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## **Parent Handbook**

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Please review the handbook carefully as it contains important information about the way our school operates. Please sign and return the bottom portion of this page indicating that you have read and understand the terms of the handbook and agree to abide by its terms.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_



## **Mission Statement**

River Song School exists to ensure every child has the opportunity to become a self-directed learner, capable of critical thinking and exercising compassion to themselves and the greater community around them. Founded in the principles of the Montessori approach, River Song meets each child at their own unique point of development and provides an environment focused on academic engagement through the exploration of the arts, global and cultural awareness, peace and sustainability. River Song is dedicated to exploring and developing progressive program opportunities to meet the needs of the whole child.

## **Arrival and Departure Procedures**

A parent/guardian or formally designated adult bringing the child to River Song School must remain with the child until she or he is accepted by a River Song staff member. Students must be signed in and out daily on his or her class's clipboard. River Song School will only release a child to a parent or another person who is named and identified by the parent or guardian in the official enrollment form. Staff will verify the identification of that person other than the parent when they come to pick up the child. If a school age child arrives at or leaves River Song School, there must be arrangements in advance in writing from the parent or legal guardian for the arrival and departure times as well as what to do if a child has not arrived at the center by the expected time.

## **Scheduled Hours**

Classroom hours are typically Monday through Friday 8:30 am-3:15 pm (unless closed due to holiday or Bend/La Pine School District closure). River Song also offers After Care from 3:15-5:30 pm and Morning Care from 8:00-8:30 am. Please contact the River Song Director to obtain more information or enroll your child for Morning or After Care. Drop-ins are also permitted with a minimum of 24 hours notice and only if space allows. Payments for After Care or Morning Care should be made via cash or check on the day of or, if enrolled for the whole month, can be included in your monthly invoice. Late pick-ups (after 3:30 pm) will be charged as After Care.

## **Snow Days**

River Song School follows the Bend/La Pine School District for inclement weather closures. We do not normally report our closures to radio or TV stations, but will try to send out an email notification if possible. You can also sign up for automatic notifications through the Bend/La Pine School District. If the start time for Bend/La Pine schools are delayed due to bad weather or hazardous road conditions, River Song will be closed for the day. In the event of snow or ice on a day that we are scheduled to be open, but public schools are scheduled to be closed, please call to confirm that River Song is open before bringing your child to school.

## **Holidays and Closures**

The school will follow the Bend/La Pine School District for holiday closures. As a year round school, River Song remains open during the summer, but will close for a short break before the start of our summer program and between summer and fall. Please see our current school calendar for more information. Holidays and breaks have been figured into the tuition rates and there will be no adjustment in tuition for the months in which they fall.

### **Observations**

Parents/guardians are welcome to observe their children in the classroom. We ask that parents wait until at least the second week of school to observe their children. This gives your children a chance to adjust to their new environment. We ask that parents please utilize the one-way mirrors. Please do not join the classroom unless previously scheduled as to not disturb the flow of the day. Visits to class can be arranged with your child's teacher.

### **Parent Conferences and Communication with Teachers**

Parent Conferences are scheduled for fall and spring. We encourage open and on-going communication between parents/guardians and teachers throughout the year. Please be mindful, however, that our teachers are responsible for the children during school hours. Any questions regarding school policy, tuition, or changes in schedule should be discussed with the Director. Morning drop off and afternoon pick up are a great time to touch base quickly about your child's day. For questions or concerns that require more time, please set up a time to meet with your child's teacher. You can contact teachers via email or phone.

### **Classroom Placements**

Classroom Placements are made based on attempts to balance age and gender, and considering what is best for the child and the classroom. Parents seeking to make a change to their child's classroom must first meet with their child's teacher to discuss concerns. If the situation is not resolved, a meeting must be scheduled with the Director. Alternate classroom placements are not always available as they are subject to space and consideration of the children in that class.

### **Clothing**

Montessori emphasizes the importance of hands-on learning. Even our youngest students develop the skills of pouring, spreading, polishing, mixing, and food preparation by practicing these tasks until they are mastered. As you may guess, the road to perfection is paved with trial and error, much of which comes home on your child's clothing. Because of the wide range of activities available, we recommend that children be dressed in washable, comfortable clothing. In addition, outdoor play is a critical part of your child's physical and social development. For this reason we ask that you recognize the following policies:

- The children will play outside year round. Please be sure that your child is dressed appropriately for all weather conditions. Your child should have a jacket, hat, gloves or mittens, and snow or rain boots during cold or snowy

weather. In the sunny hot weather, please apply sunscreen before your child comes to school and send a sun hat. Sunscreen can be sent with your child, but must include a Medical Authorization Form.

- Please send your child with comfortable and easy to get on and off shoes (Crocs, Toms, Velcro strapped shoes, etc.)
- Long necklaces and other costume jewelry are not permitted. They can cause serious injury.

### **Extra Clothing**

Water activities, painting, sand play, and occasional bathroom accidents result in a need for clean, dry clothes. An extra set of clothing should be kept at school at all times. All extra clothing should be marked with the child's name. If wet or dirty clothes are sent home, please return a clean set the following day. You are welcome to send more than one set, or additional pants and underwear, if your child is working on toileting. River Song School has a limited supply of extra, clean clothing for emergencies, but we find that children are often embarrassed or uncomfortable wearing clothes that do not belong to them or may fit poorly. Please keep a spare set for your child's comfort.

### **Food**

River Song School will provide a morning and afternoon snack. The list of daily snack items will be posted. If your child is allergic to any type of food, please make sure that our staff is aware of it. Parents/guardians of children with severe allergies may wish to send a separate snack for their child. Our school serves nut-free snacks, but children may bring nuts or nut butters for lunch. If this needs to be adjusted out of safety concerns for a student with a severe allergy, your child's teacher or the Director will inform you of the change in policy. Please include a water bottle and ice pack in your child's lunch.

### **Bathroom Procedures**

Children will use the bathroom one at a time. If assistance is needed, a River Song staff member will assist the child in the bathroom. In the Primary classrooms, children will be encouraged to change clothes and wipe independently as much as possible. We ask parents to help their children practice this at home as well.

### **Privacy and Personal Responsibility**

As children gain greater awareness of themselves and others around them, they begin to understand that males and females are different. While it is perfectly normal for young children to be curious about these differences, family members, teachers, and friends must be careful to monitor behaviors without embarrassing or shaming the child. At River Song School, the underlying theme of respect for self and others sets the stage for protecting one's privacy and not touching others without permission. However, children sometimes forget or need guidance. We make it a practice of speaking to the children periodically about these issues. We explain that using the restroom is a private time, and that only one child should be in the

bathroom at a time. We talk about the private areas our bathing suits cover, and that privates should not be seen or touched by anyone at school. If a child has a particularly messy accident, they may request help from a teacher. Children are reminded that they should talk to a teacher or their parents if anyone is not respecting their privacy or space.

### **Sick Policy**

We are fully committed to a healthy community and the health of your child. Please help keep your child and our community healthy by following our sick policy. Keep your child at home if he or she has:

- A diagnosis of a communicable disease
- A fever over 100F
- Diarrhea (more than one abnormally loose, runny stool)
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Severe Cough
- Unusual yellow color to the skin or eyes
- Skin or eye lesions or rashes that are weeping or pus filled
- Stiff neck and headache with one of the symptoms above
- Difficulty in breathing or abnormal wheezing
- Complaints of severe pain

If a child shows signs of illness during school hours, parents/guardians and then emergency contact numbers will be called immediately. The child will be isolated in a room with a cot or mat until the parents or emergency contact can pick up the child.

An outbreak of disease or food poisoning will be reported immediately to the local health department. Parents will be emailed and it will be posted for the parents who attend the facility. If a child has been exposed to a contagious disease they should be kept home and the fact of their condition should be reported to the school. Strep throat, pinworms, viral infections, infected ears or glands, measles, mumps, chicken pox, scarlet fever, lice, hand foot and mouth, and whooping cough are among those conditions that are highly contagious and should be reported promptly.

### **Medications**

Prescription and nonprescription medications to be given to your child must be handed to the staff person in charge. Parents/guardians must fill out necessary information on the Medication Form. Medications must be in their original container, labeled with the name of the child, the name of the drug, dosage and instructions. Prescriptions must include the prescribing physician's name and phone number.

### **Medical Emergencies**

In the event of a medical emergency or accident, we shall contact the parents/guardians and the doctor of the child. If it is impossible to reach both and

should emergency treatment be required, the child will be taken to St. Charles Hospital. Your authorization for the school to contact your family physician and to take whatever emergency medical procedures are deemed necessary are part of your Enrollment Agreement.

### **Emergency Procedures**

In case of an emergency (fire, flood, etc) parents/guardians and/or emergency contacts will be notified by telephone. If it is necessary to evacuate the building, children and staff will relocate to the parking lot or McKay Park, based on location and nature of the emergency, and will remain at a safe distance.

### **Tuition Policy**

Our tuition rates are based on monthly payments due on the first of the month. There are financial incentives to pay semi-annually and annually. The annual payment discount is 5% off of tuition and the semi-annual payment discount is 2.5%. Please see the Director or website for more information and current rates. Refund policies are included in your Enrollment Agreement. River Song School will do its best to keep its tuition rates as reasonable and predictable as possible, however rates will be reviewed as needed and families will be notified as far in advance as possible of any changes.

Please note: Credit is not given due to absence or delinquency. If tuition is not paid by the end of the month, and no payment arrangements have been made, your child will not be admitted to class, enrollment will be suspended, and your account will be forwarded to collections. Re-Enrollment of the student will be subject to full payment of all past due amounts, an additional \$150 deposit (will be applied to next month's tuition payment), and is subject to space availability. We feel this is necessary in order to keep rates reasonable. Unfortunately, rates have had to be raised in the past to cover deficiencies in payments. River Song School is a non-profit organization and because our staffing and operational costs are based upon enrollment income, it is imperative that payments be made in a timely manner. For this reason, we also ask for 30 Days written notice to make changes to your child's enrollment, and require 30 days notice and a Withdrawal fee when withdrawing a child from school.

### **Scholarships**

River Song School may have scholarship funds available for families in need. The procedure for applying is as follows:

- A letter of request submitted to the Director with specific details regarding need
- Copies of 2 most recent bank statements
- Copies of past 2 years federal income tax
- 2 months recent pay stubs
- Any family contribution (time, service, etc.) to the school
- Expected duration of scholarship assistance

Scholarships will only be granted for periods of one year and will be reviewed quarterly for eligibility with updated financial information required from applicants. We also encourage scholarship applicants to apply for financial assistance through the state's Employment Related Day-Care program. Please enquire or look online for more information.

### **Parent Volunteering and Community Service Fee**

Studies show that when parents are active participants in their children's education, children do better in school. As a non-profit institution, family support is vital to our school. For these reasons, we require that parents and/or family members donate at least 10 hours of volunteering/year. Volunteer time may be spent helping in the classroom, preparing materials, presenting to the class, cleaning, yard work and other light maintenance, assistance with school events, or by signing up to bring flowers or food items for use in the classroom. Volunteer opportunities will be posted near the Sign In/Sign Out table, by your child's classroom, and in the newsletter, or can be discussed with your child's teacher.

An annual Community Service Fee of \$100 is charged at the beginning of the Fall Semester. This fee is reimbursed based on completion of volunteer hours.

Volunteers who seek to work directly with the children should be enrolled in the Oregon criminal history registry. Contact the Director to obtain the necessary paperwork. Individuals living in Oregon less than 18 months will require an FBI background check. Volunteers will be under supervision of a River Song Staff member at all times.

### **Photographs and Contact Information**

Your child's Enrollment Form includes a release for photos and parental contact information. These are kept on file until replaced by an updated copy if needed. Contact information is shared by request and is generally used for arranging play dates, birthday invitations, etc. Photos taken at the school are used in our newsletter, on the website, and for publicity and marketing purposes.

### **School Records**

It is our policy that school records are not mailed. We will gladly provide parents/guardians with copies of school records upon request, if the request is made while the student is still attending River Song. Allow five working days for copies to be made. Copies of requested records will be held in the school office for the parent/guardian to pick up for up to one month following the request. At the end of that time, unclaimed copies will be considered abandoned and destroyed. If the request for records is received after your child has withdrawn from school, there will be a \$10 charge for retrieving the information from our archives.

### **Guidance and Discipline Policy**

River Song School is a place of respect and peace. Significant time is devoted to working with each child and the entire community to create a peaceful, safe learning environment for everyone. In an effort to provide an educational environment that

is free of disruption and safe for children and staff, we practice the following disciplinary procedures:

- Redirection: children displaying behaviors that are mildly to moderately inappropriate will be redirected to more positive, constructive activities.
- Natural and Logical Consequences: Children displaying inappropriate behaviors will be subject to logical consequences for their actions that may include loss of privileges, temporary restriction from activities or peer interactions, added responsibilities, relating to the behavior in question.
- Removal from the Situation: If a child is particularly destructive or hurtful, he or she will be removed from the situation and will discuss the behavior with a staff member or the Director. A child's ability to consistently follow our outside safety rules is especially important. This includes staying with the group, inside the established perimeter (marked with cones), and staying on the rope during walks outside. Parents/guardians will be notified if their child has difficulty with these safety rules and the teacher, parents, and Director will create a plan to address these concerns.
- Situations Requiring Immediate Action: If a child displays behaviors that are hazardous or overly disruptive, the staff may contact the child's parent/guardian or guardian to remove him or her from school for the day. The Director will then discuss the behavior with the staff involved and determine whether further action is needed, including but not limited to, parent conference, suspension or expulsion.

Parents/guardians will be notified of actions taken and a conference will be set up to address concerning behaviors.

### **Adult Behavior**

For the safety and wellbeing of the children and staff, it is imperative that we establish parameters for appropriate behavior, not only of the children we serve, but also of the adults who accompany them. If a parent/guardian or other adult displays inappropriate, disruptive, or hazardous behaviors on the grounds of River Song School, the Director may withdraw permission for the offending individual to visit the school and has the option of removing his/her child from enrollment. In the event of expulsion, any unapplied tuition payments will be refunded within five working days.

### **Other**

River Song School is obligated by the State of Oregon to report any suspected cases of child abuse and/or neglect. This includes children arriving or departing school without proper child safety restraints.

River Song School admits children and families regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, religious background, or family structure.

