



# Bright Mind Preschool

## BRIGHT MIND PRESCHOOL FAMILY HANDBOOK 2023-2024

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

SCHOOL PHONE: (571) 970-4075

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### **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 with sound character.*

## **CHILDREN SERVED**

Bright Mind Preschool enrolls children aged 2.5 years old through their entrance to kindergarten.

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.

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.

## **ENROLLMENT**

Registration opens in early spring for returning students and any siblings ready to enter.

Families must complete a tuition contract and pay the registration fee to be enrolled for the new year. For families new to BMPS the registration process includes a tour, online application and registration fee followed by a tuition contract and payment of at least two weeks' tuition. 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 and fees are considered delinquent at 12:00 noon on the day following the due date. Late charges will be assessed in the amount of \$25.00 commencing at that time. If tuition and any other outstanding charges are not paid within seven days of the date due (or within five banking days of notification to you, in the case of a returned check), attendance at the school will no longer be permitted until tuition is paid in full for the past due amount and for the current period.

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.

### **FAMILIES RECEIVING MILITARY, STATE OR OTHER SUBSIDY PAYMENTS**

Families who receive tuition subsidy payments 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 been received when the payment is due, families are responsible for the full tuition payment. If at any time a subsidy amount changes, it is the family's responsibility to make up the difference and make payment on time in the full amount. Families must contact the agency and process whatever is required through the subsidy agency. The school will not initiate and/or follow up with the agency providing the subsidy. The school may choose not to participate in a subsidy program at any time. The tuition contract is between the parent and the school, not with the subsidy agency.

### **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 through the Procare app. We would appreciate notification in advance 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 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. Parents are welcome to bring their child upstairs provided they leave the building by 8:45am. If you bring your child upstairs, we recommend a "short and sweet" goodbye as prolonging the farewell can be stressful for children and families alike.

### **TARDY POLICY**

In our school, instructional time is viewed as a precious resource. Circle time begins at 9:00am. We view chronic tardiness as a serious problem.

If your child has an early morning appointment, please send a message through ProCare to our staff. Cut off time for arrival to school after an appointment is no later than 12:15pm.

### **LENGTH OF DAY**

Although Bright Mind Preschool is open from 7:00am-6:00pm, it is Bright Mind Preschool's policy that a child be at school for no longer than ten hours per day.

### **CHECK OUT PERIOD**

The Bright Mind check out time 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 your child will be brought to you. Parents are welcome upstairs to pick up their child after 4:00pm and before 5:45pm. This is a great time to see which activities your child

chooses, meet their friends and to speak briefly with staff. For details about your child's day or to express concerns please contact your child's lead teacher.

Children may only be picked up by those on their authorized pick-up list. Photo identification may be required.

Legal documentation barring any individual from having contact with a student must be provided to the school 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 the staff will bring your child to you. Please note that consistent early dismissal deprives a child of valuable instructional time and may disrupt learning for other students.

The period between 12:45-3:00pm is nap time, so if your child needs to leave within this window for an appointment, we request that you pick them up before 12:45pm.

Children who leave school for any reason may not return to school that day.

### **ILLNESS AT SCHOOL**

If a child becomes sick at the school, parents will be notified and are expected to pick up their child 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.

Fever, one instance of vomiting, or two instances of diarrhea are among the reasons children may be sent home from school. A child sent home from school may return as listed below.

Parents must inform the Bright Mind Preschool staff if a member of the 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.

## **RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER ILLNESS**

Children exhibiting signs of illness should remain home for their health as well as the health of Bright Mind Preschool students and staff. Children may not return to school unless the following conditions are met:

- **Fever** until 24 hours symptom free without fever reducing medication
- **Diarrhea** until diarrhea stops for 24 hours
- **Vomiting** after vomiting has been resolved for 24 hours
- **Mouth sores with drooling** until a health care provider determines the sores are not contagious
- **Rash** until a physician determines that these symptoms do not indicate a communicable disease
- **Pink eye** (conjunctivitis) until after treatment has been initiated for 24 hours
- **Head lice** until after first treatment
- **Scabies** until after treatment has been completed
- **Tuberculosis** until a health professional states that the child may safely attend
- **Impetigo** until 24 hours after treatment has been initiated
- **Hand Foot and Mouth** until sores have dried and crusted and no fever
- **Strep throat** 24 hours after initial antibiotic treatment and cessation of fever
- **Chicken pox** until all sores have dried and crusted (usually 6 days)
- **Pertussis** until 5 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed
- **Mumps** until 9 days after onset of symptoms
- **Hepatitis A virus** until 1 week after onset of illness
- **Measles** until 4 days after onset of rash
- **Rubella** until 6 days after onset of rash
- **Herpes simplex** until drooling is controlled
- **RSV** may return with a doctor's note after 8 days
- **Covid-19** we will provide additional information about return to school following exposure or diagnosis

## **POTTY TRAINING**

Children in the Busy Bee Class are not required to be fully potty trained but children in all other classes must be able to use the bathroom independently which includes undressing and dressing themselves. Staff will assist Busy Bee families with training so please let us know where your child is in the process, what words your child uses when they need to go etc. Pull-ups, with tabs that can be refastened, and wipes must be provided by the family.

## **DRESS CODE**

Bright Mind Preschool is an active, creative place where children explore a variety of art materials and play outside every day. Attire that is comfortable yet neat, clean 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 seasonally appropriate clothing (shirt, pants, socks, underwear, shoes).
- No sandals or open-toe shoes are allowed.
- Children wearing dresses or skirts are encouraged to wear shorts underneath.
- Hats may not be worn in school.
- Jewelry except earrings on pierced ears is not welcome at school and will be placed in backpack or cubby.
- **Bright Mind Preschool is not responsible for loss or damage of any article of clothing worn by the children.**

## **WHEN CONCERNS ARISE**

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 the children. We, as a staff, may make mistakes, create misunderstandings, and occasionally have miscommunications. When these issues occur, we want you to tell us, and/or ask questions as it is our goal to provide the best possible service for our students and families.

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 spoken with directly about your concern so that the teacher can improve performance and/or resolve any misunderstandings.
- Teachers do not hold a grudge against your child or "take it out" on your child after you have expressed a concern.
- Do not allow concerns to build up. As concerns occur, share them with the teachers.
- We cannot promise to meet all requests, but we ALWAYS want to hear your suggestions. We will consider them seriously.

## **MANAGING STUDENT BEHAVIOR**

Bright Mind Preschool's 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 develop social skills are important components of the work of preschool.

Staff 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 is appropriate and respectful.

Physical punishment and verbal abuse are unacceptable and not tolerated at BMPS. We do not force or withhold food or nap or shame when toileting accidents occur.

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

## **PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE**

Bright Mind Preschool uses progressive discipline as a positive way to resolve unacceptable child behavior.

### **STEP 1 Verbal Warning**

If a child is not meeting Bright Mind Preschool behavior standards, the behavior will be discussed with the parents and recommendations will be provided on how this behavior may be modified. The verbal warnings will be recorded, discussed, and placed in 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 resolved. Written warnings will be recorded, discussed, and signed by 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 may endanger the safety or integrity of a child and/or staff member.

### **STEP 3 Termination**

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

## **BITING**

Although biting is undesirable, it is a normal developmental process. If a child bites, a teacher will 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 and/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 constituents are expected to be respectful, sensitive, and constructive.

## **CHILD RECORDS**

Parents or authorized guardians may request in writing their child's record at any time.

## **TOYS FROM HOME**

Please do not send toys, jewelry or special items to school unless specifically requested by a teacher. Children may bring one soft toy for nap time. These will be kept in a child's backpack or cubby at all other times. We cannot be responsible for the loss or damage of any toys or items brought to school.

## **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. Children will spend forty-five minutes or more each day outside unless the weather is extreme. Please make sure that your child wears clothing appropriate for the day's forecast. If a child is not well enough to go outdoors, he or she is not well enough to come to school.

## **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCE CLOSING**

In the event the school is dismissed early we will contact parents/guardians through ProCare, email, text message and/or telephone. Children must be picked up in a reasonable amount of time once closure is announced to ensure all parents, children, and staff can travel safely.

## **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 website and distributed through ProCare.

If your child has an allergy or any other condition that restricts certain foods, you must provide a doctor's note listing the food allergy and condition, the symptoms to look for if that



allergen is consumed, as well as 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 food served at the center and may not bring food from home.

### **BIRTHDAYS**

A child's birthday is a special occasion. We celebrate with a birthday crown, song and offering special privileges such as being the line leader, choosing a game to play or book to read. Families 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 of any kind.

### **CURRICULUM**

Academic excellence is at the core of the Bright Mind Preschool learning experience. The curriculum followed by Bright Mind Preschool uses a thematic approach where activities are built around a broad topic with a specific focus each day. Each day includes math, literacy, art and community building activities in addition to circle time, meals/snacks, outside play and open centers. In addition, each class has Spanish and music lessons twice per week as well as enrichment activities such as soccer and gymnastics as contracted. 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 to messages during their work hours.

### **PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES**

Conferences are scheduled twice per year, for the purpose of reporting student progress and identifying challenges. Additional conferences may be scheduled at the request of parents or staff.

### **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Bright Mind Preschool is committed to promoting wellness and to safeguarding the health and safety of children and adults who participate in our program. 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 will 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 will be on file.

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 will be consulted to determine whether these children should be excluded for the duration of possible exposure or until the appropriate immunizations have been completed.

### **MEDICATION POLICY**

Medication includes all drugs whether purchased over the counter or 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 and must complete a form.

Parents/legal guardians are also welcome to come to the school at any time during the day to give their child medication.

Children may not retain possession of any medication once he/she comes under the supervision of Bright Mind Preschool.

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

### **CHILDREN INJURED AT SCHOOL**

If a child requires emergency treatment, is bitten or bites another student or sustains a serious injury, a parent will be notified by message or phone call. An injury report form will be filled out with a copy placed in the child's record.

### **MANDATED REPORTERS**

State law requires that all childcare staff 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.

### **SEXUAL HARASSMENT 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 a 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.

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%](https://brightmindpreschool.com/generator/assets/Bright%20Mind%20Preschool%20Emergency%20Plan.pdf)

**Thank you for choosing Bright Mind Preschool for your family. We appreciate your trust in sharing your precious children with us and look forward to providing a happy, safe and enriching preschool experience.**

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