



**2023-2024**

**Family Policies, and Procedures**

***Bayou Village School***

*3701 Hardy Street Houston Tx, 77009*

*[info@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:info@bayouvillageschool.org) | (713) 864-2452*

*a non-profit organization*

## **Mission**

In an environment that embraces the beauty of nature and cultivates respect for it, Bayou Village School prepares children to meet the challenges of our world and the future with clarity of thought, a caring heart, and the confidence to initiate change.

## **Faculty and Staff**

Direct communication with your teacher and the administration through Playground is the preferred method of contact. Phone messages or notes left with the front office are also appropriate.

### **Toddler(Sweet Peas) Lead Teacher**

Jessica Almazan

Email: [jessica.almazan@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:jessica.almazan@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **Toddler(Rosebuds) Lead Teacher**

Angela Freeman

Email: [angela.freeman@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:angela.freeman@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **Preschool (Sunflowers) Lead Teacher**

Noemi (Mimi) Estrada

Email: [mimi.estrada@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:mimi.estrada@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **Preschool (Tulips) Lead Teacher**

Emily Townley

Email: [emily.townley@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:emily.townley@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **Preschool(Peonies)Lead Teacher**

Merari Linares

Email: [Merari.Linares@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:Merari.Linares@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **Mixed Kindergarten (Moonflowers) Lead Teacher**

Jenna Arbogast-Truver

Email: [jenna.arbogast@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:jenna.arbogast@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **Mixed Kindergarten(Honeysuckles) Lead Teacher**

Elizabeth Webb

Email: [elizabeth.webb@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:elizabeth.webb@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **1st Grade**

Alexandra Jones

Email: [alexandra.jones@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:alexandra.jones@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **2nd Grade**

Karina Hall

Email: [karina.hall@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:karina.hall@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **3rd Grade**

Kimberly Bowman

Email: [kimi.bowman@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:kimi.bowman@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **4th/5th Grade**

Bharathi Gunasekaran

Email: [bharathi.gunasekaran@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:bharathi.gunasekaran@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **Grades Assistant/Handwork**

Marcada Claybon

Email: [marcada.claybon@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:marcada.claybon@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **Spanish, art, and games**

Tracey Garcia

Email: [tracey.garcia@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:tracey.garcia@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **Music/Violin**

Dominika Dancewicz

Email: [Dominik.Dancewicz@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:Dominik.Dancewicz@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **Eurythmy**

Marine Kojanyan

Email: [Marine.Kojanyan@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:Marine.Kojanyan@bayouvillageschool.org)

## **Administration**

### **Executive Director**

Chloe Rogers

Email: [info@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:info@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **Admissions Director**

Maryoceane Guy

Email: [enroll@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:enroll@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **Finance Director**

Hannah Alsdorf

Email: [hannah.alsdorf@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:hannah.alsdorf@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **Administrative Assistant**

Natalie Beasley

Email: [natalie.beasley@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:natalie.beasley@bayouvillageschool.org)

### **Fundraising and donor relations coordinator**

Leticia Barrios

Email: [leticia.barrios@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:leticia.barrios@bayouvillageschool.org)

## **Hours of Operation**

Bayou Village School business hours are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. Our academic school year is from August 28, 2023 to June 5, 2024.

## **School Governance**

Bayou Village School is an independent, collaboratively-led private school. The primary governing bodies are: the Board of Directors, the Administration, and the Leadership Council.

These entities maintain confidentiality in all matters relating to the individual children, financial aid allocation, and all other personal and private matters.

### **Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is responsible for the legal operations of the school, budgeting and fiscal management, long-term strategic planning, resource allocation, and fundraising. The Board consists of parent representatives, community members at large, and our Executive Director.

The aim for the Board is to unite people who have a strong interest in helping the school develop and whose skills complement one another in order to provide the leadership needed for the school to prosper.

#### **Board President**

Marietta Clewing

#### **Ex-Officio**

Executive Director, Chloe Rogers

#### **Board Treasurer**

Tonya Mize

#### **Board Secretary**

Elena Magallanes-Ruiz

#### **Board Member**

Natasha Bashir

Board Email: [bvsboard@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:bvsboard@bayouvillageschool.org)

## Administration

The Administration is responsible for the daily operations of the school. The administrators oversee the facilities and grounds, employees, admissions, enrollment, marketing, day-to-day financial bookkeeping, and communications. The Administration implements the policies set and approved by the Board and holds the Faculty accountable for fulfilling the teaching mission of the school.

## Leadership Council

Leadership Council is a group of members of the community. There is representation from teachers, administration, and board. They are leading the task of overseeing the collaborative work of all aspects of our organization. The Leadership Council and its working groups work on Family education opportunities, implementing child portfolios for students, and much more. There are regular collaborative meetings. The Leadership Council aims to provide ample opportunities for discussion from a variety of perspectives giving a more full picture when making decisions and taking on the work of running the school. The LC is involved in the hiring process of new faculty and responsible for the pedagogical life in the school.

## **Bayou Village Families Council (BFC)**

**Purpose:** The Bayou Village School (BVS) Family Council (BFC) is composed of all BVS families and is led by the BFC Officers, which consists of a Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer, Delegate Coordinator(s), Historian and various committees. Each month a BFC meeting is held and all families and Class Delegates (CDs) are encouraged to attend.

The BFC is a model of service culture. Through engagement, families can learn more about the school and Waldorf education, discuss ways to strengthen the school community, and share in the joys and challenges of raising children.

**Mission:** The mission of the BFC is to facilitate communication between BVS families and the school's governing bodies (the Board of Directors, the Administration, and the Leadership Council) while cultivating connections within our BVS community and supporting awareness of Waldorf education, thereby creating a warm and inviting social environment for everyone.

## Goals:

The BFC's goals for the 2023-2024 school year include

- Fundraising to support the mission of the school and its families. Funds raised will be allocated to particular projects or needs at the school, as prioritized by the BFC, BVS families, administration, and staff. Specific fundraising goals are discussed and selected at the monthly BFC meetings.
- Hosting community-building events. BFC-hosted events include Winter Faire, Parents' Night Out, Parent Tea & Craft Circle, Open Playground Day, schoolwide playdates, parent/family mixers, community workdays, and more.
- Providing education opportunities to enhance understanding and awareness of Waldorf education. BFC will coordinate ongoing parent education opportunities throughout the year for our BVS families as well as the community at large.
- Building strong partnerships. Collaboratively with the Fundraising and Donor Relations Coordinator, the BFC will engage with the greater Houston community via community volunteer days and open family education events.

## BFC Officers:

The BFC Officers are a core group of BFC community adults who are elected to provide structure and support to BFC meetings and activities, and maintain lines of communication between families, Administration, faculty, and Board of Directors. BFC Officers are here to support and encourage your engagement. Please reach out at the email addresses below for any questions, concerns, ideas, or just to say hello!

## Your 2023-24 BFC Officers:

Chair : Deja Hasness [bfc2@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:bfc2@bayouvillageschool.org)

Secretary: Amna Mulla [bfcsecretary@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:bfcsecretary@bayouvillageschool.org)

Treasurer: Open

Historian: Sabali Watkins [bfchistorian@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:bfchistorian@bayouvillageschool.org)

Delegate Coordinator: Kristi Darby [classdelegate@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:classdelegate@bayouvillageschool.org)

Class Delegates (CDs): Class Delegates are an integral component to making the Bayou Village School experience a positive communal one. This role will act as a representative of their class in the BFC monthly meetings and who then serves as a conduit of information between the class and the wider school community. The CD acts as the central point of communication to their class families regarding class contributions back to the school and they coordinate outside of school activities among their classroom families. It is strongly encouraged to have multiple CDs in each class to share responsibility, support and to collaborate in the role.

If you have any questions regarding this role or with anything that comes up along your delegate journey, please email the Delegate Coordinator at [classdelegate@bayouvillageschool.org](mailto:classdelegate@bayouvillageschool.org)

## **Volunteerism and Parent Involvement**

Our school believes that volunteerism builds and strengthens empathy, wisdom, confidence, courage, and a whole host of beneficial attributes in all people, but especially in children. Many opportunities are made available throughout the school year for parents to set the example for their child.

### **Family Participation**

The Faculty, Administration, and Board of Directors wholeheartedly agree that parent involvement is crucial for the continued growth of the Bayou Village School community.

Parents are expected to actively participate in the collective task of building and developing Bayou Village School and in the specific goal of helping their children to fully develop their capacities. We count on attendance at parent-teacher conferences, at festivals, at class meetings, and at school events among the most critical forms of participation.

### **Fundraising and Giving**

Bayou Village School works on fundraising initiatives throughout the year. Company matching is a common program at many companies and is welcomed enthusiastically by the school. Please talk with our Administration about this opportunity. If you have a connection to a foundation and would like the school to submit a proposal, the Administration would like to help. Since the school is planning to expand its grades program through 8th grade, we will require more donations than ever. If anyone in the community has expertise in leadership, non-profit leadership, giving programs and more, please contact the Board of Directors or the Administration.

# **Licensed Childcare Facility**

Bayou Village School is a licensed child care center through DFPS(Texas Department of Family and Protective Services) the minimum standards can be reviewed at <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/provider-portal/protective-services/ccl/min-standards/chapter-746-centers.pdf>.

## **Child Abuse, Neglect & Sexual Molestation Prevention & Reporting**

### ***Background***

The safety and well-being of children is a serious concern for educators and schools. Texas law mandates that any person who knows or suspects a child may be being abused make a report to Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). The law also assigns civil and criminal liability to those professionals who do not comply with their mandated reporter responsibilities. Bayou Village School's policy is that all faculty, administrators and staff share the responsibility of the prevention and reporting of suspected child abuse and sexual molestation. School officials, and therefore all employees of BVS, are considered mandated reporters.

### ***Role of the Mandated Reporter***

Mandated reporters are required to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment—or cause a report to be made—when, in their professional roles, they are presented with reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or maltreatment. Reasonable cause means that, based on your observations, professional training and experience, you feel the parent or person legally responsible for a child has harmed that child or placed that child in imminent danger of harm.

### ***Descriptions of Abuse***

Abuse includes the following acts or omissions by a person:

1. mental or emotional injury to a child that results in an observable and material impairment in the child's growth, development, or psychological functioning;
2. causing or permitting a child to be in a situation in which the child sustains a mental or emotional injury;
3. physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the child, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline by a parent, guardian, or managing or possessory conservator that does not expose the child to a substantial risk of harm;



4. failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent an action by another person that results in physical injury that results in substantial harm to the child;
5. sexual conduct harmful to a child's mental, emotional, or physical welfare, including conduct that constitutes the offense of continuous sexual abuse of young child or children;
6. failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent sexual conduct harmful to a child;
7. compelling or encouraging the child to engage in sexual conduct;
8. causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing the photographing, filming, or depicting of the child if the person knew or should have known that the resulting photograph, film, or depiction of the child is obscene or pornographic;
9. the current use by a person of a controlled substance in a manner or to the extent that the use results in physical, mental, or emotional injury to a child;
10. causing, expressly permitting, or encouraging a child to use a controlled substance;
11. causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing a sexual performance by a child; or
12. knowingly causing, permitting, encouraging, engaging in, or allowing a child to be trafficked in a manner punishable as an offense under or the failure to make a reasonable effort to prevent a child from being trafficked in a manner punishable as an offense under any of those sections.

### ***BVS Policy***

1. If, as an employee at Bayou Village School, you have concerns about a student being abused or mistreated, follow these guidelines:

- Do not investigate.
- Do not question the child.
- Do not question siblings.
- Do not question friends of the child.
- Do not ask the opinion of other faculty or staff.
- Take your concerns immediately to the Executive Director. She will listen to your concerns and advise you accordingly. She will go over your obligations with you concerning the situation.

2. If a child reports to you that he/she has been the victim of abuse, or if a child reports that a friend or relative has been a victim of abuse,

- Take your concerns immediately to the Executive Director. She will listen to your concerns and advise you accordingly. She will go over your obligations with you concerning the situation.

For the protection of the child and for you, do not discuss the case with anyone but the appropriate authorities.

- Do not discuss the case with parents, siblings, or friends of the child.
- Do not discuss the case with close friends (other teachers, relatives, or friends).

- Do not discuss the case with a spouse.

Rumors can spread. Information can leak out, even accidentally. The best way to prevent information from being spread is to not let it out.

### ***Making a Report***

Mandated reporters are required to report concerns to DCFS or to a law enforcement agency as soon as possible, but no later than 48 hours before bruises and marks start to fade. The report can be made using the Abuse and Neglect Hotline (1-800-252-5400) or by reporting online at <https://www.txabusehotline.org>

The Executive Director will work with you to make the report to DFPS, or if unable to contact the Executive Director, you may make the report yourself, in which case, as soon as practically possible, you must inform the Executive Director of the report so that the Administrative Mandated Reporter Form can be completed and filed by the Administrative team.

Your report to DFPS is confidential and not subject to public release under the Open Records Act. The law provides immunity from civil or criminal liability for innocent persons who report even unfounded suspicions, as long as the report is made in good faith. Your identity is kept confidential.

Once a report is made, a DFPS specialist will contact you and help determine if the information provided can be registered as a report. If the DFPS staff does not register a report, the reason for the decision should be clearly explained. REMEMBER TO ASK THE DFPS SPECIALIST FOR THE "CALL I.D." ASSIGNED TO THE REPORT. If making a report online, please print the confirmation page with this number on it.

In situations where the DFPS staff receives information that leads them to believe there is an immediate threat to a child or that a crime has been committed against a child, but the DFPS is unable to register a report (because it does not involve a parent or other person legally responsible for the child), the DFPS staff will make a Law Enforcement Referral (LER). When a report is registered at DFPS, the local Department of Social Services is immediately notified for investigation and follow-up. A DFPS specialist will investigate the report within 24 hours. The Social Services Law provides confidentiality for mandated reporters. Oral reports must be followed within 48 hours by a written report to the local DFPS, using the Mandated Reporter Form (LDSS Form 2221A).

### ***Penalties for Failure to Report***

Anyone who is mandated to report suspected child abuse or maltreatment and fails to do so could be charged with a class A misdemeanor and be subject to criminal penalties, as well as being sued in a civil court.

## Confidentiality

Due to the nature of the profession, employees may learn a great deal about the personal lives of students and their families. Employees are expected to treat all personal information about members of the BVS community with respect. Idle gossip is not permitted. If a teacher receives sensitive information about a student or his/her family, it is the responsibility of the Executive Director to decide whether and to what extent that information should be shared with other employees for the benefit of the student.

Teachers should not talk about classroom incidents and individual students in front of other students, parents, or in a public forum.

Comments in conferences and conversations reflect a positive attitude toward the School, administrators, and faculty. All remarks should be professional.

Employees also must protect all confidential School information (e.g., salaries, identity of students or school families, health information about students or other employees, class lists before they are made public, etc.) and may disclose such information only pursuant to school policy or as otherwise required by law. The employee must make sure that documents with confidential information, such as Social Security Numbers, Medical Information and the like, are not left out in an area where they can be read by another person.

Breach of confidentiality may constitute reason for involuntary dismissal.

## Early Childhood

### *Class Sizes*

Our toddler, preschool and mixed kindergarten classes range from 10 to 18 students, dependent on age level. All classes are well within the required ratio outlined by DFPS.

### *Early Childhood Drop Off:*

Early childhood drop off will be directly at your child's classroom. Parents may enter the classroom but please make drop-off as swift as possible. Drop off is between 8:30-9:00. After 9am, drop off will be at the front office.

### *Early Childhood Pick Up:*

Toddler and preschool pick up will be directly at your child's classroom. Mixed kindergarten pick up will be done through the drive through. Pick up is between 3:00-3:15pm.

## **Outdoor Time**

Our children go outside into our well-equipped play yards every morning and afternoon, in a variety of weather conditions. We encourage all guardians to be aware of the weather when dressing their children for school, so they are dressed appropriately for extended outdoor play. If individual children become uncomfortable, they may be taken inside, but the rest of the group will remain outside for their full play period. Outside time is an opportunity for active, noisy, rowdy play.

When the temperature is within safe conditions, the children will continue to play outside every morning and afternoon, on their regular schedule – UNLESS the air quality index for that day is CODE RED. That is the only time (except for thunder and lightning) that the children are to be kept inside

We keep cups and bottled water outside and encourage the children to drink frequently.

When needed, students are applied sunscreen and insect repellent each time before outdoor activities.

## **Nap Time**

Nap materials (blankets, pillows, fleeces, etc.) will need to be taken home on a weekly basis (at least) in order to be properly washed and disinfected. Nap items will be stored in each classroom, separately. Should your child go home sick, we ask that you take their nap items home to be washed for when they return to school.

## **Safe Sleep for Infants**

- *Always put infants to sleep on their backs unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional [§746.2427 and §747.2327].*
- *Place infants on a firm mattress, with a tight fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full size cribs and for non-full size cribs [§746.2409 and §747.2309].*
- *For infants who are younger than 12 months of age, cribs should be bare except for a tight fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector.*
- *Items that should not be placed in a crib include: soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts, or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys/animals; soft objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices [§746.2415 and §747.2315].*
- *Also, infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, liners, or clothing [§746.2429 and §747.2329].*
- *Do not use sleep positioning devices, such as wedges or infant positioners. The AAP has found no evidence that these devices are safe.*
- *Their use may increase the risk of suffocation [§746.2415 and §747.2315].*
- *Ensure that sleeping areas are ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult [§746.3407(10) and §747.3203(10)].*
- *If an infant needs extra warmth, use sleep clothing (insert type of sleep clothing that will be used, such as sleepers or footed pajamas) as an alternative to blankets [§746.2415 and §747.2315].*

- Place only one infant in a crib to sleep [§746.2405 and §747.2305]. Infants may use a pacifier during sleep.
- But the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal or the infant's clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk [§746.2415 and §747.2315].
- If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing, or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), move the infant to a crib immediately, unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional [§746.2426 and §747.2326].
- Our child care program is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas child care operations (this includes e-cigarettes and any type of vaporizers) [§746.3703(d) and §747.3503(d)].
- Actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound [§746.2403 and §747.2303].
- If an infant is able to roll back and forth from front to back, place the infant on the infant's back for sleep and allow the infant to assume a preferred sleep position [§746.2427 and §747.2327].
- Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time" several times daily. This will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally [§746.2427 and §747.2327].
- Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional [§746.2428 and §747.2328].

## **Grade School**

### ***Classes***

Our Grade school includes grades 1-5. Each class has one main teacher or a main teacher and assistant teacher, and supporting specialty teachers they visit throughout the week. Our Grade school is following DFPS standards.

### ***Drop off***

Drive-through drop off is available for grades students. 8:00am-8:20am will be drop off time. Students will be considered late after 8:20am. In the event a child is tardy, we ask that guardians accompany their child to the front office to sign a tardy slip.

### ***Pick-Up***

Drive-thru pick-up for grades students from 3:30 to 3:45. Grades students will be released directly into the vehicle of a parent or authorized person.

### ***Attendance***

Regular attendance is a vital element of the academic and social success of each child. Please make every effort to be on time and to minimize trips, appointments, and special events that require missing school. Grades students arriving after 8:20 AM must report to the Executive Director, Chloe Rogers. Five(5) late arrivals will count as an absence from school. Parents of students with 5 late arrivals will be called for a meeting to work out a plan to assure timely arrival. Students with a total of 7 absences for the school year (either full day or due to late arrivals) will be required to repeat the grade. COVID related absences will be excused and not affect Grades promotion or attendance.

### ***Outdoor Time***

Our Grades children, like our early childhood students, enjoy extended outdoor time through recess, games, and other outdoor activities.

### ***Specialty Classes***

Specialty classes including art, spanish, games, eurythmy, handwork and music will be a part of the students' weekly schedule for the 2023-2024 school year.

### ***Field Trips***

Field trips are an essential part of our Grades program. We commit ourselves to finding creative and innovative ways to supplement our curriculum by visits to various establishments in our community. Planned field trips will be well communicated and organized by your child's teacher. Should you have any suggestions for a great field trip opportunity, please contact your child's teacher.

### ***Class Plays***

Class plays and performances are held throughout the school year. The time, date, and details of all class performances will be communicated by your class teacher.

## **Emergency Pick-Up**

Administration must be notified via email or phone, anyone who picks up must be on the authorized pick up list. Administration will need a valid Identification card to verify at pick up.

## **Dress Code Policy**

- Dress students in media character-free clothing that is seasonally appropriate. Examples of non-character clothing include solid-color shirts, pants, skirts, or dresses without any logos or images depicting media characters
- Shoes should be outdoor play appropriate, ensuring safety and comfort for students. Examples of acceptable shoes include sneakers, closed-toe sandals, or other sturdy footwear suitable for physical activities.
- We understand the importance of diversity and strive to create an inclusive environment where all students feel safe and respected. Our dress code policy promotes equality by avoiding clothing that may be offensive, discriminatory, or culturally insensitive.

Please note that this dress code policy is subject to reasonable interpretation and enforcement by school staff to maintain a positive and conducive learning environment.

### ***School Supplies***

Every student is expected to have:

1. **Slippers:** Lightweight, flexible-soled, plain, soft shoes or slippers that hug the foot for inside play.
2. **Sunhat:** A hat to be worn outdoors during autumn and spring that is comfortable to wear.
3. **Full rain gear:** Head-to-toe rain gear (boots, hat, long jacket/coat or a jacket and pants combination) to protect the child on rainy days. Guardians and students are responsible for keeping their child's rain gear clean and will be sent home periodically to be cleaned at home.
4. **Change of clothing:** For a variety of reasons, your child may require a change of clothing (including socks and underwear). Please place the spare clothing in a labeled, plastic zip lock bag to be stored at the school.
5. **Nap/Rest supplies** (full day Early Childhood and 1st Grade students): A 19" x 15" nap mat and small blanket for nap time. A small stuffed animal or lovie (non-media oriented) is permitted, of course. Nap time supplies go home each week for cleaning.
6. **Reusable Water Bottle:** Please ensure your child has a labeled reusable water bottle they can use throughout the day. This water bottle must be labeled with your child's name and able to be placed in a basket or backpack, without spilling or leaking.

The above list of items, excluding the water bottle, will be stored at the school unless in need of cleaning. Please label everything you bring to school with your child's name to avoid confusion and loss.

### **BVS Nut Awareness**

There are several students at Bayou Village School who are seriously allergic to peanuts and tree nuts. While many students and adults have sensitivities, the students who have serious nut allergies can have an anaphylactic reaction that may require medical attention and can be life-threatening.

Families whose children have severe allergies have worked out with their child, the school and their teacher what needs to be in place during school for their child's safety, particularly in the classroom.

As a school community, we ask that you respect the school's peanut-free policy, and join us in being "nut aware." Please do not bring snacks and food to share in general school areas that contain any peanut ingredients and please label any food that contains other nuts (or nut oils). With conscientious labeling, the students and families can stay clear of food they should not be in contact with.

In the course of a day, many of us use nuts for protein and nourishment. In classrooms where there are not nut allergies, but nuts are commonly eaten, please encourage and practice excellent hand washing. If a student just ate something with nuts in it, their hands can spread the oils and some of our allergic students will react from skin contact with nuts, as well as ingestion.

Many thanks for your help and awareness.

## **Lunch & Snacks**

Please send a healthy, nutritious lunch from home. No refrigeration is available, in which case lunchbox ice packs can be helpful to preserve food. Food that is to be eaten warm should preferably be sent in a thermos, however teachers are able to heat up food that is brought in a microwave-safe container, if needed. A healthy lunch would include ample food to sustain your child throughout their day. We suggest including fruits, vegetables, and a protein/carbohydrate source (deli meat sandwich, for instance). These three items are typically sufficient for a complete meal.

A healthy nutritious morning snack will be provided by the school. Please check in and reference your child's classroom snack rhythm and any other needs.

Please do not send candy, gum, soda, fruit juices, food coloring, highly processed foods, foods high in refined sugar, chocolate, or "junk" food, as these are not allowed at Bayou Village School, even during birthday celebrations.

## **What NOT to Bring to School:**

Please be sure your children do not bring toys or other play things, purses, cough drops, candy, gum, lip balm, or other treasures of any kind to the school. Children love to exchange treasures with one another, but it is better if this activity takes place in your home with your approval.

We do encourage children to bring little gifts from nature for the nature table in their classroom.

Bayou Village School maintains a "zero tolerance" policy toward weapons on campus. Students are not permitted to bring or use the following items on campus, except as



provided by the school and used under the direct supervision of a teacher: fire igniting equipment such as matches, lighter, or lighter fuels; aerosols; flammable substances; weapons or toys such as knives or guns. You are not permitted to bring or use any illegal items or substances on campus.

Additionally, Bayou Village School extends this zero tolerance policy to all weapons, defined as any object, device or instrument designed as a weapon or through its use is capable of threatening or producing bodily harm or which may be used to inflict self-injury including, but not limited to, any firearm, whether loaded or unloaded; airguns; pellet guns; BB guns. Devices or instruments having the appearance of a weapon including, but not limited to, weapons listed above which are broken or nonfunctional, look-alike guns; toy guns; and any object that is a facsimile of a real weapon. Knives, belts, pencils, files, scissors, etc. shall be considered weapons if they are used to inflict bodily harm and/or intimidate and such use will be treated as the possession and use of a weapon.

## **Discipline Policy**

Bayou Village School attempts to surround the children with a rhythmically consistent, safe, and nurturing environment. Therefore, the primary strategy for discipline is through redirection of the child to a healthier activity.

Discipline at Bayou Village School is rooted in respect for the individual, and our approach is pedagogical rather than punitive. If problems persist, the process outlined herein will be used to work with the child and family, with the aim to help each child develop the attitudes and skills to act responsibly.

The expectation is for each student to:

- Be courteous
- Be truthful
- Be respectful of their peers, teachers, staff, and all visitors
- Be compassionate, considering others' emotional and physical well-being
- Take care of their own property and that of others
- Use polite and socially acceptable language at all times
- Show good will by responding to requests and directions promptly and willingly
- Be tolerant of the differences of others

These behaviors are best learned through imitation, so we ask and expect that parents and caregivers also act in accordance to these expectations.

Discipline measures may include a verbal correction, a conversation, assigned work or writing, a time-out, restriction from activities, a warning, or another consequence the teacher feels appropriate.

The use of curse words and pejorative language is strictly forbidden, as are behaviors that threaten or cause bodily harm, which includes bruising, blood, and breakage of limbs.

Defacement of property belonging to the school or to other students, stealing, and disrespectful conduct toward the physical self and space of other persons is also forbidden.

Teachers will write incident reports when bodily harm comes to students as a result of both play and conflict, and reserve the right to take additional action, including parent teacher conferences, behavior intervention plans, scheduled detentions in which the parent will also be present to supervise their child, taking part in restorative conduct that repairs a wrong or harm done to persons or property, and expulsion in cases where student conduct cannot be remedied to comply with community standards.

Rarely are children asked to leave the school, but in serious and repeated cases, a discussion with the parents to determine the right course of action will occur that may include permanent removal of the student from the school. This is a drastic scenario and a matter not left up to an individual. Decisions such as these are made by a group and only after thorough, thoughtful, and careful consideration.

Our community standards and disciplinary methods are informed by the work of Rudolf Steiner and developmentally appropriate restorative conduct and are fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, as well as other federal and state legislation regarding the rights of the child.

## **Visitors Policy**

Parents and other adult relatives of students are welcome to visit our school. All visitors are required to report to the main office and check in with administration. All adult visitors will be required to have a Texas driver's license or other government-issued photo identification, i.e., passports, visas. Parents are invited to visit schools for conferences with teachers, or administrators at any time the need arises. Each teacher has one period set aside each day for conferences and will be available after school for conferences if scheduled in advance. It is required that parents call the school and schedule a conference with teachers prior to their visit. Parents are encouraged to make an appointment to visit administrators.

Visits to individual classrooms during instructional time shall be permitted only with the executive directors approval, and such visits shall not be permitted if their duration or frequency interferes with the delivery of instruction or disrupts the normal school environment. Classroom visitations by non-school students are strictly prohibited. Students not enrolled at Bayou Village School are discouraged from visiting a school at any time during the day. Parents, relatives, siblings and students from other schools are

encouraged to attend school functions, community events, and festivals that occur outside of the normal school day.

## Student Non-discrimination Policy

Bayou Village School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, gender expression, disability, sexual orientation, or national or ethnic origin in the Administration of its educational policies, enrollment, financial aid awards, or any other school-administered programs.

## Tolerance and Acceptance

Bayou Village School expects all of its community members, staff, parents, and students, to respect, accept, and appreciate the rich diversity of the world's cultures, forms of expression, and ways of being human. Discrimination against or mistreatment of community members because of difference will not be condoned.

## Diversity Statement

At Bayou Village School, we believe that diversity is a fundamental strength that enriches the educational experience for every student. We are committed to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment that celebrates and values the unique backgrounds, cultures, perspectives, and abilities of our students, families, and staff.

We strive to cultivate an atmosphere of respect, empathy, and understanding, where everyone feels safe, valued, and empowered to express their authentic selves. Through our curriculum, we promote diversity by incorporating a variety of cultural traditions, perspectives, and narratives, allowing our students to develop a global awareness and appreciation for different ways of life.

We actively work to dismantle barriers and biases, fostering a culture of equity and justice. We believe that embracing diversity not only prepares our students to thrive in a multicultural world but also fosters a sense of compassion, collaboration, and social responsibility.

We continuously engage in conversations, workshops, and trainings to deepen our understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion, ensuring that our school remains a place where all individuals are embraced, respected, and supported.

Together, we aspire to create a Waldorf community that reflects the rich tapestry of humanity, where every voice is heard, every story is valued, and every individual is

celebrated for their unique contributions. We believe that by embracing and honoring diversity, we cultivate a vibrant and transformative educational experience for all."

## Mutual Respect Agreement

All members of Bayou Village School community, understand the importance of fostering a harmonious and supportive environment for the growth and development of our children. In order to cultivate a strong partnership between faculty and families, we hereby establish this Mutual Respect Agreement:

### **1. Respect for Individuality:**

- We honor and value the unique qualities, backgrounds, beliefs, and perspectives of each member of our school community.

- We recognize that diversity enriches our educational experience and promotes personal growth.

### **2. Open Communication:**

- We commit to maintaining open and transparent communication between faculty and families.

- We will actively listen to one another, seeking to understand and address concerns in a constructive manner.

- We will communicate promptly, respectfully, and directly, using appropriate channels provided by the school.

### **3. Trust and Confidentiality:**

- We will foster an environment of trust, respecting the confidentiality of personal and sensitive information shared within the school community.

- We will handle conflicts or disagreements with discretion and confidentiality, seeking resolution through dialogue and collaboration.

### **4. Supportive Partnerships:**

- We acknowledge that education is a collaborative effort between faculty and families, and we commit to working together in the best interest of the child.

- We will support one another, offering encouragement, assistance, and understanding during challenging times.

### **5. Appreciation and Gratitude:**

- We will express gratitude for the contributions and efforts of faculty, staff, and families within the Waldorf School community.

- We will celebrate achievements, milestones, and shared successes, fostering a culture of appreciation and recognition.

*By mutually agreeing to this Respect Agreement, we aim to create an inclusive and nurturing environment where every child can thrive. Together, let us cultivate a strong sense of community, where trust, respect, and collaboration are the pillars of our partnership.*

## Discretion

Children are impressionable, precious little imitators that do not yet have control or understanding of their emotions. To protect our students to the best of our abilities, we ask that adults and parents act with discretion and respect our children by holding sensitive and mature discussions in private, refrain from inappropriate language and behavior, resist the urge to use cell phones, and keep the best interests of not just their own child, but the students as a whole, always in mind.

## Parking Lot

Guardians are welcome to park in the school's lot when needed. Please follow the one-way flow of traffic, and make use of the handicapped spaces ONLY if you have a handicapped decal. Please be respectful and aware when entering/leaving as there are many small children and our utmost duty is to keep them safe. We ask that you maintain a speed limit of 5mph and stay off mobile devices when driving in the parking lot. We also require guardians to hold the hand of all children under the age of 6 years old when walking through the parking lot. Please be sure to lock your car and take any valuables with you. Though there is video surveillance of the parking lot, the school is not responsible for lost or stolen property.

## Media and Electronics Usage

Bayou Village School strongly discourages the use of electronic media by young children and encourages families to observe and think about the effects of media such as television, radio, movies, video games, computers, tablets, and cell phones, on their young children. As a school, we believe that young children should not be exposed to such media, and that, if they are, exposure should be limited and supervised by the parents. Based on current research, our experience as classroom teachers, and our understanding of child development, we are moved to further educate ourselves and explore the influence of media on the learning process, and in our school. We invite you to be active participants in this, as Waldorf-inspired education is a partnership between parents and teachers.

We ask that parents act with wisdom and discretion when considering what your child is exposed to, and ask that screen time is limited to the utmost extent possible. As a community we are guided by the principles of open discussion, truthful reflection, and support of one another in achieving a healthy balance of family time to ensure enjoyment of media does not dominate our children's thinking, will, and emerging morality. Our formal media statement can be found below:

## Media Statement

Bayou Village School is committed to promoting the healthy mental, physical, emotional, and social growth of children. Through cultivating each child's imagination, artistic sensibility, and capacity for independent and critical thinking, our approach to education attempts to support and build on the child's inherent capacities for learning. Maximizing a child's ability to learn requires his / her mental, emotional, and physical engagement at the highest level. It is with the goal of striving for the ideal learning environment that we question the use of electronic media for young children. For our purposes, electronic media includes television, DVDs, videos and video games, computers, MP3 players, and other similar sound devices. Such media are known to interfere with children's natural play instincts and inhibit the imagination. Media of this kind often introduces powerful, sophisticated, and complex images and sounds that can be overwhelming, inappropriate, and misleading. Additionally, current research suggests that the rapid succession of flickering images diminishes a child's capacities for attention and memory development, both of which are essential to learning. Media use is known to habituate a learning state that lacks full physical, emotional and sensory involvement. The influence of electronic media can also interfere with a child's ability to participate in the overall life of the classroom. Regardless of content, it is said to cause a diminished development of the senses through passive viewing and listening. The effects of media's pre-programmed and synthesized sounds and images can cause stress, leaving little or no room for creative input. When natural learning modes are inhibited, a child can become disengaged, frustrated, or unable to concentrate. When a child is in an active learning process, there is participation, visible engagement, focus and enthusiastic response. We strive through the Waldorf approach to provide an environment in every classroom that nurtures this deep level of engagement and vitality in the learning process.

## School Policies on Electronics Usage

### Students

Students are not permitted to use cell phones, tablets, computers, and other personal electronic devices at BVS or at school events. Faculty and staff will confiscate such devices and they will be held in the Administration Office for parent pickup.

### Parents, Faculty, and Staff

We ask that parents, Faculty, and staff refrain from using such devices around children, on school grounds and/or at school sponsored events. If you must use a cell phone for

purposes other than taking photographs, please avoid using it where children are present.

## Illness policy

An ill child should remain at home. When children are recovering from an illness, they should be kept at home until they have completely recovered their health. As a parent, go with your gut and sometimes your child just needs a little extra TLC. When they return to school too quickly they have not regained all of their strength sufficiently and often relapse, becoming more ill than they were originally. Please keep your child home if he/she has a fever, deep or persistent cough, rash, upset stomach, diarrhea, non-clear runny nose, or any infectious condition. You should make arrangements for this possibility, even if your work schedule prevents you from staying home. Please call and email the office by 8:30 a.m. any day your child will be absent. If absence is due to illness, please give child's symptoms so we may be attentive to the development of these symptoms in classmates. If a child becomes ill while at school, parents will be contacted to pick up their child. The school does not have facilities to care for children who come to school too ill to remain in class. The school staff is only permitted to administer internal medicine in certain circumstances. If a child is sent home ill from school, they may not return until they have been fever free for 24 hours. Children should remain at home for 24 hours after a fever breaks.

## Medication

The school staff is not permitted to administer any medicine unless it is arranged with the office in advance and under certain circumstances. We prefer to leave administration of internal medicine to parents. In addition as part of the enrollment process we ask for your consent for school staff to administer topical first aid treatments.

## Immunizations

Each child must have completed health and immunization forms in the office prior to being admitted. This is a requirement of the county health department and state law. Texas law provides for two exemptions from immunizations: (1) Medical exemption in which a licensed physician certifies in writing that an immunization may be detrimental to a person's health. (2) Reasons of conscience. Families must submit a written and notarized statement declaring their beliefs and opposition to the immunization requirements, after which, the child may attend school without presenting a certificate of immunizations. Information on immunization requirements can be found at the Texas Department of State Health Services website at [www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize). An affidavit for exemption from immunizations can be ordered online from the Texas Department of State Health Services website at <https://webds.dshs.state.tx.us/immco/affidavit.shtm>.

## Hearing and vision screenings

Hearing and vision screenings may be required each year. The signature of your physician and/or pediatrician is needed. If for some reason you are unable to handle this with your physician and/or pediatrician, please let the school know. The Administrator will let you know in September if this is a requirement for your child.





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### Acknowledgement and Acceptance of Terms Family/Employee Handbook

I, \_\_\_\_\_, am a parent/guardian and acknowledge that on \_\_\_\_\_ I received and reviewed the Bayou Village School Family Policies and Procedures. I further acknowledge and agree that I have read the Policy in its entirety and agree to abide by the contents thereof. I further agree that I will instruct my/our child(ren) as to what is expected of them concerning the Policy prior to my/our child(ren) attending school for the 2023/24 academic year.

**Guardian Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_