



## **Parent Handbook**

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## **1. Welcome**

Welcome to Barnyard School House (BSH). We sincerely hope this will be the beginning of a rewarding and trusting relationship between your family and us. This handbook is meant to serve as a guide to what you should expect from us. It also details what your responsibilities are. Of course, always feel free to contact the Director, or any other staff member, in person, by telephone, or by e-mail, if you have any questions or concerns about these policies and procedures.

From all of us at BSH, please accept our thanks for placing your trust and your child with us. Welcome to our family!

## **2. Our Philosophy**

At Barnyard School House (BSH) we're dedicated to one thing—giving your child the best start on life by laying the foundation for a lifetime of learning. From our dedicated staff and inspired array of programs, to our secure facilities, every element of BSH is designed to enrich your child's mind, body, and spirit.

The fundamental reason and long-term goal for the kind of developmentally appropriate, child-centered, experiential learning we advocate is not only to help children to develop personal integrity and fulfillment, but also to enable them to think critically, work cooperatively, solve problems creatively, and make the life-long decisions necessary to participate fully in society. Our meaningful curriculum for all age levels provides experiences, which enable children to make sense of what they are learning and to connect or integrate their knowledge in ways that lead to rich conceptual development.

## **3. Our Faculty**

We believe that a school's excellence is ultimately measured by the quality of its staff, which is why we're extremely selective when it comes to our faculty. Our classes are led by teachers who are supported by well-educated, experienced assistant and specialty teachers. All of our teachers and administrators are required to participate in diverse workshops, seminars, and continuing education courses annually.

Every employee at BSH, from Director to Housekeeper, is held to the highest standards and must complete a rigorous pre-employment screening process. This includes a thorough background check, education and experience verification.

All staff members are required to have emergency response training and current first aid and CPR certification. Fire, severe weather, and evacuation drills are practiced regularly. You can be sure your child is always in the best hands while he/she is at Barnyard School House.

#### 4. Peace of Mind—Our Security Procedures

We kept two things in mind when designing Barnyard School House facilities—safety and atmosphere, which is why every part of all our school has been designed to make you and your child feel secure and comfortable. Our buildings are equipped with fire alarms, which are directly connected to the City of Hutto Fire Departments.

You'll notice our commitment to your child's safety begins the moment you step inside our center. In order to access the schools' interior classroom area, everyone must first participate in a "scan", or "code" entry that is located inside the entrance. You and the people you permanently authorize to pick up your child, after verification of their identification, will be entered into system during the enrollment process or at any time after your child begins to attend Barnyard School House (BSH).

If a medical or any other type of emergency occurs, including the need to evacuate the building, we will take whatever steps are required. We will call 911 and/or the local city's office of emergency preparedness if necessary to obtain an appropriate and expeditious response to the situation. Parents will always be contacted as quickly as possible and be advised of the plan. **Please make sure your child's registration information is up-to-date at all times.** It is extremely important we have your and all your emergency contacts' current home, work, and cellular phone numbers. It's important to us to take proactive steps to protect your child's well-being at all times, but from time to time, accidents do occur. All injuries will be documented carefully and you will be fully informed.

## 5. Open Door Policy

We welcome you to visit your child throughout the day if you choose to do so. You may observe or participate in classroom activities, but we do ask you not to disturb the class during naptime. If you would like to have lunch at BSH with your child, we ask you to arrange it with his/her teacher beforehand. Parents who are interested in enrolling their child or children do not need an appointment to take a tour.

We happily welcome visitors at any time. However, visitors on a tour are not allowed to enter classrooms when children are present.

## 6. Our Goals for Children

Barnyard School House (BSH) goals for children address all the domains of child development—emotional, social, cognitive, creative, and physical.

Children enrolled in BSH will:

- develop a positive self-concept and attitude toward learning, self-control, and a sense of belonging.
- develop curiosity about the world, confidence as a learner, creativity and imagination, and personal initiative.
- develop relationships of mutual trust and respect with adults and peers, understand perspectives of other people, and negotiate and apply rules of group living.
- understand and respect social and cultural diversity.
- know about the community and social roles.
- use language to communicate effectively and to facilitate thinking and learning.
- become literate individuals who gain satisfaction, as well as information, from reading and writing.
- represent ideas and feelings through pretend play, drama, movement, music, art, and construction.
- think critically, reason, and solve problems.
- construct understanding of relationships among objects, people, and events, such as classifying, ordering, number, space, and time.
- construct knowledge of the physical world, manipulate objects for desired effects, and understand cause and effect relationships.
- acquire knowledge of and appreciation for the fine arts, humanities, and sciences.
- become competent in the management of their bodies and acquire basic physical skills, both gross motor and fine motor.
- gain knowledge about the care of their bodies and maintain a desirable level of health and fitness.

Child-to-Teacher Ratios:

To ensure individualized instruction and essential nurturing attention, our child-to-teacher ratios and group sizes are according to the standards required for state licensing by

the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. All our child-to-teacher ratios and classroom group sizes that vary according to children's ages, are published on our Tuition Rate Sheet, which is available by contacting our schools by phone or by e-mail. This information is also included in the folder you receive when you take a tour.

#### Curriculum and Assessment:

Any preschool can help a child learn basic skills like letters, numbers, or shapes. But at Barnyard School House, we help children learn **how** to learn. We encourage children to question why and discover the answer for themselves. This approach inspires our students to think more creatively, thus strengthening their problem-solving abilities. What's more, our programs include character- building activities that teach children the importance of fairness, integrity, and honesty.

We believe highly appropriate curriculum and assessment should be planned based on the best knowledge of theory and research about how children develop and learn, with attention given to individual children's needs and interests.

Our curriculum is an organized framework that represents a broad range of relevant content and skills that children need to learn, the processes through which children achieve these identified goals, what teachers do to help children achieve them, and the context in which teaching and learning occur.

The most effective curriculum develops knowledge and skills in a meaningful context, not in isolation. For example, children learn numerals and number concepts best by counting and manipulating real objects, not by filling in workbook pages. Children learn letters and their sounds by using them in their names, signs, or stories that are engaging to them rather than by tracing them on a page or reciting the alphabet repeatedly.

We use assessment, the process of regularly and systematically observing and documenting what children do and how they do it in light of realistic and attainable content goals, as a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child from infancy on, including curriculum planning for groups and individual children and communicating with parents.

The following are our basic assumptions about the interactive process of teaching and learning:

- Children learn best when their physical needs are met and they feel psychologically safe and secure.
- Children construct their own knowledge through repeated social interaction with adults and other children or through physical experiences with objects.
- Children's learning reflects a recurring cycle that begins in awareness and moves to exploration, to inquiry, and finally, to utilization.
- Children learn through play.
- Children's interests and "need to know" motivate learning.
- Human development and learning are characterized by individual variation.

## 7. Daily Procedures

### Hours of operation:

Barnyard School House is open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Monday through Friday year round. Our core curriculum hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Each class's daily schedule is posted on the classroom boards, and given to you at time of enrollment. The days we are closed are listed in section 28 on page 15-16.

### Drop-off/check-in procedure:

Children in our infant, toddler, 2's Transition, and Preschool A classes must always be checked in by the adult who brings them to school.

**All children must be signed in. Please use the scanner/PIN at the front lobby before heading to your child's classroom.**

### Pick-up/check-out procedure:

When you pick up your child, please park your car and come into the lobby. You enter the main school area using your scan and proceed to your child's classroom. You do not need to notify us if you are picking your child up early, unless it will be during naptime.

Please note we will only release your child to individuals you have designated as an "Authorized Person" on your child's enrollment form or by using our "Authorization for Release of a Child" form. Barnyard School House employees cannot be an "Authorized Person". Giving a note or verbal permission to your child's teacher is unacceptable. In an emergency, if you need to make arrangements over the phone to give permission for someone who has not been authorized to pick up your child, please ask to speak to an administrator. That person will assist you in completing the "Authorization for Release of a Child" form by fax or by email. In all cases in which you authorize the release of your child to a person who has not picked up your child before or who is unknown to the administrator on duty, we require that person to provide picture identification.



## 8. Your Child's First Day

You have probably visited us on one or more occasions and our intent is for you to have a smooth and informative enrollment and orientation process. In addition, we want you and your child to feel as comfortable and welcomed on your first day at Barnyard School House as possible. We understand no matter how well prepared and excited a family may be, the newness can also be a little scary for everybody. We don't consider any questions or concerns you may have unimportant or silly.

Please come to our lobby where our administrators will greet you warmly, assist you to check-in using our scan system, escort you to your child's classroom, and help you get your child settled. Sometimes saying goodbye isn't easy. We recommend you keep it reassuring, short, and sweet. Prolonging the inevitable often does not help the situation—ten minutes or so should do it; however, we won't rush you and respect your right to decide how to best handle this situation with your child.

We suggest that if you have any business or final paperwork to attend to, you should do it after you return to the lobby, because we don't want to keep your child waiting beforehand. We will be glad to take your phone calls later in the day if you need reassurance about how your child is doing. Please know if we ever think you need to be told about anything concerning your child, we are going to call you, if necessary, or speak with you at drop-off or pick-up times, so that you can help us decide a course of action.

## 9. Meals, Snacks, and Breastfeeding

Barnyard School House (BSH) does not provide lunch to students. At Barnyard School House we serve healthy, nutritious snacks. Our weekly snack menus, are posted in the classrooms as well as on our Parent Board near the main entry. Morning snack is available from 8:30 to 9:00 a.m., and lunch is served between 11:00 a.m. and 11:30 p.m. **To prevent the possibility of allergic reactions, our menus do not include tree nuts or peanuts.**

Children are encouraged to try new foods, but may refuse what they do not want to eat. Withholding food is never used as a form of discipline. We reserve the right to substitute any menu item if the listed item is unavailable. You will be told about substitutions, which are a rare occurrence, on your child's Bright Wheel Messenger.

Parents may provide meals and/or snacks at any time for their child if there is a particular food he/she does not prefer or to substitute for food he/she is allergic to. Food should be sent in insulated containers to maintain its appropriate temperature. When parents choose to provide a child's meals and/or snacks from home, it is with the understanding Barnyard School House is not responsible for this food's nutritional value or for meeting the child's daily food needs. **Parents may not bring any food items that are cooked in or/and contain tree nuts or peanuts.** All food items must be labeled with the child's name and the menu item it's substituting for. All food items must be either consumed or returned to parents every day. Food items sent by parents will be stored in the classroom, left in cubbies or backpacks. We are not responsible for keeping temperature on your child's lunch. We will not refrigerate food or beverages.

If you are breastfeeding your baby, you may provide breast milk, which will be stored in the infant room refrigerator or freezer. Mothers are most welcome to breastfeed in the infant room or in any area of the center they will most comfortable ( We will not store breastmilk or formula in our refrigerator overnight)

**If your child is allergic to any foods, you must let us know.** We strongly urge you to monitor our menus for possible reactive foods. In particular, if your child has an allergy that can cause a life-threatening reaction such as anaphylactic shock, we require you to notify the Director to make sure we have an agreed-upon plan for emergency situations. You must provide doctors note stating their allergies before starting with Barnyard School House or as soon as you are made aware. Barnyard will not recognize any allergy unless proven by a doctor and the proper paperwork is completely filled out and on file at Barnyard School House.

## 10. Outdoor Play

This is a special time of the day to release energy and simply enjoy the physical rewards of active play. Barnyard School House is equipped small sized outdoor play systems. In addition, our spacious indoor activity rooms are the ideal place to allow for physical play when we cannot go outdoors due to inclement weather or ozone alerts.

We actively monitor the air quality and temperatures for the day, and keep children indoors when the air quality is hazardous or when it's too hot (over 95 degrees F. including the heat index) or too cold (below 45 degrees F. including the wind chill factor). In the hot summer months, we schedule our outdoor playtimes early in the day to take advantage of the cooler morning temperatures. Please make sure your child brings a coat, jacket, or sweater to wear when he/she will use the playground on breezy and chilly days.

In addition, sunscreen is a very effective protection against the sun's rays. If you would like us to apply sunscreen on your child prior to outdoor play, we will gladly do so year round provided you supply us with your preferred sunscreen brand. Please make sure to write your child's name on all containers with a permanent marker and give them to your child's teacher for safe storage. Under no circumstances may sunscreen left in a child's backpack. We will only apply sunscreen and/ or insect repellent if parents have give written permission and signed the Sunscreen/Insect Repellent Permission Slip.

## 11. Naptime

Every day, after enjoying our lunchtime meal, the children have a 1½ to 2 hour naptime. While all children are encouraged to take a nap, they are never forced to sleep and may have a quiet, peaceful rest time instead. Your child may bring a blanket, pillow, and/or stuffed animal for naptime except for children under 12 months old, but they must be small enough to be stored in his/her backpack when not in use. BSH provides crib sheets for infants. We ask that all over age groups provide a mat sheet from home. Crib sheets are

changed weekly or as needed and mat sheets are changed weekly, at which time mattresses and mats are sanitized. Soiled sheets are always changed immediately and the mattress or mat is thoroughly cleaned and sanitized before the sheet is replaced.

## **12. How We Communicate With Parents**

We understand that an important part of your life is finding out about your child's day and progress at BSH. In our infant classes through pre-kindergarten, our daily Parent Report form, in addition to the on-going, informal conversations you will have with your child's teacher(s), is one way of sharing with you what, why, and how we do things. We encourage you to read these report forms and, when he/she becomes verbal, talk with your child about his or her accomplishments, further reinforcing the pride and competency your child will surely have.

Our administrators and teachers are very special people who spend a great deal of time with your child and they want to build mutually trusting relationships with you. We know you will use good judgment and not monopolize the teachers' time while they are supervising children. If you ever have any concerns, call us or stop in the lobby and we'll address them immediately. We will respond as quickly as possible. We usually do not put parent calls directly through to the classrooms because that would distract the teachers' attention from the children. If you want to arrange a meeting or conference with a teacher or an administrator or both, all you have to do is ask and a mutually agreeable time will be arranged. Email [barnyardschoolhousellc@gmail.com](mailto:barnyardschoolhousellc@gmail.com)

## **13. Our Discipline and Guidance Philosophy**

Barnyard Schoolhouse consistently emphasizes respect for the individual child. Young children are striving for understanding, independence, and self-control. They learn by exploring, experimenting, and testing the limits of their environment and experiencing the consequences of their behavior. In this way, they begin to understand how the world works, their own limits, appropriate assertiveness, and self-control. Barnyard Schoolhouse helps children learn these lessons by offering a relaxed, positive atmosphere of support and understanding that recognizes the child's struggle. Here, development is viewed as a process of growing, with each age and stage having its own characteristics, challenges, and needs. Positive guidance is viewed by adults as an important aspect of teaching and learning. Through positive guidance and modeling, staff help children feel good about themselves and behave in responsible ways. At Barnyard we like to:

- Use praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing solely upon unacceptable behavior
- Remind children of behavior expectations daily by using clear and positive statements
- Redirect behavior using positive statements
- Use individualized and consistent guidance for each child
- Direct guidance toward teaching the children acceptable behavior and self-control

At Barnyard we prohibit:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishments

- Any punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument
- Placing anything in or on child's mouth
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language
- Placing a child in any locked or dark space including a dark classroom, bathroom, or closet
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for any period of time

#### 14. Attire and backpacks

For the sake of safety and comfort, keeping in mind that part of your child's day at BSH will be spent in very active play, such as running and climbing, the only allowed shoes are closed toed athletic footwear with non-skid, non-marking rubber soles to be worn with socks. Crocs are acceptable.

From time to time, toileting accidents or spills will occur at school, which require your child, regardless of age, to have a change of clothes. Therefore, **please make sure you always have a complete change of clothes, including underwear, shoes and socks, in your child's backpack.** If your child does not have extra clothes, we will call you to bring some. We do not have any clothes available for your child to borrow.

#### 15. Diapering

All diapers and supplies are provided by the parents. Children's diapers will be checked at least every two hours as well as upon awakening, and will be changed promptly when soiled or wet. Barnyard School House does not allow the use of baby powder during diaper changes. Baby powder can get into the baby's lungs, causing swelling and irritation and potentially causing breathing problems. When exposed to the broken skin of a diaper rash, it can also cause an inflammatory reaction in some children. To reduce rubbing and prevent diaper rash, cornstarch or cornstarch powder is a safer choice. Parents must fill out and sign a Topical Ointment Form if you wish to have diaper cream applied. Cloth diapers with a waterproof covering may be used. The soiled diaper and covering will be changed as a unit and not reused. Due to the risk of contamination, soiled diapers will not be emptied. Items will be double bagged, sealed, and labeled with the child's name for return home.

#### 16. Toilet Training

We recognize that toilet training is an important step in the early development of all children. At some point during the older toddler or 2/3's school year, when you believe your child is ready to begin the process, discuss what you plan to do with his/her teachers. The teachers will have suggestions to assist you. Your child will have the greatest success when parents and teachers work together in a consistent team effort. If the timing's right, it should be a natural progression, not an ordeal to worry about. Children who are in the toilet training process must have several changes of clothing on hand every day.

## 17. Personal Belongings

**It is your responsibility to make sure everything your child brings or wears to school has his/her name clearly written on it in permanent marker.**

All children love to bring personal items to school with them, but please understand we have plenty of toys and materials at our schools already. If your child brings an item to school, it may be lost or damaged. The risk is yours and Barnyard School House cannot be responsible for personal belongings. We do our best to keep track of such items; but if it's precious, it's best left safe and sound at home. We will put unclaimed, unlabeled items in our "Lost and Found" basket. If they are not claimed after a month, they will be donated to charity.

Your child must not bring to school any weapon or replica of a weapon or any other item that may encourage overly aggressive play. Small or delicate items, such as jewelry, coins and ceramics, which could be easily swallowed or broken, should not be brought to school. All items brought to school should fit in your child's backpack. Please do not bring larger things unless they are something needed for a special "show and tell" assignment/project that has been previously arranged with your child's teachers.

**Children go in and out of their backpack throughout the day: please DO NOT store medication or anything that can be harmful to children in their backpacks. Sunscreen and insect repellent..etc. should be give directly to a teacher or supervisor.**

## 18. Health and Immunization Policy

State licensing standards require specific medical and immunization information to be on file for each child upon enrollment. The Texas Department of Health audits our records regularly.

State regulations also require children who are four and five year olds to have had vision and hearing screenings. Please arrange to have these screenings performed at your child's pediatrician's office and provide us with the results so we can report them to the proper state agency. When your child receives an immunization, it is very important for you to give us a copy of its documentation from your child's health care provider in order to keep his/her records up to date.

## 19. Transitions

At Barnyard Schoolhouse, we recognize the importance of new beginnings for both child and parents. These new beginnings are called "Transitions", we like to make these as smooth and easy as possible. Transitions are supported by slowly integrating the child into a new program and by customizing communication and care throughout the transition.

## 20. Illness Policy

If your child becomes ill or injured while at school, we will notify you immediately for you to make arrangements for pick up; and we will do our best to comfort him/her until you arrive. To avoid the

spread of disease, state licensing standards require ill children to be isolated from their group and picked up from school as soon as possible, but **no later than one hour after notification**. If emergency medical care is required, we will call 911 for immediate assistance.

**To attend school, your child needs to be well enough to function in group care, which means he/she must be able to follow his/her class's daily schedule without the need for one-on-one attention from the teachers.** If your child exhibits any of the following symptoms, he/she must be excluded from attendance:

- a. Has or has had a fever at or above 100.0° F. within the past 24 hours, regardless of its cause. This includes fever that you and/or your pediatrician believe is caused when infants or toddlers are teething.
- b. Is vomiting or has an upset stomach accompanied by diarrhea.
- c. Has diarrhea that is not able to be contained within a diaper.
- d. Shows evidence of a communicable disease, such as chicken pox or pink eye.
- e. Has an undiagnosed rash.
- f. Has discharge from the eyes, ears, and/or profuse, colored nasal discharge.
- g. Has difficulty breathing.
- h. Has unusual lethargy, irritability, or persistent crying.

As a courtesy to all Barnyard School House children, families, and staff, please help us minimize the transmission of illnesses. **In order to return to school, your child needs to be free of all symptoms for 24 hours without the use of medication, except for an antibiotic prescribed for an ear or sinus infection, for example.**

To reduce the spread of infections, children and staff wash their hands, using anti-bacterial soap, many times during the day, but especially after toileting and before eating, and we do not allow children to share cups, utensils, etc. In addition, toys, doorknobs, and all other items that are handled or contacted on a regular basis by children are disinfected regularly with an anti-bacterial solution.

## **21. Medication Policies**

We recognize the administration of medications is an important part of helping to maintain your child's overall state of welfare and health. We will administer all prescription and non-prescription (over the counter) medications according to the following requirements:

- a. All medications must be in their original containers. For prescription medications, the pharmacy label with the child's and physician's names, the prescription number, date prescribed, dosage, and frequency must be current and legible. For non-prescription medications, the child's name and the date supplied needs to be clearly written on the container with permanent marker. Non-prescription medications will only be administered with a note or email from your child's pediatrician stating the specific name of the medication, the dosage, and its frequency.
- b. With the exception of prescription allergy and asthma medications, medicine will not be administered on an as needed basis. A specific time must be indicated on the authorization form.

- c. An “Authorization to Administer Medication” form must be completed in full by the parent and given, along with the medication, to an administrator. Forms are available in the lobby. Do not give medication or forms to your child’s teachers. For on going medication, a new form must be submitted every week.
- d. Clearly indicate it if the medication needs to be refrigerated.
- e. We recommend you have your pharmacist prepare your child’s prescription in two containers, one for home and one for school, in case you forget to take the prescription medication home at the end of the day.
- f. Medication can be very dangerous in the hands of children and must never be left in a child’s backpack where it might be accidentally available to any child.

## **22. Allergy Prevention**

Families are expected to notify the center regarding children’s food or environmental allergies. Parents/guardians of children with diagnosed allergies or asthma are required to provide the center with an individualized health care plan, signed by the child’s medical provider, detailing the child’s symptoms, reactions, treatments, care, and all necessary medications. A list of children’s allergies is posted. Staff members are trained on how to consult and use the list. Despite our diligent efforts, it is impossible to eliminate all risk for children with food allergies. Ultimately, in light of the risks that cannot be eliminated, parents/guardians will need to decide whether group care is appropriate for their child with allergies.

Contact with nuts, including peanuts or products containing traces of nuts or oil, can be critical or even fatal to a child with a severe nut allergy. Barnyard Schoolhouse is nut-safe, this means we do our best to keep nut products out of the centers. All families and staff are asked to carefully monitor all product ingredients to avoid nut-containing products (including almond milk and products containing nuts in any form, such as lotions).

## **23. Solicitation of BSH Employees**

Solicitation of Barnyard School House teachers for work such as private tutoring or babysitting on an evening or weekend basis is allowed; however, all arrangements must be made away from the school facilities during non-school hours. This work must not conflict with an employee’s regularly scheduled Barnyard School House work hours. For liability reasons, we cannot release children to Barnyard School House employees.

## **24. Severe Weather Days**

If Hutto Independent School District is closed due to unsafe weather conditions, Barnyard School House (BSH) will be closed.

Public school closings are announced on local TV and radio channels. If delayed openings are announced, we will make every effort to open Barnyard School House following the HISD’s designated time, but since our staff commutes from different locations, we may not be able to do so. We will post closings and delayed opening times on Bright Wheel or E-mail. In the case of a severe mid-day storm, we will notify you by phone and/or e-mail if your child needs to be picked up early.

## **25. Children's Birthdays**

We greatly enjoy celebrating children's birthdays at Barnyard School House and believe every child's birthday deserves special recognition.

If you would like to bring a simple, yet special treat for the class, please limit it to small cupcakes, muffins, or cookies. For safety reasons, we do not allow candles and/or balloons to be brought to school. We ask you to make arrangements in advance directly with your child's teachers as to how much to bring and when. Special birthday treats will be served at our afternoon snack time.

We strongly discourage exchanging birthday gifts at school. We also discourage the distribution of birthday party invitations at school, even if you plan to invite the entire class. Because small envelopes are easily misplaced and sometimes don't get home with children, misunderstandings and hurt feelings can be the result. We suggest you contact the Director to email invitations to children's parents in your child's class.

## **26. On-Site Water Activities**

During the summer months, toddlers through school-age children participate in splashing, wading, and sprinkler activities on our playgrounds.

## **27. Closings**

Barnyard School House will close on the following typical holidays:

- a. New Year's Eve/New Year's Day (reopen January 2<sup>nd</sup>)
- b. Memorial Day
- c. Independence Day
- d. Staff In-Service Day (Friday before the first day of the school year)
- e. Good Friday
- f. Labor Day
- g. Thanksgiving and the Friday after
- h. Christmas Eve/Christmas Day (Entire School will be closed from December 24<sup>rd</sup>, thru January 2<sup>nd</sup>)

Closings may vary and will be adjusted accordingly. There may be other infrequent occasions when we close early prior to a holiday or to allow our entire staff to attend early childhood education conferences. Please check the current school year holiday calendar for specific closure times and dates.

## **28. Fees, Security Deposit, and Tuition**

**Application and/or Registration Fees are non-refundable and non-transferable.**

*Registration Fee:* \$100.00 per child due upon initial enrollment. For wait list purposes when a class is full, we charge a \$50.00 Application Fee with the remaining \$50.00 balance of the Registration Fee due upon enrollment when a space for your child becomes available.



*Tuition:* Tuition is due in full each week on Friday for the following week of service. For your convenience, Authorization Agreement for Preauthorized Payments (ACH Debits) are available as a method of payment.

BSH reserves the right to increase tuition and other charges upon one month's prior written notice. Tuition information is available on a separate rate sheet. There will be no reduction of tuition due to absences.

**Late Payment Fee:** Payments received after Monday will have a late fee of \$20.00 and \$7.00 a day until balance is paid in full. Director can refuse care for any unpaid balance.

- a. **Late Pick-Up Fees:** All children must be picked up by 6:30 p.m. A late pick-up fee of an initial \$15.00 charge and \$1.00 per minute per child will be charged directly to your account after that time. Please let us know if you will be late, so we can reassure your child. The fee will double if you are late more than five times per school year.

*Absences:* Tuition must be paid in full, without deduction for absences of any duration or for any cause, and without substitution of other days of attendance as "make-up" days. This is necessary due to staffing and operational costs that are incurred on the basis of fixed levels of enrollment. If your child is absent from Barnyard School House for two consecutive weeks without notification to the Director, your child will be considered withdrawn from our school. If you choose to re-enroll your child, depending on space availability, you will be charged another registration fee.

*Withdrawal:* The obligation for full payment of tuition continues until the date indicated by the parent or guardian as the date of withdrawal. The parent or guardian agrees to furnish Barnyard School House with at least thirty (30) days written notice of such date of withdrawal. Failure to do so will result in your account being charged the rest of the month's tuition.

## **29. Confidentiality Policy**

All personal records of children and families are kept in the strictest confidence. Information pertaining to admission, progress, health, or discharge of a child shall be confidential, unless we have written permission for disclosure from the parent or guardian.

## **30. Licensing Information and Liability Insurance**

Barnyard School House (BSH) is licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS). The Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers, our most recent licensing inspection report, and Barnyard School House Certificate of Liability Insurance are available for review in the lobby. The TDFPS website is [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us).

Local Child Care Licensing Offices:

14000 Summit Dr. Suite 100 Austin, TX 78728

512-834-3195

### **31. Gang-Free Zones and Reporting Suspected Abuse and Neglect**

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of a child center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized gang-related criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty.

Texas law requires parents, teachers, and administrators to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the TDFPS or law enforcement. Call the Child Abuse Hotline number, 1-800-252-5400 to make confidential reports. Failure to report suspected child abuse or neglect is a crime. Employers are prohibited from retaliating against employees who make reports in good faith.

## **32. Supplemental Information**

Barnyard School House does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, or national or ethnic origin in the admission of children to our programs or in the administration of our policies and procedures.

Barnyard School House reserves the right to exclude the new enrollment of or terminate the existing enrollment of a child at any time, including, but not limited to, children whose behavioral and educational needs cannot be met at BSH without fundamental alterations of or undue burden to our existing programs, procedures, or practices, as deemed by Barnyard School House, and/or children whose fees and/or tuition payments are in arrears.

Parents must never leave a child unattended in a vehicle in the Barnyard School House parking lot. Please lock your vehicle when you enter the building to drop-off and pick-up your child. Never leave anything of value visible in your vehicle. Barnyard School House is not liable for the theft of or damage to any property.

Children may be photographed for classroom display, curriculum, social media, and/or publicity purposes. To ensure a safe environment for children, Barnyard School House screens parents who want to volunteer in classrooms at the United States Department of Justice Sex Offender Public Website ([www.nsopw.gov/core/offendersearchcriteria.aspx](http://www.nsopw.gov/core/offendersearchcriteria.aspx)).

Barnyard School House reserves the right to change, revise, supplement, or delete any of our policies and procedures, including all those covered herein, at any time. Changes will be effective on the dates determined by Barnyard School House and will be communicated to parents by email within five business days.

This Parent Handbook contains general information concerning the policies and procedures of Barnyard School House. The policies and procedures described herein are not intended to be and should not be interpreted as a contract between Barnyard School House and any other person. This information does not constitute a legal document, nor does it constitute a contract. It does not confer any legal rights, nor does it create any contractual obligations, expressed or implied.

## **33. Safety and Injury Prevention**

Teachers for each age group are responsible for daily safety inspections of their assigned areas and equipment. Defective equipment is removed or repaired to prevent injury. Small toy pieces or other objects that could pose a choking hazard to infants and toddlers are not allowed in areas designated for children under age three. For the same reason, children's personal items such as barrettes, hair ties, earrings, necklaces, and beaded jewelry are strongly discouraged in these areas. When visiting your child's classroom, please ensure that purses, briefcases, or backpacks are not left within the reach of children.

## 34. Biting Policy

Biting is unfortunately not unexpected behavior for toddlers. Some children and many toddlers communicate through this behavior. However, biting can be harmful to other children and to teachers. This biting policy has been developed with both ideas in mind. As a childcare provider, we understand that biting, unfortunately, is a part of a childcare setting. Our goal is to help identify what is causing the biting and resolve these issues. If the issue cannot be resolved, this policy serves to protect the children that are bitten. If a biting incident occurs, state regulations require that the parent of the child biting and the parent of the child who was bitten be contacted. Names of the children are not shared with either parent.

### When Biting Does Occur:

Our teachers strongly disapprove of biting. The teacher's job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites to learn different, more appropriate behavior. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children such as biting back or washing a child's mouth out with soap.

### For the child that was bitten:

1. First aid is given to the bite. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the bite is covered with a bandage.
2. Parents are notified.
3. The "Injury/Illness Report" form is filled out documenting the incident.

### For the child that bit:

1. The teacher will redirect the child and remove him/her from the situation.
2. The child would be told "Biting is not ok".
3. The parents are notified.
4. The "Injury Report" is filled out documenting the incident.

### When Biting Continues:

1. The child will be shadowed to help prevent any biting incidents.
2. The child will be observed by the classroom teacher to determine what is causing the child to bite (teething, communication, frustration, etc.) The administrative staff may also observe the child if the classroom teacher is unable to determine the cause.
3. The child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.

### When biting becomes excessive:

1. If a child inflicts 3 bites in a one week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, a conference will be held with the parents to discuss the child's behavior and how the behavior may be modified.
2. If the child again inflicts 3 bites in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the child will be suspended for 2 business days.
3. If a child once again inflicts 3 bites in a one-week period (5 weekdays) in which the skin of another child or staff member is broken or bruised or the bite leaves a significant mark, the parents will be asked to make other childcare arrangements. If a child, who has been through steps 1 and/or 2, goes 3 weeks (15 business days) without biting, we will go back to step one if the child bites again. If a child bites twice in a 4-hour period, the child will be required to be picked up for the remainder of the day.

This will not count towards the 2-day suspension.

### **35. Infant Sleep Positions and Crib Furnishings**

At Barnyard Schoolhouse, your child's health is our primary concern. We follow the recommendations of the First Candle/SIDS Alliance, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Association of SIDS and Infant Mortality Programs, which strongly recommend that infants be placed to sleep on their backs in a crib. This is the best sleep position for your baby. At first, some babies do not like sleeping on their backs, but most quickly adjust.

Infants who fall asleep outside of a crib will be gently picked up and placed in a crib on their backs for the duration of the nap time.

In keeping with our safe sleep practices, infants who arrive at the center asleep in a car seat will be immediately placed on their backs in their assigned crib.

Additionally, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, to reduce the risk of SIDS, suffocations, entrapment, and strangulation, no soft items of any kind may be placed in a crib, with a child of any age at a Barnyard School House center. This includes blankets, pillows, sheepskins, bolsters, mobiles, toys, bumper pads, and other crib furnishings and/or attachments. The AAP recommends sleepers or other sleep clothing as alternatives to blankets, or no covering. However, a Baby Merlin's Magic Sleep Suit is prohibited. Sleep sacks are allowed when in use.

The use of sleep sacks will be stopped when any of the following occur:

- The swaddle sack begins to limit the child's movements.
- The child becomes overheated

### **36. Process of Suspension of Child**

Our childcare programs are centered on the children for whom we care. We seek to provide programs that support children's growth and that challenge them to learn as individuals with unique learning styles and ways of responding to the world. Given the diversity of families and communities we serve, we recognize and appreciate the characteristics and behaviors that each child brings to our programs.

Our hope is to build a program that is responsive to the wide range of individual learning styles and needs in our classroom, one that truly celebrates and values the individuality of each child. Our child-centered approach seeks to accommodate a wide range of individual differences; however, on occasion, a child's behavior may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for care.

Examples of such instances include:

- A child who cannot participate safely in our program or appears to be a danger to him or herself or others, despite our best efforts to reasonably reduce the risk of harm or injury
- The conclusion, by medical, psychological, school district, or social service personnel working with the center or child, that continued care at the center could be harmful to, or not in the

best interest of, the child

- Any other situation in which the accommodations needed for the child's success in the program conflict with the fundamental nature of our group environment, or when a different environment is in the best interest of the child or the center

Anytime a child's behavior/circumstance becomes of concern to a teacher or administrator, written documentation and family/teacher communication will begin as the first steps to understanding the child's individual needs and challenges, and to evaluate these needs in the context of our program.

Length of suspension of child will be at the Directors discretion.

### **37. Process of Disenrollment of Child and/or Family**

Our programs are based on developing partnerships and supporting families; however, despite our best efforts, on rare occasions a parent's/guardian's/child's actions or requests may warrant the need to find a more suitable setting for themselves and their child.

Some examples of such instances include:

- A parent/guardian fails to abide by the center policies or those requirements imposed by the appropriate licensing agency.
- A parent/guardian demands special services that are not provided to other children and that cannot reasonably be delivered by the program (including requests that are outside the philosophy of the program).
- A parent/guardian/child is physically or verbally abusive to center staff, children, or anyone else at the center (including via social media).

Disenrollment from program at family's discretion will require a one month notice in writing to the director.

## Parent Handbook Acknowledgment

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent name) have received and reviewed the parent handbook provided by Barnyard School House LLC.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director/Staff Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date