



# **Bright Mind Preschool**

## **BRIGHT MIND PRESCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK**

**2022-2023**

(Revised 07/12/2022)

**SCHOOL ADDRESS: 322 North Alfred Street, Alexandria, VA 22314**

**SCHOOL PHONE: (571) 970-4075**

**DIRECTOR EMAIL: [info@brightmindpreschool.com](mailto:info@brightmindpreschool.com)**

## **WELCOME**

Welcome to Bright Mind Preschool! We look forward to working with your family during the important preschool years. Our mission is to provide a challenging learning environment where all students are accepted and can become creative, innovative future leaders. We believe that teaching a child to accept responsibility for one's own action produces individuals of sound character.

Bright Mind Preschool seeks and accepts students for admission without regard to sex, race, color, religion or ethnic origin. Bright Mind Preschool will ensure its admission practices are consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## **CHILDREN SERVED**

Bright Mind Preschool enrolls children aged at least 2.5 years old through their entrance to kindergarten. Children seeking enrollment should be fully potty trained (although we are aware that accidents do happen).

Copies of the student's birth certificate and current immunization records must be presented at the time of registration. According to Virginia state law, no student will be admitted or assigned to a class until the school has received these required documents. In the case of a student transfer, an application is not complete until all documents are received directly from the sending school.

Bright Mind Preschool reserves the right to deny admission to any student based on the admissions policy criteria within the limits of both federal and state law.

## **REGISTRATION PERIOD**

Registration opens in early spring for returning students and their siblings entering school for the first time. Places will not be held for any students, before or after registration. No exceptions.

Registration is held for new families to Bright Mind Preschool after our in-house re-enrollment. Following the re-enrollment process, new families will be notified of a date and time to return to the school to complete the admission process. Registration fees are non-refundable.

## **CLASSROOM PLACEMENT**

Children are placed in classrooms according to age, and developmental level. Children at Bright Mind Preschool generally transition to a new class at the beginning of the new academic year (late August/early September).

## **TUITION**

Tuition rates and fees for Bright Mind Preschool are established annually. If an applicant is registered and accepted for enrollment at Bright Mind Preschool, no part of the tuition will be refunded in the event of withdrawal. However, if the parent of the student moves from his/her present domicile to one outside the area, thereby rendering it impossible for the student to attend Bright Mind Preschool, the unused portion of the tuition will be refunded upon receipt of proof of new address, after deducting any indebtedness to Bright Mind Preschool.

Tuition payments are due on the first and third Monday of each month. Failure to remit payments by the Friday of that week will result in a late charge of \$25. If all or any portion of the tuition remains past due for a period of time exceeding sixty days and no arrangements can be made with the parent or

guardian for payment of the tuition owed, the student(s) will be dismissed immediately from Bright Mind Preschool. If an attorney or collection agency is employed for the collection of past due tuition, the parent/guardian will pay 15% of the total amount due as a reasonable fee. The owner of Bright Mind Preschool for good cause shown may grant variances to this collection procedure.

Families in need of financial aid should work with the school's Administrator to determine what support agencies are available. Upon payment of the enrollment fee, the applicant has entered an admission agreement with Bright Mind Preschool and is required to fulfill all tuition responsibilities.

#### **PAYMENT POLICY FOR SUBSIDY PAYMENTS**

In the event a family is to receive tuition subsidy payments, parents are expected to pay the full tuition and fees until the subsidy payments have been received. Upon receipt of the subsidy payment, the amount will be credited to the families account, reducing the following month tuition payment proportionally to the amount of the payment received.

If at any time a subsidy payment has not be received when the payment is due, parents are responsible for the full tuition payment. If at any time parent's subsidy amount changes, it is the parent's responsibility to make up the difference and make payment on time in the full amount. Parents are responsible to contact the agency to conduct and process what's required through the subsidy agency. It's not the school responsibility to initiate and/or follow up with the agency providing the subsidy. The school has the right anytime not to participate in the subsidy program without further notice. The tuition contract is between the parent and the school not with the subsidy agency.

#### **STUDENT VACATION**

After one year of attendance a three day vacation credit will be authorized. After the credit has been utilized, tuition for the two day balance of the vacation week will be due. After the credit has been used, any further time will be charged at full weekly tuition rate. If the vacation week is not used, it cannot be held over until the following year. A vacation week cannot be used early or 'borrowed' against for a future vacation. Individuals not wishing to pay may dis-enroll their child; however, their student slot will not be retained. They will be placed on a waiting list and must reregister as a new enrollee when they return and pay all applicable fees. Vacation is determined by date of enrollment. There is no discount in tuition during holiday or vacation weeks.

#### **TRANSFERRING TO ANOTHER SCHOOL**

In the event of a student transferring to another school, the student must be free of financial obligation with tuition and activity fees before the school records are released.

#### **ATTENDANCE**

If a child is absent for any reason please send a message throught the Procure app. We appreciate advance notice of absence when possible.

#### **ARRIVAL**

Students may arrive at school anytime between 7:00 and 9:00am. Open Center activities will be available during this time. Breakfast will be offered breakfast between 8:00-8:45am.

Students must be brought to the door of the school by an adult and checked in with the staff person on duty. If no staff person is at the door, please ring the bell and wait with your child.

### **TARDY POLICY**

The arrival window at The Bright Mind Preschool is 7:00-9:00am. In our school, instructional time is viewed as a precious resource, consequently, we view chronic tardiness a serious problem. We seek parent cooperation in seeing that the students arrive at school before 9:00am. Class disruption because of tardiness causes other students in that class to lose focus. Not only that, but your child misses important interactions.

In the event that your child has an early morning appointment, please send a message through Procare to our staff.

### **CHECK OUT PERIOD**

The Bright Mind check out period is from 4:00-6:00pm. Open Center activities will be available during this time. Parents may send an arrival message through the ProCare app or ring the bell and children will be brought to you.

Children may only be picked up by those on their authorized pick-up list. Photo identification may be required. Please note that under state law children may spend a maximum of ten hours a day in a daycare or preschool setting.

Legal documentation barring any individual from having contact with a student must be provided to the school in order for the school to comply with Court-ordered requirements.

### **EARLY DISMISSAL**

If you need to pick up your child early please send a message through Procare and staff will bring your child down. Please note that consistent early dismissal deprives a child of valuable instructional time and can disrupt learning for other students.

The period between 1:00-3:00pm is nap time so if your child needs to leave within this window for an appointment, please plan to pick them up before 1:00pm.

Children picked up early may not return to school that day.

### **RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER ILLNESS**

Following an absence due to illness, children must be fever free and have experienced no vomiting or diarrhea for the last 24 hours before they will be allowed back in school.

### **DRESS CODE**

Bright Mind Preschool is an active, creative place where children explore a variety of art materials, sit on the floor and play outside every day. Attire that is neat, clean, comfortable and easy to wash is best suited for our school.

Any clothing that may be taken off and misplaced (hats, sweaters, mittens, coats, etc.) should be clearly labeled with your child's name. Please provide an extra set of clothing (shirt, pants, socks, underwear, shoes).

1. No sandals or open-toe shoes are allowed.

2. Children wearing dresses or skirts are encouraged to wear shorts underneath.
3. Hats are not to be worn inside the school buildings unless administrative permission is given.
4. Bright Mind Preschool is not responsible for loss or damage of any article of clothing brought or worn by the children, although we make a special effort to preserve them.

### **WHEN CONCERNS ARRISE**

We recognize that parenting is one of the most difficult, intense and rewarding experiences in your life. We want you to share your thoughts, hopes and dreams for your child. We all want what is best for your child and we know it is your job to advocate and protect your child.

We, as a staff, will make mistakes, create misunderstandings, and occasionally have miscommunications. When these issues occur, we want you to tell us, to ask questions as it is our goal to offer your family the best preschool services possible. We value your input, suggestions, questions, and concerns.

When you have a concern, please know:

- Our staff want families to feel very satisfied with the care their child is receiving and take pride in their work.
- It is best to communicate directly with the staff person involved whenever possible.
- Concerns shared with the Director will be investigated and staff talked to directly about your concern so that the teacher can improve performance and/or correct any misunderstandings.
- Be assured that teachers do not hold a grudge against your child or “take it out” on your child after you have expressed a concern.
- On the other hand, don’t allow concerns to build up. As concerns occur, share them with the teachers. It is disturbing to find out that a parent had a number of concerns and never expressed them.

Sometimes we cannot make changes you request, but we ALWAYS want to hear your suggestions. We promise to consider them seriously and respond to you in a timely manner.

### **MANAGING STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

School rules defining limits and expected behaviors are made with the children’s age and cognitive abilities in mind. These rules are explained in each classroom in a way the children will understand. Helping children learn to follow safety rules and social skills is an important component of the work of preschool.

As teachers, our role is to guide each child toward behavior that is safe and sociable. We do not expect perfection. Good behavior is encouraged by suggesting and praising appropriate actions as well as by teaching the children what not to do.

Physical punishment and verbal abuse are unacceptable and not used. We do not force or withhold food or naps. Toileting accidents, a natural childhood occurrence, are not punished.

Behavior out of the ordinary is communicated to parents by behavioral reports, which parent must sign, verbally from your child’s teacher at pickup, or by message or phone. In some cases a parent- teacher conference may be needed to decide on the best way to manage challenging behaviors.

### **PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE**

Bright Mind Preschool uses progressive discipline as a positive way to correct unacceptable child

behavior.

#### **STEP 1 Verbal Warning**

If a child's is not meeting Bright Mind Preschool behavior standards, the behavior will be discussed with the parents and recommendations made on how this behavior might be modified. The verbal warnings will be recorded, discussed, and placed on the child's record.

#### **STEP 2 Written Warning**

A written warning is given if a problem/s identified by multiple verbal warnings has not been corrected. Written warnings will be recorded, discussed, and signed by both the staff member, Director and parents/guardians. After a written warning has been issued, any further issues or actions may result in suspension or termination of the Parent Tuition Contract. Written warnings will be issued immediately for refusal to follow lawful instructions or any other serious policy violation, which endangers the safety or integrity of a child or staff member.

#### **STEP 3 Termination**

Termination may result when using progressive discipline if steps have not produced satisfactory and acceptable results. Parents/guardians will be given a written notice of termination of the Tuition Contract and a two weeks' notice will be given. Termination may be immediate without using progressive discipline if circumstance warrant.

### **BITING**

Although biting is undesirable, it is a normal developmental process. If a child bites, we separate the child from the other children for a short period of time. In order to protect the privacy rights of the children, information will not be released to parents regarding the identity of a child involved in a biting incident. However, parents of both the biter and the child who was bitten will be informed. Bright Mind Preschool will consider dismissal of children who become habitual biters and who present a direct threat to the safety of other children.

### **BULLYING**

Bullying behavior is defined as repeated and persistent verbal, written, physical, or psychological action, implied action or communication intended to cause harm, fear, or distress to another person or group of persons. An imbalance of power between the aggressor and the target is often involved. Students who bully are in violation of this policy and are subject to disciplinary action up to and including suspension or expulsion.

### **COURTESY**

Bright Mind Preschool considers itself to be a courteous and respectful community of parents, children and educators. Therefore, conversations and interactions between the various constituencies are expected to be respectful, sensitive and constructive

### **CONFIDENTIALITY OF CHILD RECORDS**

Records of the children are confidential, may not leave the Center, and should not be discussed with other parents or in front of other children. Confidential information includes but is not limited to: children, their families, employment, payroll, fiscal, and management information.

Access to confidential data, including children's records, is permitted only when authorized and only in order to perform assigned tasks. Information contained in a child's record is confidential. This includes all

written and verbal communication, which pertains to the child and/or his/her family. It includes but is not limited to addresses, telephone numbers, progress reports, learning disabilities, testing, financial information, behavior issues, attendance, etc.

Parents or others authorized can request in writing their child's record at any time.

### **TOYS FROM HOME**

Please do not send toys to school. Children may bring one soft toy for nap time. These will be kept in a child's backpack or cubby at all other times. In addition, children new to the school may need a security item from home in the beginning. We cannot be responsible for loss or damage of any toys brought by the children.

### **OUTSIDE PLAY**

The school has contracted with the City of Alexandria for use of the playground at the Helen Miller/Bernard Miller Park: 224 North Fayette St., Alexandria, VA 22314 where the children enjoy running, shouting, and climbing on the play equipment. Weather permitting, all children will spend forty-five minutes or more each day outside. If a child is not well enough to go outdoors, he or she is not well enough to be at school. Please make sure that your child wears outer clothing appropriate for the day's forecast.

### **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE CLOSING**

In the event the school is dismissed early, the office personnel, will contact each student's parent or guardian through Procure, email, text message, or telephone to pick up his/her child. Children should be picked up in a reasonable amount of time to ensure all parents, children, and staff can travel safely home.

### **MENUS**

Students are offered a well-balanced breakfast, lunch, and two snacks daily under the direction of ServSafe Accredited Managers. The meal plan is included in the monthly tuition fee. Menus are posted on the Bright Mind Preschool web-site and distributed through Procure.

If your child has an allergy or other medical condition that restricts certain foods, you must provide a doctor's note that lists the food allergy and condition, the symptoms if that allergen is consumed and a plan of action in case of consumption. Children with significant food allergies may need to bring food from home. Aside from these circumstances, children will be offered the foods served at the center and will not bring food from home.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

A child's birthday is a special occasion and we will celebrate with a birthday crown, song and special privileges (things like being the line leader, choosing a game or book etc.). You are welcome to send in treat bags for classmates or provide a gift such as a book or game for the class or school. Please do not send food treats.

### **CURRICULUM**

Academic excellence is at the core of the Bright Mind Preschool learning experience. The curriculum followed by Bright Mind Preschool is a thematic approach where activities are built around a broad topic with a specific focus each day. Each day will include math, literacy, art and community building activities

in addition to circle, meals/snacks, outside play and open centers. All of these activities help children learn academic and social skills and each is a valuable component of our school.

#### **PARENT TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

Staff will report through the ProCare app on the activities presented, food served and naps taken each day and will respond during their work hours to messages sent.

#### **PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Conferences are scheduled in November and February for the purpose of reporting student progress and identifying challenges. Additional conferences may be scheduled at the request of parent or staff.

#### **ILLNESS AT SCHOOL**

We do our best to stop the spread of illness with regular sanitation of toys, table and materials, temperature checks and frequent handwashing, however children (and adults!) do get sick. If your child becomes sick at the school you will be notified and expected to pick up your child immediately or within the hour. If a parent cannot be reached, the staff will call the emergency contact persons listed in your child's file. Until your child has been picked up, they will be excluded from the school's population.

Parents must inform the Bright Mind Preschool staff if a member of their immediate household has developed any reportable communicable disease, as defined by the State Board of Health, within 24 hours. Any life threatening diseases must be reported immediately.

Children with pink eye, unidentified rash or communicable illness such as chicken pox will be excluded from the center until a doctor's note is supplied stating that your child is no longer contagious and that he or she may return to school. Even with a doctor's note Bright Mind Preschool reserves the right to not permit your child if visible signs are present.

#### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Bright Mind Preschool is committed to promoting wellness and to safeguard the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. In order to provide a safe and secure environment for every child and adult, we follow guidelines required by the National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance, regulatory agencies and pediatric authorities in the field.



## **UNIMMUNIZED CHILDREN**

If immunizations have not been or are not to be administered because of a medical condition (contraindication), a statement from the child's primary care provider documenting the reason why the child is temporarily or permanently medically exempt from the immunization requirements should be on file. If immunizations are not to be administered because of the parents/guardians' religious or philosophical beliefs, a legal exemption with notarization, waiver or other state-specific required documentation signed by the parent/guardian should be on file.

The parent/guardian of a child who has not received the age-appropriate immunizations prior to enrollment and who does not have documented medical, religious, or philosophical exemptions from routine childhood immunizations should provide documentation of a scheduled appointment or arrangement to receive immunizations.

If a vaccine-preventable disease to which children are susceptible occurs in the facility and potentially exposes the unimmunized children who are susceptible to that disease, the health department should be consulted to determine whether these children should be excluded for the duration of possible exposure or until the appropriate immunizations have been completed. The local or state health department will be able to provide guidelines for exclusion requirements.

## **MEDICATION POLICY**

Bright Mind Preschool staff, accordingly trained as determined by the Commonwealth of Virginia, will be permitted to administer life-sustaining medication. A logbook will be kept of all medications administered at Bright Mind Preschool.

Parents/legal guardians are also welcome to come to the school at any time during the day to give their child medication. EXCEPTION: Life sustaining medication, as determined by the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) will be administered with appropriate paper work filled out by a doctor and a parent/legal guardian.

Medication given at Bright Mind Preschool shall include all drugs, whether the medication is purchased over the counter or is prescribed by a licensed physician or dentist. Medications given at school are limited to medications which cannot be administered before or after school hours. All medication must be in the original container with the pharmacy label on it. The parent shall provide no more than a twenty day supply of medication(s) to be kept at school.

Diaper rash ointment and sunscreen may be applied to your child with written parent authorization. Parents supply the actual ointment in its original container, labeled with your child's name. Teachers will apply these ointments and/or sunscreen. Children will not be permitted to apply to themselves.

Under no circumstances may the child retain possession of any medication once he/she comes under the supervision of Bright Mind Preschool.

## **CHILDREN INJURED AT SCHOOL**

Every effort is made on the part of the staff to prevent injuries to children. However, because of the nature of children in group care, injuries do occur. If a child requires emergency treatment, is bitten or bites, or sustains a serious injury, a parent will be called. In case of any injury leaving a mark on a child, an injury report form will be filled out. A copy will be placed in the child's record.

## **MANDATED REPORTERS**

State law requires that all child care staff to report any suspected child neglect or abuse to Social Services. Maltreatment usually falls into one or more of four general areas: physical abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment, and sexual abuse.

Indicators are basically of three types:

1. **Physical** - child's appearance (including presence of physical injury)
2. **Behavior** – the child is unusually quiet or exhibits aggressive behavior
3. **Environment/Circumstantial**-including social, cultural, or familial factors which are known to correlate with various kinds of abuse and neglect.

Persons making complaints and reports are, by law, immune from any civil liability if they act in good faith. Any staff person required to report, who is found guilty of not reporting suspected child abuse will be disciplined up to and including termination.

## **SEXUAL HARRASSENT POLICY**

It is the policy of Bright Mind Preschool to prohibit sexual harassment of employees, students, parents, or other persons. It is not the purpose of this policy to intrude upon the personal lives of our employees or to interfere with social relationships. However, sexual harassment has no place at Bright Mind Preschool and will not be permitted. "Sexual harassment" includes any unwelcome or offensive sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature such as uninvited touching or sexually related comments, either in person, written or sent electronically. Any individual who believes that he or she is being subjected to sexual harassment of any kind by anyone connected with Bright Mind Preschool should report the matter promptly to the Administration. They, or their designated representative, will carefully and confidentially investigate each complaint of sexual harassment. It is the policy of Bright Mind Preschool to listen to any reasonable complaint, promptly investigate it, and take corrective action where appropriate. Violation of this policy by any individual at Bright Mind Preschool can result in discipline up to and including termination for an employee and up to and including suspension or expulsion of a student.

## **IN CASE OF EMERGENCY**

In the event of fire or other emergency an alarm system will sound over the entire building. All classes will follow the emergency evacuation routes to the parking lot across the street. Our school holds fire drills each month.

In the event the area is evacuated, the children will assemble at: Barrett Branch Library 717 Queen Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, 703-746-1703. If required, to move elsewhere, the children will assemble at the secondary location of: Charles Houston Recreation Center, 901 Wythe Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, 703-746-5552

For the full Emergency Preparedness plan for the school, please visit:  
[www.brightmindpreschool.com](http://www.brightmindpreschool.com), For Parents, Forms.

Or click on the following link to access directly:

<https://brightmindpreschool.com/generator/assets/Bright%20Mind%20Preschool%20Emergency%20Plan.pdf>