly to encourage the family to be involved in the child’s education, learn important steps in the child’s development, be informed of current trends and/or research concerning children in the community and throughout the world, participate in relationship building activities. If attending, an adult family member (18 years or older) is required to supervise the child.

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Meetings are usually held on a Friday and a meal is always provided to accommodate those who may be coming straight from work.

### ***Fundraisers***

As a non-profit organization, fundraisers are an important part of keeping costs down, but more importantly, they provide funds for new educational materials in each classroom and for helping families in need in our community. All families are asked to help with fundraising efforts as they feel comfortable.

### ***Teacher Conferences***

Teachers will conduct a formal conference with parents in the winter and in the spring. At this time, a progress report, based on observations and ASQ evaluations, of each child will be discussed. If, at any point, there is an indication/suspicion that a child may have special needs, MABEC will inform the child's family, request an ASQ evaluation, and offer referrals for assessment and assistance.

### ***Volunteers***

Parents and community members are encouraged to volunteer at MABEC to demonstrate support for the program and to model "service" for the children. Volunteer opportunities include things such as: helping a teacher during school hours, reading to the children, tutoring children, chaperoning on a field trip, preparing special treats for staff to show appreciation, assisting with fundraising projects, etc. Talk with your child's teacher or the director to let them know how you can serve. All volunteers that work directly with the children must have a background/SLED check.

## **Visitation/Full Access Policy**

Parents of children enrolled in My Amigos Bilingual Education Center may have free and full access to visit/observe their children during operation hours, unless a court order stipulates otherwise. The visit must not disrupt instructional activities or classroom routines. The office must receive permission from a parent, in writing or by phone, for all other visitors (such as grandparents, family friends, etc). All visitors must sign in at the office.

## **Birthdays**

Each child will be recognized and celebrated on their birthday. However, we do not allow birthday "parties" at MABEC. Parents are welcome to send a "special snack" for the class on the child's birthday if it is arranged with the teacher in advance. Please understand that due to health regulations, food items can only come from a food establishment approved by DHEC (such as a grocery store or restaurant) and must be properly labeled.

## **Special Events & Holidays & Closings**

MABEC will recognize special days for many different cultures throughout the year (such as independence days for different countries). We will also recognize traditional American holidays such as

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Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter. However, we will not focus on Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny. While we have no problem if your family associates Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny with the holiday, we choose to recognize the holiday for the biblical meaning rather than a particular character. We do not emphasize Halloween due to the fact that many young children can be frightened or upset by the images and traditions associated with it.

MABEC will be **CLOSED** on the following days (may not apply if the holiday falls on the weekend):

- New Year's Day (if New Years Day falls on a weekend, we will be closed the day before or day after)
- Martin Luther King, Jr Day
- President's Day
- Good Friday (Friday before Easter Sunday)
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Election Day (even numbered years only)
- Thanksgiving Holidays (Thursday and Friday)
- Christmas Holidays (December 24-25 and the day before or after depending on the weekend)

**\*Please note: Weekly tuition rate is not adjusted for holidays.**

# My Amigos Bilingual Education Center

## **Resources and Support for Families**

### **Help Me Grow**

<https://helpmegrowsc.org/>

### **Kid Connections (Speech Therapy)**

[kidconnections@hotmail.com](mailto:kidconnections@hotmail.com)

### **BabyNet**

<https://www.scdhhs.gov/resource/babynet>

### **Partners for Early Attuned Relationships (PEAR)**

<https://www.scimha.org/PEAR-Network>

### **Child Find / local school district**

Richland District One: <https://www.richlandone.org/Page/621>

Lex District One: <https://www.lexington1.net/Special-Services-dept>

### **SC Department of Disabilities and Special Needs (DDSN)**

<https://ddsn.sc.gov/>

### **Developmental Pediatrics -USC**

<http://pediatrics.med.sc.edu/patientcare/developmental.pediatrics.asp>

### **SC Child Care Resource & Referral**

<https://www.sc-ccrr.org>