



Birch Tree Academy

Parent Handbook

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Mission

The mission of Birch Tree Academy is to provide an exceptional education, as well as foster both a strong individual and cooperative learning environment.

Accreditations and Licensing

Birch Tree Academy is a fully licensed preschool. We meet or exceed all rules and laws of the Washington State Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) as well as Snohomish and King Counties.

Given the nature of an ever-changing quality early education and care program, this handbook is a “living” document. You will be notified of formal policy changes during the year via a written policy notice on Brightwheel. In addition, the handbook will be updated as needed.

Admissions, Enrollment, Withdrawals and Fees

The policies in this document apply for the duration of the family’s engagement with Birch Tree Academy. Any changes will be communicated in writing and the handbook will be resigned each year before the new school year. A change in the handbook does not negate the rest of the document.

Birch Tree Academy accepts children ages 3 months to 6 years old.

Brightwheel:

Here at Birch Tree we use an app called Brightwheel for forms, communication, and sharing about your kiddos day. For the application process, all the forms and required documentation will be sent to you through the Brightwheel app. Brightwheel is also a great way to communicate with teachers and admin, photos, and information about their day too.

Application Form:

You will need to read the Parent Handbook, Emergency Procedures Handbook, Pesticide Policy and Health and Safety Policy and sign the acknowledgement. You must provide current immunization information on the required form, CIS form before your kiddos start date. All forms need to be updated annually.

Applicants who wish to have their name placed on the Birch Tree Academy waiting list must submit an enrollment form. Admission will be granted based on availability.

Parents/Guardians will be notified when space becomes available. Enrollment must begin within 30 days, or the space will be forfeited. There is no charge to be on the waitlist.

Classroom placement will be determined by your child's birthday as of August 31st. We try to align our classrooms with the elementary schools in the area to create a smooth transition into kindergarten. The age of your child on August 31st will be the classroom or age group we will enroll your child in.

Fees:

Enrollment requires a non-refundable \$300 registration fee and a non-refundable tuition deposit. The deposit is \$1,500 for full-time enrollment and \$1,000 for part-time schedules. The tuition deposit will be applied toward your child's first month of tuition. Enrollment is confirmed once both the registration fee and deposit have been received. This deposit is refundable up to 60 days prior to the date of enrollment. Within 60 days of the date of enrollment, there will be no refund of the deposit. Finally, there is a \$250 non-refundable re-enrollment fee, per family, due at the time of re-enrollment for the following school year, new families that enroll after February 1st, when BTA does re-enrollment do not have to pay a re-enrollment fee for the upcoming September but will need to pay the re-enrollment fee for subsequent years. Please get current monthly tuition rates from office staff.

If you are enrolling in our Pre-K, you must provide 30-day notice of disenrollment. If you are enrolling in the kindergarten program, you will be committed to a full year program (September – June) and are required to give 30-day notice of disenrollment after the contract is up. For example: if your child is enrolled in the kindergarten program and their last day will be June 30th, you will need to give 30-day notice of disenrollment no later than May 30th. Your contract is through June but your child does have the ability to stay through the summer as well.

If you are enrolling into our Kindergarten program (Lake Hills – Bellevue) you are committed to paying the full tuition (September – June) and forfeit any rights to receive any refund once the deposit is paid. You will be required to sign a Kindergarten Commitment Contract and pay an additional deposit to ensure your spot. Additionally, you forfeit the right to the 30-day disenrollment notice. You may disenroll for the following reason and not have to pay the full-year tuition (the first month's tuition and enrollment fee are not refundable):

- Moving 30 miles or more away from the school

We update our tuition pricing every year for September, and let families know what the new price will be for the following school year by June of each school year. Families will be charged the difference in tuition pricing from their deposit amount to the new school year amount, due September 1st.

Late Fee Policy:

It is mandatory that all children are picked up on time. Our staff members have responsibilities both before and after class sessions, so it is important that parents are mindful of dismissal times to respect teachers' personal time. It is also upsetting to your child when he/she is unexpectedly the last person in the class to be picked up.

We define 'late' as leaving the building after 6:00pm. Thus, you must arrive by 5:55pm to collect your child and his/her belongings. The late fee also applies on the early closure days, these are communicated throughout the year. We close every first Monday of the month at 5:00pm and the late fee will apply if you are in the building after 5:00pm.

In the event that you are late picking up your child you will be:

1. Charged \$5.00 per minute if you are late (after 6:00). The amount of the late fee is based on the clock in the school lobby; it will be added to the following month's tuition invoice and is per child.
2. Receive a written note, which will be kept in your child's file. After 3 late pick-ups in a school year, we will have a meeting about possibly being dismissed from our program.

Sibling Discount:

Families who have more than one child enrolled will receive a 10% discount on the tuition of the youngest child's tuition rate. Families with three children enrolled at one time will receive an additional 15% discount off the third child's tuition.

Termination or Change of Attendance:

If you choose to terminate or change your child's attendance schedule at Birch Tree Academy, we require written notice 30 days prior to your child's anticipated last day of attendance or schedule change. Schedule changes are subject to availability and must be approved by the office staff. You must give 30 days' notice of schedule change. Note: An email message is an acceptable form of written notice.

If Birch Tree Academy terminates your child's attendance you will be credited with any pre-paid tuition.

Termination of attendance for any reason indicates the end of the enrollment period, and any returning students/families after a disenrollment must pay a new enrollment registration fee. Birch Tree does not allow for enrollment spots to be held for breaks, Summer, or travel without full payment for the time.

Tuition:

Our program is year-long, and enrollment is on an annual basis, starting September 1st and ending August 31st of each calendar year. There will be no reduction in fees if your child does not attend the program for any reason. Therefore, tuition payments must be made in full during extended leave. We do not allow prorated absences over the summer as we operate on an annual basis.

Full monthly payment is due by the 2nd calendar day of every month. Children won't be allowed to participate in the program until all fees have been paid. If you are paying by check, it must be made out to Birch Tree Academy and submitted to the Director or Assistant Director. If you are paying your tuition with a debit/credit card, there is a 2.95% charge from Brightwheel to cover the transaction cost.

There is no reduction in fees for the holidays, professional day closings, sick days, or early closures.

If payment is late, we will charge you a \$25 late fee per day. Refunds will only be given on tuition if Birch Tree terminates your child's enrollment.

Returned checks or online payment will result in a \$25 fee.

Extra-Curricular Activities:

All activities that the children participate in at our center are included in your tuition. This includes music, Spanish, and Physical Education (PE), as well as scheduled field trips. Spanish and music are offered to all ages 1 year – Kindergarten. PE is offered to classes 3 years – Kindergarten.

Additional Days:

We **DO NOT** offer make-up days due to ratio and licensing purposes. However, if you would like to add an additional day, please see the office staff. One-week prior notice is mandatory, as we need to check availability in the classroom for the requested date.

The cost of adding an additional day if approved by the office staff is \$135/day.

Non-Discrimination Policy:

Birch Tree Academy enrolls children and hires employees without regard to race, color, national or ethnic origin, age, religion, disability, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, veteran status (special disabled veterans, disabled veterans and Vietnam-era veterans), or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law.

Right to Refuse Service:

Birch Tree Academy reserves the right to refuse service to any family for reasons that include, but are not limited to the following:

- Consistent failure to comply with the policies and procedures outlined in this Parent Handbook, and/or State Child Care Licensing Regulations, and/or Health Department guidelines.
- Consistent failure to pay tuition and fees in a timely manner for 2 months.
- Failure to provide the program with complete, updated contact information for the child's parent(s), and for those people listed on the enrollment form as emergency contacts and approved escorts.
- Consistent failure to pick up the child on time.
- Using fever reducers and/or other medications to mask symptoms that would otherwise preclude a sick child from being in school.

The child's behavior is excessively aggressive, destructive, disruptive, or unsafe and one of the following:

- Reasonable efforts have not resulted in an acceptable sustained improvement
- Parent(s) are unwilling or unable to work together with staff or provide the staff with information

- Parent(s) fail to provide support to effectively care for a child
- Interacting with center staff and/or other parents in a disrespectful, harsh or intimidating manner.
- Interacting with any child in a harsh or discourteous manner, including their own child or gossiping or talking badly about any child in our care.
- Requesting staff to disclose confidential information about children, other parents, staff and/or the program.
- Swearing, cursing or smoking on school property, including the parking lot.
- Other reasons deemed inappropriate by the owner, head of schools, and/or the director.
- Discussing (negatively) a staff member/teacher on campus.

Note:

The decision to dis-enroll a family with or without notice is made at the discretion of the owner, head of schools, and/or the director.

On occasion, our program is not an optimal fit for a child or family. Birch Tree is a school that will make a reasonable effort and work collaboratively with families to resolve any challenges that arise. Additional resources may need to be used to support a child's success in the school environment. If, after all reasonable efforts are exhausted, and a problem cannot be resolved, Birch Tree reserves the right to dismiss a child from the program.

We follow a staged process that allows us to support the child in the classroom while getting them needed additional help, as well as getting teachers additional resources to allow the child to be successful in the classroom.

When we notice a pattern of negative behavior, we take the following steps to partner with parents in setting goals and expectations.

- 1) Phase 1: Teachers need to start keeping behavior logs track and document behavior that they feel may need to be addressed for 2-3 weeks. Teachers let parents know via incident reports and BrightWheel that incidents are occurring.
- 2) Phase 2: Director to give teachers suggestions on some things they can do before calling the front desk to take the child out of the class. Teachers must try those suggestions before calling the directors. A child should only be removed from the class if they are a threat to themselves or others. If a teacher calls a director to help with a child, the director goes into the classroom instead of removing the child. This will help model appropriate behavior management techniques while also supporting the teachers.
- 3) Phase 3: The director will set up a meeting with parents to discuss what the parents do at home and how we can best partner with them to support the child in the classroom.

Parents and teachers will agree on:

- a. Behaviors that are considered appropriate at school and at home
- b. Consistent consequences for mistaken behavior at school and at home
- c. Any additional resources that the child may need to be successful.
- d. Timeline for improvement

Parents have to commit to picking up the child from school if they have more than 1 unprovoked violent incident per day.

Parents and teachers plan a check-in in 2-3 weeks.

- 4) Phase 4: The director will follow up with teachers regarding behavior on a weekly basis, or more as needed. Teachers communicate with parents via BW on an almost-daily basis, discussing any improvement or decline in behavior for 3-4 weeks. If behavior improves, the child continues at BTA. This is ALWAYS our goal!

If behavior continues or declines further, the child is asked to leave BTA. The family is given 2 weeks to find care for their child elsewhere before being disenrolled.

Confidentiality:

We keep all records securely stored and accessible to staff for the daily operation of Birch Tree Academy only. Teachers and management will not discuss private information, or anything else, about your child with anyone beside you, the Director, Assistant Director, and their co-teacher.

Weapons

No weapons (including guns) are allowed at BTA for any reason.

Camera Access

Enrolled parents will be provided with instructions to access the camera in your child's class. Only enrolled parents will be provided with access. Access will be terminated once your child is no longer in attendance. Camera **access** is not provided to parents for combining classes such as in the mornings/evenings or other areas of the school such as playgrounds, gym, offices, just for your child's primary classroom.

Camera access is a privilege that we give to parents to use to check on their child throughout the day and to see that he/she is happy and safe.

We reserve the right to revoke your camera access for the following reasons:

- You are sharing access with people outside of your immediate family.
- You are micromanaging the teachers. Example: you call to ask the teachers to wipe your child's face.
- You are micromanaging your child. Example: you tell your child you saw them hit another child and punish him/her at home, or you notice that he/she didn't participate in the art project. Teachers handle issues that happen at school. Children should be picked up with love and positive attention at the end of the day.

- You approach other parents or their children about a perceived conflict in the classroom between your child and their child that you saw on video.
- If you are recording, take screenshots, or save videos or pictures of your child's classroom. Videos are property of Birch Tree, and it is unlawful to record, take snapshots, or own the videos and photos of the classroom.

Calendar, Business Hours, and Closures

Birch Tree Academy Lake Hills, Bothell, Bel-Red, Canyon Park, and Woodinville hours of operation are 7:30 am to 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

No drop-in care is available.

Most classes do the bulk of their academic time between 9:00-12:00 and 3:00-4:00, a consistently late drop-off could impact your child's academic progress.

Kindergarteners are required to attend 8:30 am – 3:00 pm Full Time.

Your child must be dropped off before 11 AM each day, unless you give 24-hour notice that you will be dropping off after 11 AM. We DO NOT allow drop-offs after 12 PM.

Before signing in your child to his/her class, your child is still in your care. He/she must be within your sight. During drop off, make sure your child's teachers sees you enter and drop off your child. Once your child is signed out, he/she is in your care. You must ensure their safety here on campus by keeping him/her within your sight and ensure that they are not running through hallways, parking garages, lots, and are conducting themselves in a safe manner.

Non-School Days

Holidays: Birch Tree will be closed for Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday following Thanksgiving, Dec 24th, Dec 25th, and January 1st.

Additional Days: We will have 1 teacher in-service day throughout the year for continued education classes. Parents will be notified of the date of in-service days at least 30 days in advance. Finally, the two days before school starts are non-student days for training and onboarding new staff and preparing the classroom for the new school year. There is no proration of tuition for days of closure. The closure days will be communicated on the school calendar on the Brightwheel app.

Early Closure

All campuses will close at 5:00pm on the first Monday of each month. This time will be used for staff meetings.

Beginning in November 2023 staff meetings will be held at 5:00 PM on the First Monday of each month at all Birch Tree Academy locations.

All schools will have additional days for early closures throughout the year for either staff or community events such as field day or trunk or treat and we usually close at 3:00pm or 3:30pm. All dates will be available on the school calendar on Brightwheel. Any changes or additional days will be announced at least a month in advance.

Severe Weather Policy

Ordinarily, we will follow the Bellevue School District's severe weather policy for Lake Hills and Bel Red schools, and Northshore School District for the Bothell, Canyon Park, and Woodinville school. We will email or message through Brightwheel if we will be either closing early or starting school later due to weather. If we need to close early, we strongly encourage you to pick your child up as soon as possible so our staff can get home safely too.

Parking

Bel-Red campus:

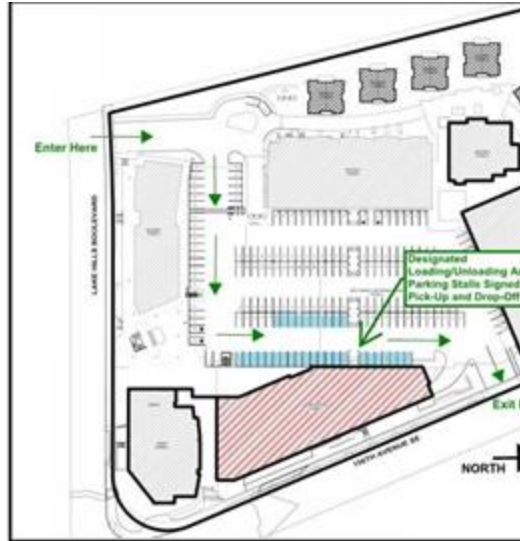
Please see the map below for how to enter and exit our site, and where you can park if you need to go inside the center.



Lake Hills campus:

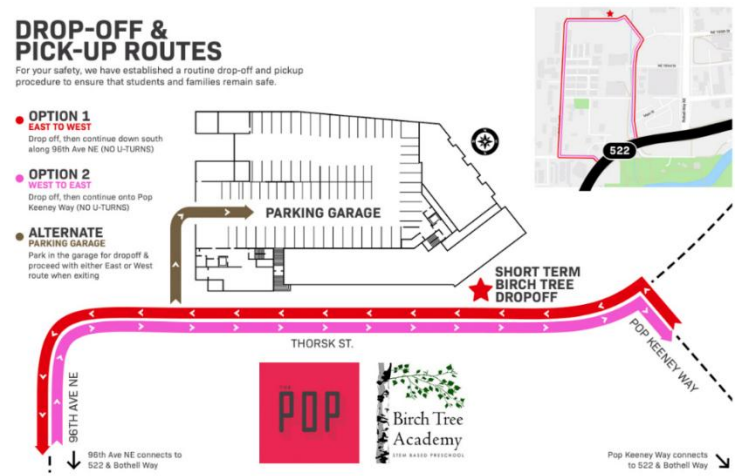
We have designated parking (marked with Birch Tree signs) on the main level. Please note that parking is allowed for 2 hours maximum on the main level. If you are staying longer, you can park in the parking garage (green labeled area).

You can access the school on the second level via the elevator or stairs.



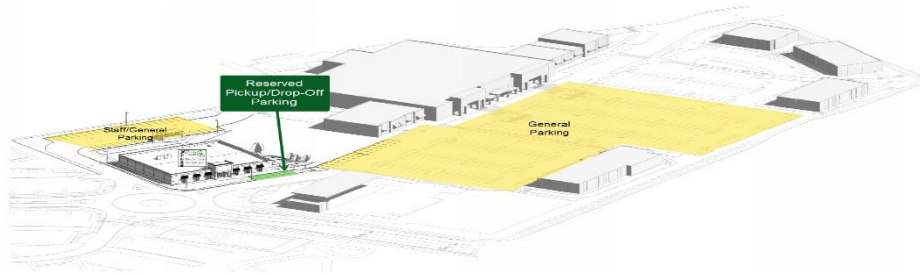
Bothell Campus:

You can park either in front of the building (on Thorsk St) if you are planning to stay 15 min or less, or in the parking lot inside the building for up to 2 hours. If you are staying for more than 2 hours, please park in the large parking lot adjacent to Pop Keeny stadium.



Canyon Park Campus:

You can park in front of the building if you are planning to stay 15 min or less, or in the parking lot (Please do not park in the parking spaces at the Safeway Gas Station).



Woodinville Campus:

In the parking garage, we will have specific parking spaces reserved for pick-up and drop-off hours.



Sign-in/Sign-out

You are required to sign your child into Birch Tree when he/she arrives and sign him/her out when he/she leaves. Only people specifically given permission to pick up your child may sign him/her out. We will not allow a child to leave the school with anyone that is not specifically named in the enrollment packet under “authorized pick-up.” or listed on Brightwheel as an authorized pickup. We require picture identification to release a child to an authorized escort if the front desk staff does not recognize them. Please notify both teachers and office staff if someone other than a parent or guardian is going to pick up.

Access

You always have access to any part of the facility used by your child, and we would be happy to show you where your child spends his/her day. If you would like to come into your child’s classroom, we ask that you come either during drop-off or pick-up making sure not to disrupt the children or disturb our daily operations. If you are dropping off or picking up during the busy

times of the day such but not limited to meals or snacks, closing, and transitions, please limit your time in the classroom and make those drop offs and pick up times as quick and seamless as possible.

Please contact your classroom teacher to learn ways you can participate in your child's classroom.

Education and Curriculum

Philosophy:

Birch Tree Academy believes that the key to a successful early education is a combination of nurtured curiosity and guided learning. By cultivating that curiosity, we hope to instill in our students the desire to forever learn and explore.

Each day, Birch Tree provides a balanced approach to learning, giving children a chance to develop cognitively, socially, and creatively. In an interactive and engaging environment, our passionate and encouraging teachers give your child endless opportunities to imagine, learn and grow. We place a strong emphasis on the discovery and exploration of everyday wonders such as birds taking flight, systems of our body or how bridges support weight. Children learn about these and many other subjects by observing them in life, having the subject explained and through hands-on activities.

Individual and social development is also at the core of our program. We strive to instill self-awareness, generosity, compassion and self-confidence in every child. Throughout the day children have a chance to practice sharing and teamwork as they do small and large group projects. Children learn to listen to directions, wait their turn, and politely assert their wants and needs throughout the day. These skills will allow them to make lasting friendships, as well as be successful in school, on the playground, and in life.

We also believe in the benefits of students learning a second language. We offer Spanish once a week for 30 min to all classes age 1-5.

You will be provided with a weekly schedule for your child's class. This is a general schedule and may vary from day to day.

Curriculum:

The base of our curriculum is **thematic-based** and incorporates most developmental milestones and curricular areas every week. For example, if the week's theme is Farm Animals, we will read fiction and non-fiction books about farm animals (language arts), count and sort/classify farm animals (math), build a barn so that friends can fit in (STEM), classify mammals and birds (science), look at local maps where you could find a barn (geography), play 'guess the animal' (drama), walk and move like animals (gross motor) and sort animals using tweezers in a bin of hay (fine motor and sensory). Our theme will also be incorporated in our centers and free-choice play.

Toddler Program:

Our **toddler program** gives children learning opportunities to explore throughout their day. Areas include developing cognitive skills, enhancing communication and language, STEM, early literacy development, gross and fine motor skills, music and movement games, finger plays and songs, enhancing sensory development, outdoor activities and building social skills. Activities planned and learning materials provided around the room are purposeful to assist in children's developmental milestones.

Preschool, Pre-K, and Kindergarten Programs

Phonics:

We have two phonics programs for our 3's and 4's classes. "Zoo Phonics" focuses on the sounds the letters make, incorporating a rhyming song and movement for each letter. The sequence of learning the letters is not alphabetical, but in order of most common sound. "Handwriting Without Tears" focuses on the letter construction. Every letter can be formed with a combination of a long straight line, a short straight line, a large curve or a small curve. Children learn hands-on with magnet boards, playdough mats and large pieces (the 4 different shapes mentioned above).

Math:

Our math program, "Everyday Math" is schematic, standard based and aligns with the Common Core. We use the Pre-K version for our 3's and the kindergarten version for our Pre-K students. Kindergarten uses a First Grade Math Program from Teachers Pay Teachers that scaffolds accordingly with "Everyday Math" by reviewing previous units as well as introducing new math units.

Science:

We have an in-house science curriculum for ages 3 through kindergarten that focuses on Earth, Life & Physical Science. Our program encourages open-ended exploration of key science concepts and provides options for sensory-driven activities and experiments. Furthermore, the program creates room for expansion on various science topics.

STEM:

What is STEM?

STEM is an acronym for Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. It is a way of learning that encourages children to explore, observe, ask questions, predict, experiment and 'think outside the box.' STEM-based education is a curriculum that is driven by problem solving, discovery and exploratory learning.

Why is STEM Important?

Our knowledge of how children learn has grown substantially over the last few decades. We now understand that success in learning requires the child to be at the center of the experience, making connections across disciplines and contextual settings. Children need to be presented opportunities to learn the same material in different settings and from different perspectives. A teacher's role is

to offer support to the child when it is needed and to guide and facilitate the flow of ideas. This approach is a departure from teaching topics in isolation and caters to the way children learn and develop best.

STEM at Birch Tree Academy

The most important tenant of our academic program is teaching for understanding. We encourage children to solve their own problems instead of supplying an answer. We teach towards understanding how to figure out the problem or concept instead of teaching to memorize. Children can then use concepts to figure out more difficult problems.

Outdoor Play:

We believe in the importance of daily fresh air and outdoor exercise for children, rain or shine. Licensing guidelines from the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) require one hour of outside playtime daily. We provide at a minimum:

- 30 minutes of outdoor time in the morning, and an additional 30 minutes of outdoor time in the afternoon every day
- 30 minutes of active indoor gross motor activities every day.

Water Play:

Playing with water is important to the development of children. It serves to develop sensory skills as well as fine motor and life skills. Children at BTA will be exposed to water in the classroom and on the playground in sensory bins and water tables. The water will never be higher than 1.5 inches and the children will be always in direct view and arm's reach of a staff member when engaged in water play.

If your child has been out sick, he/she may not return to school until well enough to fully participate in the program, **including outdoor play**. We cannot honor a request to keep your child inside. In the case of severe weather (pouring rain, temperature above 100 degrees or less than 20 degrees, stormy weather, lightning and polluted air), we may have indoor recess time.

Below is the link to how we will determine if the temperature is too hot or cold with accounting for the wind chill and the humidity.

[Child Care Weather Watch](#)

Below is the link for what we use in the summer months and determining if the air quality is safe for outdoor play.

[AirNow.gov](#)

Green: Okay

Yellow: Okay but monitor children and if they are not comfortable and need to come in, have indoor recess.

Orange: Limit time to 15 minutes and still monitor while outside.

Red: No outside time

Purple: No outside time

Maroon: No outside time

Field Trips:

As part of Birch Tree curriculum in the 4's and Kindergarten classes, field trips will be occasionally planned. Prior to each trip, information will be sent home detailing the date, time and location. A permission slip must be signed either electronically through Brightwheel or printed and returned to the office staff for the child to attend. All children will be placed in safety approved booster seats as required by Washington State law. If you do not wish for your child to participate in the field trip, notify his/her teacher so that other arrangements can be made for the day.

Religious and Cultural Activities:

We love celebrating our families' religious and cultural traditions and always welcome suggestions for age-appropriate activities that we can do in the classroom. We make sure to cover the following holidays in our classes in an age-appropriate way but try to include holidays that are appropriate to our children's backgrounds and interests.

- Christmas and New Year
- Hanukkah
- Lunar New Year
- Halloween
- Day of the Dead
- Valentine's Day
- Thanksgiving
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day/Friendship Week
- Women's Day
- Mother's Day
- Father's Day
- Diwali
- Kwanzaa
- Holi
- Easter
- Earth Day/ Week
- Cinco De Mayo
- St. Patrick's Day
- Pi Day (Kindergarten)
- Flag Day
- Ramadan
- Read Across America Week
- Indigenous People's Day

Care of Children

Group Size:

We believe that class size has an important impact on program quality for toddlers and preschoolers. Our student-to-teacher ratio is smaller than the DCYF guidelines so that we can provide quality care. There may be occasional circumstances that don't allow us to operate at our ideal Birch Tree Academy ratios, in which the DCYF state ratio will still be used. Classes will often combine in the mornings and evenings to ensure they remain in ratio or due to staffing.

- Infants: 6 students with 2 teachers (State ratio is 1:4)
- 1-2-year-old class: 8 students with 2 teachers (State ratio is 1:7)
- 2-2.5-year-old class: 12 children with 2 teachers (State ratio is 1:7)
- 2.5- 3-year-old class: 14 children with 2 teachers (State ratio is 1:10)
- 3- 4-year-old class: 16 children with 2 teachers (State ratio is 1:10)
- 4-5-year-old class: 18 children with 2 teachers (State ratio is 1:10)
- Kindergarten class (ages 5-6 years old): 14 children with 1 teacher (State ratio is 1:15)

Mixed Age Groups:

In our infant classrooms, depending on the location, the age may range from infants to younger toddlers (up to 18 months). We will follow the requirements for this age-group - birth to thirty-six months as listed below:

- Meet the square footage and staff-to-child ratio requirements for the youngest child present in the group;
- Meet the health, safety, and developmental needs for all ages of children in the mixed group; and
- Inform the department of the center's mixed age group policy.
- Have at least two staff present with the group, consisting of one lead teacher and one other staff member qualified under this chapter; and
- Keep a staff-to-child ratio of 1:4.

Meals and Snacks:

We strive to provide healthy food for children every day. All of our meals will be prepared in our kitchen by an experienced chef. Menus will be prepared and distributed every week. We provide children with fresh fruits and vegetables, organic dairy and eggs and organic hormone/antibiotic-free meat. We offer healthy grains such as quinoa, buckwheat, brown rice, lentils and couscous. We offer only water and 1% milk for beverage choices (whole milk for children ages 1-2). No juice is allowed at Birch Tree Academy.

If your child has special dietary restrictions, please let us know so we can make sure he/she doesn't receive food that isn't appropriate for them. We are happy to eliminate food from the child's diet and will make every effort to provide food that works within their food allergies and food preferences, but we are unable to prepare food separately to fit individual needs. If food

needs to be eliminated for any meal, the parent is responsible to bring supplemental food for the child.

If you would like to provide your own lunch or bring supplemental food, please make sure that the meal is healthy, with items such as fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy, protein and grains. Licensing guidelines for lunch brought from home are one serving of protein (meat, poultry, fish, beans, cheese, tofu, etc.), two servings of fruit or vegetables (or one of each), one serving of starch (bread, tortilla, naan, rice, pasta, etc.) and fluid cow's milk. If your child cannot have cow's milk with breakfast and lunch, you are required to submit a note from your child's healthcare provider. Desserts and candy are not allowed at school. We cannot heat food for children that are in lunches due to licensing reasons, so all packed food must be in a container with an ice pack and be able to be eaten cold. Lunches that do not meet the nutritional guidelines may need to be supplemented by Birch Tree Academy.

Please note that Birch Tree Academy is a nut and nut product-free school. No nuts or nut products may be brought into the building. Additionally, if your child eats breakfast at home and it includes nuts or nut products, we ask that you make sure your child changes his/her shirt and washes his/her hands after eating breakfast.

Food provided by parents may only be eaten by that child and may not be shared.

Families may not take Birch Tree Academy food home at the end of the day as this presents a potential hazard as the food is meant to be eaten within a certain time frame and at specific temperatures. Since Birch Tree cannot control those conditions once the food leaves our school, we cannot allow food to be removed from our premises.

Birch Tree Academy does not use Styrofoam made plates, bowls, or cups to serve food for children.

Tracking Developmental Progress and Assessments:

We use the Washington State Early Learning and Developmental Guidelines to track students' developmental progress. Lessons will be geared toward these milestones appropriate for the age group and/or child's ability.

We track each child's developmental and social progress using ASQ assessment tool. We have two official parent/teacher conferences a year but can meet anytime throughout the year. Please make an appointment at the front desk to make sure your child's class will have coverage during the meeting.

Changing Classes:

We think children learn best when they are grouped with their peers and are working within an age-appropriate curriculum. We will start all children in the class that corresponds with their age group and will only move children to a class that is older or younger than their age group if we are not able to meet the child's academic or social needs in their age-appropriate class *most of the time*.

We will NOT move children for the following reasons:

- The child just had a birthday
- The child likes playing with older kids
- There is more scheduling availability in the other class
- The child *occasionally* seems bored in his/her current class. If you notice this, please bring it to our attention as it is the teacher's responsibility to engage all children at their level.
- The child can demonstrate some academic knowledge that is being covered in the older class.
- The child's friends have moved to another class.

The teachers will plan more challenging activities for children that need more challenging work.

Birthdays:

We want to celebrate each child's birthday in a way that is unique to them, and we would love to get parents' help in the planning!

For their birthday:

- The class will sing to the Birthday child!
- The Birthday child will get to wear a birthday crown made by his/her teacher just for them.

If you would like to bring in a snack to share with the class, please make sure that it is nut-free, low in sugar and easy to distribute. All birthday snacks must be store bought and in the original store packaging with a clear label of ingredients. Please check with the class teacher(s) the week before and coordinate a time for the snacks.

Toys at School:

Birch Tree is not responsible for lost or stolen items. We will do our best to ensure the safety of your child's belongings; however, we do ask that you do not send unnecessary items with him/her to school. Birch Tree will not take responsibility or be held liable for lost, stolen or damaged items. Please DO NOT send items of value from home with your child, including jewelry, delicate items, etc. Toys and games that can be easily broken, lost or not comfortably shared with other children should be left at home (except for "Show and Tell" days, as specified by the classroom teacher). We have a variety of equipment at the center to meet the needs of children. Please have all personal belongings labeled with the child's first and last name.

Naps:

All children will be provided with time to rest in the afternoon although they are not required to sleep. Children who do not need to sleep will be asked to rest quietly on their cot for the first half

of nap time and then be provided with quiet table-top activities for the second half of nap. We will try to accommodate parent's requests to individualize children's rest routines. Please discuss specific accommodations with your child's teacher.

Children are allowed to bring their own little pillow, personal bedding and soft toys, if it fits in the school bag provided. Please label it with your child's name. We will provide and launder sheets and blankets for the cots. Sheets and other sleep items are stored separate from those of other classmates. Children in our Kindergarten program do not have nap time.

Clothing:

Active indoor and outdoor play is a regular part of our school day. Please dress your child in clothing that is suitable for vigorous activity and that is appropriate for the weather.

Because the children may be working with paint and other messy materials, they should wear clothes that can be laundered easily.

Athletic-type shoes or shoes with rubber soles with closed toes are required.

To provide a clean learning environment, we do not allow shoes that have been worn outdoors in the classroom. Please provide your child with slippers, crocs, or another footwear to wear when they are inside the classroom. If you provide slippers, please choose ones that have strong enough soles that they can be worn outside when we do fire drills and have a snug enough fit that they won't slip off throughout the day.

It is essential that you provide 2 complete changes of clothing including underwear and socks for your child in a Ziploc or similar bag with the child's name on it. If your child is actively toilet training, we will need 3 complete sets of clothes. These will be used if your child's clothes become soiled, wet or otherwise unwearable. Please label all items with your child's name or initials. Soiled clothing will go home in a blue plastic bag. If you take home soiled clothing, please make sure to replenish your child's extra clothing asap.

Diapers, Toileting, and Bathroom Use:

At Birch Tree Academy, we want to do everything possible to help with your child's transition from diapers to potty. This is an exciting time for you and your child because he/she is becoming more independent and learning how to make his/her own way in the world.

- We start toilet training only when (1) the child indicates readiness in the group environment and (2) in consultation with you. Please note that we will not engage in supporting your child in toilet learning unless there is consensus between home and school that he/she is ready, and you are willing and ready to work on toilet training at home as well.
- Children must wear pull-ups with Velcro sides to school until they have used the potty successfully (both bowel and bladder) for one full week at home and at school (excluding sleep time).

- Parents must provide their child’s pull-ups and Birch Tree will provide wipes. Birch Tree disposes of all soiled diapers at our center.
- We take children to the bathroom (at a maximum of) every two hours (much more frequent when just starting with potty training, if the flow of the day/class permits) and we will remind him/her to go periodically throughout the day. However, if your child seems to require very frequent reminders and/or refuses to go, it would be an indicator that she/he is not ready for active toilet training. If this is the case, we will speak with you about discontinuing potty training until a later date.
- We understand that accidents happen and are to be expected. For the first month of wearing underwear, please send pull-ups to school for your child as we will need to use them if they have two consecutive accidents in a day. Please provide three full changes of clothes (or more) for your child during this period.
- Children must be potty-trained by age 4 before their first official start date. Potty-trained is defined as having no more than one accident per week.

Care of Infants

Safe Sleep:

Infants will follow individual sleep schedules until 12 months old and sleep in a non-weight sleep sack. No additional items will be permitted in the infant’s crib except a pacifier. Infants will sleep on their backs and all infant and toddler teachers receive “Safe Sleep” training annually in this practice.

Bottle & Feeding:

Every bottle, every day must be labeled with first name, last name, date and contents. Bottles will be refrigerated at school and returned to families each day to be cleaned. Bottles will be warmed using a warmer with a digital temperature gauge.

Infants eat on demand and will be fed based on individual needs and schedules. Infants tend to eat more at school due to being more active, thus we recommend providing more milk than your baby would usually consume.

Pacifier:

If your child utilizes a pacifier, it must be provided in a container labeled with your child’s first and last name.

Cue-based care:

Infant staff provide cue-based care. Cue-based care means that staff will not force a baby to eat, awaken a baby to eat, or make a baby go to sleep at a certain time. Rather they offer food or sleep and individualize a schedule to the baby’s needs. Infant teachers are taught to read baby cues to respond appropriately to their needs.

Introduction to solid food:

Food at school will be introduced to infants in stages:

1. Puree (6 months)

2. Mashed food (7.5-8 months)
3. Soft chunks (8-9 months)
4. Full table food (10 months)
5. Offering a sippy cup (11 months)

Birch Tree Academy will provide softened table food beginning at 10 months, families must provide puree food, mashed food, and soft chunk food. All food must be labeled with the child's first name, last name, date, and contents.

Health and Safety

Each child will have a confidential health record, containing:

1. Emergency contact information
2. Consent for emergency care
3. Allergy and food intolerance information with care plan including physician signature.
4. Complete Immunization record on the proper form with physician signature or approved by MyIR or the WA IIS.
5. Health care provider and Dentist information

As in other areas, communication between parents and staff is key. Please inform staff of any changes observed in your child's health or behavior. The school must be provided with complete information about allergies, food preferences, medical conditions, or special needs.

Keeping Children's Information Current:

It is important that parents regularly update their children's information as Brightwheel as there are changes in address, emergency contacts, allergies, doctor information or anything else that may be pertinent to the care of the child.

Parents can make these changes in their Brightwheel app or can email the school director any changes they wish to make, and the director can make the changes in BW.

Only school management (directors and owner) as well as DCYF, CPS and law enforcement may access children's entire files (including billing history, etc.). The child's current teachers can access contact information, allergies, doctor and dental information, parent permissions and classroom enrollment. Teachers do not have access to billing information.

Immunizations:

In the case of a local outbreak of a disease which is preventable through immunization, a child who has not had that immunization will be excluded from the program for the duration of the outbreak.

Health Awareness (Sick Policy)

For the health of the class, children must be kept home if they are displaying one or more the following symptoms:

1. Fever of 100.4 or more (as read on a forehead thermometer) within the past 24 hours.
2. 2 or more incidents of Vomiting within the past 24 hours.
3. 2 or more incidents of Diarrhea or bloody stool within the past 24 hours.
4. Undiagnosed rashes or blisters, especially if accompanied by fever, itching or other symptoms.
5. Eye discharges or pink eyes, until cleared up and 24 hours medication or with a doctor's note.
6. Open sores, until healed or cleared by doctor.
7. Lice, nits, ringworm or scabies until 100% cleared up. If your child is sent home for any of the above, he/she will be checked by a designated teacher/director to determine readmittance. Lice and nits will be checked each morning for a full week to determine readmittance.
8. Chicken pox until it is cleared by doctor and all sores are scabbed over.
9. Coughs, colds and flu until well enough to participate in classroom activities. If antibiotics were prescribed, the child may return 24 hours after beginning of treatment.
10. Does not have his/her normal energy level and is just not feeling him/herself.

If children begin displaying these or other serious symptoms at school, parents will be called in to pick him/her up within one hour. Children will be separated from other children while they wait to be picked up, so please come ASAP.

For more serious illnesses, a doctor should be consulted as to when the child is well enough to return to school. If your child is diagnosed with a serious illness, it must be reported to the school immediately so that we can take precautions to ensure it does not spread to other children. Children must be fever, diarrhea, and vomit free for 24hrs before returning to school under normal circumstances. In the event of an outbreak or epidemic students with symptoms may be excluded for up to 72 hours.

All reportable communicable diseases are reported to the local health department and licenser, and all parents are notified. In these cases, we will send out information on all communicable diseases from the King County health department to all families in the classroom that had the exposure. We must follow the required guidelines for each disease and may have a stricter school policy to ensure the reduction of spread and contamination in the classroom.

If your child has special health needs, we will work with you and your child to make sure he/she gets the individualized care they need.

*Note: These rules have been put into place to prevent the spread of contagious illness. A licensed health care provider can overrule these policies with a written note stating that the child is not contagious after seeing them for an in-person visit (virtual visits are not accepted) and able to participate fully in the program, however symptoms must be improving and it is up to the discretion of the schools Directors if the child is not well enough to be at school.

Medication Management:

Medicine is administered to children only with written consent from a parent or guardian containing the following information:

1. Child's full name
2. Name of medication
3. Reason for medication
4. Dosage
5. Method of administration
6. Times to be administered
7. Storage requirements
8. Any possible side effects
9. The end date for the medication or cream must be listed.
10. Any other relevant information or instructions

If the child refuses the medication, a parent will be called in to administer it. Records will be kept documenting that the medication was administered, including the time, amount, and the name of the person who administered it. Written consent is required for ALL medications and topical creams, including over-the-counter medication and creams.

All medicine and creams must be in their original container with the child's first and last name written clearly on the label. Medicine will be stored where it is inaccessible to children: Oral and topical medications are stored in separate lockable containers which are out of the children's reach. Medications which require refrigeration are stored away from food in a lockable container in the refrigerator in the kitchen. Narcotic medications are stored in a lockbox, kept in the front office, and only administered by the director or assistant director, who will document the administration and count the remaining pills afterwards. Rescue medications, i.e., EpiPen and asthma inhalers are stored in the classroom Grab-and-Go backpack which is hung on a high hook by the door and taken whenever the children leave the classroom.

Health information is considered confidential and will be kept private.

Maintaining Healthy Habits:

Children will be taught about illness prevention and hygiene through classroom activities and daily routines. An important factor in classroom health is hand washing. All adults and children will wash their hands:

- Upon arrival
- Before and after eating
- After diaper changes or using the toilet
- After sneezing, coughing, etc.
- After playing outside
- After any other activity which might necessitate hand washing.

Tooth Brushing:

Washington State requires that licensed childcare providers offer tooth-brushing activities to all children each day. Our goal at BTA is to include developmentally appropriate daily oral health activities in the form of books, brushing model teeth, songs, and discussing healthy eating habits.

Washington State has also asked that childcare centers try to participate in actual tooth brushings. As the parent/guardian, you can opt in or opt out of tooth brushing. A form will be provided for opting in/out of toothbrushing for your child.

If you would like to opt in, **BTA requires** the following:

- A disposable pre-pasted toothbrush must be brought each day as there will be no storage of toothbrushes on site, and all used toothbrushes will be disposed of immediately. (Fluoride is ok for children 2+, for children under 2 fluoride free is required without a doctor's note).
- A medication form must be filled out when toothbrushes are brought in **and** every time the disposable toothbrush brand changes.
- The toothbrushing will only be performed after lunch is finished at 12:30pm, before nap.

Consistent Care Policy:

Current childcare philosophy's hold that it is extremely important for children's social and emotional development that they have consistent, reliable care from adults with whom they build bonds and relationships. One of our program's goals is to ensure that children in our school have high quality and consistent care where they can build those close bonds and relationships with our staff members.

Child Abuse Reporting:

Law requires teachers comply with the Child Abuse and Neglect laws and the Mandatory Reporting of Suspected Neglect and/or Abuse. Any school official or employee who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect, or who observes the child being subjected to conditions or circumstances that would reasonably result in abuse or neglect, will immediately report to the Director, or designee, who will then become responsible for assuring a report is made via the Child Abuse Hotline to the Washington Children's Division, as required by law.

Birch Tree may not be able to notify parents when the police or Child Protective Services are called about possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, depending upon the recommendation of Child Protective Services.

Accidents and Medical Care:

The health and safety of the children is our top priority. Children's health will be monitored by staff and any relevant information will be communicated to his or her parents or primary caregivers. To ensure an optimally safe and healthy setting, we ask that any symptoms or changes in a child's health noticed at home be communicated to our staff as well.

All steps will be taken to prevent injuries, and a safe environment will be maintained. In the event, however, that an injury does occur, or symptoms of an illness are noticed at school, the following steps will be taken:

- If the injury/illness is minimal, first aid will be administered, and an Incident Report will be filled out.
- If it is appropriate, first aid will be given, an incident report will be filled out and parents will be called in to collect their child.
- If it is serious, first aid will be given, an incident report will be filled out, parents will be notified, and medical assistance will be called. If hospitalization is required, one member of staff will accompany the child until the parents arrive.
- The level of seriousness of care will be at the discretion of the attending teacher.
- In the event that a child has a major allergy attack, a staff member will administer the child's Epi-pen, then call 911 and then call the child's parents.

The incident report will include:

1. Nature and cause of incidents
2. Date, place and time
3. Treatment provided
4. Name(s) of staff who provided witness the incident
5. Who was contacted?
6. Any other relevant information
7. By licensing regulations, staff members may NOT disclose the name of the child who injured another child. Please respect this confidentiality policy.

In an emergency medical situation, we will take the children to Bellevue Children's Hospital or Evergreen Hospital. If you have a preference other than those hospitals listed, we will try to accommodate those preferences if possible.

All members of staff are trained in First Aid and CPR.

Parents have access to the following documents:

- Health policy, pesticide policy and evacuation policy will be sent to parents upon enrollment. A copy is stored at the front desk and is always available to parents.
- Staff policies are stored at the front desk and are available to parents. ○ Consistent care policy: ○ Menus are sent out weekly via our communication app, as well as posted at the entrance to each classroom.
- Liability insurance is posted at the front desk of each location. ○ Inspection reports and notices of enforcement actions are stored at the front desk and are available to parents upon request.

Animal Care and Handling

Restrictions:

1. Animals will be inaccessible to children with pet allergies. Before a child enters an area where animals have been, it must be cleaned and disinfected.
2. No aggressive or harmful animals will be allowed on the premises.
3. No animals are allowed:
 - In infants or toddler classrooms.
 - Where any child eats, sleeps or active plays areas. They may be kept in lobby areas.
 - Food preparation areas
 - Children’s restrooms
 - Children’s hand washing sinks etc.
4. Animals not allowed around infants and toddlers:¹
 - Parrot family (Parakeets, cockatiels, lovebirds etc.)
 - Reptiles and amphibians (reptiles that are contained in a tank or cage are permitted).
5. Animals are not allowed in toddler or infant rooms, spaces (Fish in properly installed and maintained aquariums may be considered)
6. All cages/containers will be secured and must not be a falling hazard.
7. Any equipment needed for the animal will be inaccessible to the children and safe.
8. Animals must be located only where the environment can be cleaned and sanitized (example: no carpeted areas).
9. Local health jurisdiction requirements for the number of animals on the premises must be met.

Animals on our Premises (including visiting animals)

List of Animals that may visit:

Dogs, Guinea Pigs, Bunnies, Fish, Birds, Reptiles

Common health risks associated with these animals:

Dogs: Intestinal Parasites, Skin Disease, Ear Infections, Eye Problems, Digestive Upset, Dental Disease	Guinea Pigs: Diarrhea, Malocclusion, Mites, Ringworms, Scurvy	Bunnies: Overgrown teeth, snuffles, hairballs, uterine tumors, myxomatosis, calicivirus	Fish: Ammonia poisoning, columnaris, fin rot, Ich, Nitrite poisoning, Velvet	Birds: Salmonella Trichomoniasis, Aspergillosis, Avian Pox, Mites	Reptiles
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Location of Animals in the Building:

- Daisy Guinea Pig: Front Lobby (Lake Hills Campus)
- Peter Rabbit: Front Lobby (Bell-Red Campus)
- Honuiki Turtle: Front Lobby (Bothell Campus)

Visiting animals are located in these areas:

- Front Lobby
- All classrooms if permission slips are signed and no allergies

The staff assigned to the individual animal is responsible for the care and treatment of the animal at all times including disasters. Staff responsible for animals are:

- Director: Daisy (Guinea Pig at Lake Hills Campus)
- Director: Peter Rabbit (Bunny at Bel-Red Campus)
- Director: Honuiki (Turtle at Bothell Campus)
- All other animals are assigned to their owners

Plan to care for animals when our facility is closed:

- Reptiles, amphibians, and fish will remain on school premises. The guinea pig and peter rabbit will go home with the director, a staff member, or if families sign up to take their school animal home.

Veterinarian Information:

Lake Hills/ Bel-Red/ Bothell Campus:

Name: The Center for Bird and Exotic Animal Medicine

Phone: 425-486-9000

Emergency Contact and Telephone: 425-486-9000

Vaccination Records and Licenses:

Animals requiring licenses: these records are to be kept on site.

Dogs:

- Rabies vaccination certificate
- Vaccines up to date
- Regular Veterinary check-ups/Wellness exam
- Must have Temperament test completed/License or Tags

Fish: No vet visit required.

Guinea Pigs: No vet visit required

Turtle: No vet visit required.

Where animal's records are kept (health, shots, vaccinations, licenses, etc.):

- Office filing folders

In a disaster the animal's emergency supplies and records are kept: In a backpack

Care:

1. Provide appropriate food and water.
2. Animal containers and cages are cleaned and disinfected weekly or as often as needed (immediate cleaning and disinfecting if animal odors are evident).
3. Cages, litter boxes, and containers will be cleaned and disinfected in utility areas – not around child areas.
4. All litter boxes will be inaccessible to children (not in kitchens, food prep areas or restrooms, corridors, entries, classrooms, where they play or eat, etc.)
5. Animals are not allowed to use the children's play areas inside or outside as a restroom.
6. All containers or cages will prevent debris from spilling out of the container or cage.

Our litter boxes are located:

- None required because all animals must be potty trained
- Guinea Pig: In its cage
- Bunny: In its cage

Outdoor animals litter area (separate from children's area):

- All animals must be potty trained and taken on walks away from the facility

Cleaning and Disinfecting Procedure:

Staff will either bring the animal to the utility area or place the animal in a temporary cage or container. The area around the pets will be kept clean at all times and disinfected at least once a day and more often if necessary.

- Clean and disinfect the utility sink and counter.
- Wash your hands and wear gloves.
- All debris and waste will be discarded in a plastic bag, tied and placed in the garbage.
- Container /cage etc. will be cleaned and disinfected using soap and water, rinse, and bleach solution (1 tablespoon to a quart of water). Cage/container will be allowed to air dry before returning the pet, the cage, or container unless an alternative method is approved.
- Clean and disinfect the sink, faucet, and counter.
- Remove gloves and wash hands.
- Return pet to container or cage.
- Wash hands.

Child-Animal Interaction:

Curriculum regarding the animal and how to interact gently and appropriately. (Describe below)

- Children will be taken in small groups (3 or 4) and directly supervised by a staff member.
- Only trained animals that tolerate handling can interact with the children. Must be healthy and free of disease or pests (fleas, ticks, etc.)

- Immediately stop the interaction with animals showing stress or harmful behaviors.
- If children handle/touch/hold the animals or their cages/containers the following procedures and rules will be in place (Note: a handwashing poster must be posted by the animal)

Children and staff will wash their hands in the nearest hand-washing sink after handling animals or touching containers where the animal is located. Post handwashing sign near the animal cage/container, etc.

Discipline Policy

All staff and students are expected to be considerate of others, maintaining materials and equipment properly and to express their feelings appropriately. Birch Tree Academy views inappropriate behavior as an opportunity to help a child learn age-appropriate self-management skills. We strive to guide young children in developing age-appropriate impulse control, tolerance of frustration, social skills, the ability to understand their feelings and those of others, and to make good choices.

Discipline is about learning, not about punishment. In the event of inappropriate behavior, positive reinforcement will be used to address the situation. Redirection, discussing alternative ways to express feelings, coaching, role playing, and modeling are typical strategies used. Sometimes a short period of separation from an area will be used to address inappropriate behavior (approximately one minute per year of the child's age), or short-term restrictions of certain areas of play.

Under no circumstances will an employee of Birch Tree Academy ever discipline a student using corporal punishment of any kind (spanking, pinching, shaking, pushing, etc.), isolation (except for very brief periods as described above), confinement in any kind of any enclosed space, humiliating/embarrassing the child, or any kind of consequence related to eating, sleeping or toileting. In the event that a child's behavior is at risk of hurting self or others, a teacher will gently but firmly restrain him/her until the situation becomes safe; his/her parent or guardian will be informed in writing if this has happened.

In the event that a child displays persistent behavior problems, we will contact his/her parent or guardian to set up a meeting. Our goal is to work together to support the child to be more successful in the group environment. If reasonable accommodations do not result in sufficient improvement or if improvement is not sustained, any or all of the following strategies might be implemented: The parent/guardian might be asked to consent to an outside specialist observing the child in the classroom and/or to have the child assessed outside of the school; if the child's behavior has been particularly challenging, the decision might be made to send him/her home early or to suspend him/her temporarily; to reduce the child's attendance to fewer hours per day or fewer days per week. If inappropriate or unsafe behaviors persist, the child may be dis-enrolled from the program. The final decision will be made by the owner and/or director.

If a child has more than one (2 or more) incident of unprovoked physical aggression towards the children, staff or themselves, we will call the parents to pick the child up within one hour and keep them home for the remainder of the day.

Behavior Plan Procedure:

Step 1: Document and communicate behaviors in the classroom with both directors and families. Meet with the families to discuss any behaviors we are seeing in the classroom. Meeting with parents, director and lead teacher after 2 weeks of documenting behavior or sooner depending on the severity and intensity of the behavior. If parents are not able to/willing to attend within 5 days of 2-week guidelines, children cannot attend school until meeting is held.

Step 2: Teachers will observe and document mistaken behaviors and/or concerns on a behavior log. Meet with the family to go over strategies we can use in the classroom and at home. It is important to have the strategies used at both home and school to encourage the same behaviors at both. We will also discuss the expectations moving forward, for example, no more than 2 incidents a day and on the third incident your child will be sent home for the remainder of the day. The expectations will be discussed with your director and set together. There are no tuition credits for being sent home.

Step 3: Implement the behavior plan at both home and school for 2-4 weeks to see if there is any progress and improvement. Teachers will communicate the behaviors and strategies with the family at least once a day throughout this period. During this time, if your child is continuing the behaviors, you will be required to pick up your kiddo within 1 hour of the incident.

Step 4: If there is no improvement in the behavior or families are not participating in the behavior plan, we will meet with families and come up with an exit plan. We know behaviors do not change overnight but do require parent participation in the plan and able to see some progress when the strategies are implemented at home and school with the child's behaviors.

Emergency Procedures

Fire drills (monthly) and disaster drills (quarterly) are held throughout the year.

Earthquake Procedures:

Plan of action once the earth starts shaking:

- Teacher will direct students to “drop and cover” where falling items will not strike the students.
- Teachers will keep calm and give precise directions to students.
- Students/Teachers should stay away from and face away from windows.
- Students/Teachers should be aware of light fixtures and other objects that might fall.
- If a class is outside during such an occurrence the teacher should instruct students to do the following: Move away from the building and avoid utility poles, and overhead wires.

Once the shaking has stopped, teachers will instruct students to exit the building in the same manner as a fire drill.

- Once at the designated location the teacher will take attendance and establish the class's status.
- No outgoing calls will be allowed until the situation stabilizes.
- Parents will be called once the situation has stabilized. Please do not attempt to reach the school. We will reach out to you as soon as we are able.

Intruder Procedures:

Plan of action when an intruder tries or enters the building:

- Our entrances to the building are always locked and staff need to allow anyone into the building.
- If there is an intruder, the administration or front desk staff notice someone, they will notify staff of the intruder with the loudspeaker. We use a code word, so every staff member knows what to expect.
- Teachers will stay calm and give precise directions to the children.
- Teachers will lock all classroom doors and put down all blinds. They will escort all children to an area where children are safe and secure (shared restroom between classrooms) and lock all doors entering the area.
- Staff and children will remain in the area until administration lets them know the situation is safe to return to their classrooms.
- Teachers will take emergency backpacks (provided snacks and age-appropriate activity) and classroom iPads with them.
- No outgoing calls will be allowed until the situation stabilizes.
- Parents will be called once the situation has stabilized. Please do not attempt to reach the school. We will reach out to you as soon as we are able. We will message in Brightwheel as well to communicate the situation.

Fire Evacuation Procedure:

All staff personnel, students and building visitors will be warned of a fire by a repeating buzzer.

- When the fire signal sounds, all occupants of the building will rapidly evacuate all students to the assigned area and bring the class emergency backpack with them.
- (Bel Red campus) The toddler room will evacuate to the front parking lot. Classrooms 1, 2, 3 and 4 will evacuate to the playground area. The children will then use the playground gate to walk to the front parking lot.
- (Lake Hills campus) Ducklings, Goslings, Hedgehogs and Chipmunks will exit through the emergency exit doors near the gym and outside near the library. The Bunnies' class will exit out the main entrance and walk to the outside area near the library. All other classes walk out the emergency exit near the kindergarten room and walk down the emergency stairs to the ground level parking lot under the pergolas.
- (Bothell campus) Narwhals, Sea Turtles, Sharks, and Orcas will evacuate through the main hallway door, then through the emergency exit door in the hallway and walk outside towards Pop Keeney. Crabs will exit through the classroom door onto the

- playground and proceed to the cross street. Seahorses, Starfish, Puffins, Penguins, Otters, and Seals will evacuate through the main entrance doors.
- (Canyon Park Campus) Bluebells, Buttercups, Sunflowers, Peonies, and Tulips will exit through the front entrance. Daisies, Violets, Poppies will exit their emergency exit to the roundabout. Lillies, Marigolds, Lilacs, Daffodils, Roses will exit out the playground exit and out to the back parking lot.
 - The director and assistant director will remain behind and do a quick sweep of the building to be sure no child is left behind.
 - Once at the designated location the teacher will take attendance and establish the class's status.
 - Teachers will always remain with their class.
 - The building can be re-entered once the building has been declared safe by the director, in coordination with the fire department.
 - Parents will be called once the situation has stabilized. Please do not attempt to reach the school. We will reach out to you as soon as we are able.

Communication and Community

News and Updates

Birch Tree Academy will send out weekly school newsletters as well as next week's menu to keep you informed of school matters through the Brightwheel. Please read through it carefully as this is our main form of communication with parents.

Parent Teacher Communication

The best possible support for your child is strong parent-teacher communication! We understand that all children are unique and deserve individualized care. We want to be informed of any changes you notice in your child and want to communicate your child's successes and struggles to you. Types of communication can be a quick word at pick-up or drop-off, an email to your child's teacher or a request to your child's teacher for a meeting. The communication line is always open. A strong home/school team supports our students in their success! Please note that we will not discuss your child's progress in his/her presence or the presence of other children or parents.

Communication is done through our Brightwheel app, where you can message your child's teacher and admin with any questions. You can also reach your director and assistant director through their email if you have any questions.

Birch Tree sends out communication about diapers, food, photos from the day, tracking the administration of creams, lotions, medication or chap stick. Please reach out to your child's teacher or director if there is specific information you need or would like communicated throughout the day for your child. We will try to be as accommodating as possible with requests and communicating as much as possible.

There will also be two official parent-teacher conferences (for ages 2+) which allow teachers to meet with you to review your child's progress in the developmental guidelines appropriate for his/her age.

Babysitting Policy

If you choose to use one of our staff to babysit for your family, please keep in mind that their behavior is in no way a reflection of Birch Tree Academy and we are only responsible for our staff's action while they are on our premises. We bear no responsibility, legal or otherwise, for their opinions, words or actions when they are not at our facility.

Community

Social development and interaction are core components of Birch Tree Academy. We work hard to build a community in each classroom as well as the whole school. Birch Tree Community is a way we can get all parents and kids together on a regular basis to have fun and get to know each other. We will hold community events a few times a year (Trunk-or-Treat, Field Day, Dads & Donuts, Mother's Day Tea Party, etc.) and although these events are in no way mandatory, we sincerely hope you are able to attend at least a few. Our families are what will make our school a wonderful place for children to spend their days!

This handbook and the acceptance of its rules and obligations continues to apply to all families that are enrolled at Birch Tree Academy for the duration of their time with us. If a family leaves and then returns to Birch Tree Academy, they are held to the rules of the last handbook they signed.

It is the parents' responsibility to read the handbook and any changes that Birch Tree communicates regarding policies on an annual basis. Birch Tree will not be held accountable for any information that the parents are not aware of but has been communicated to them in writing.