



Parent Handbook

2023-2024 School Year

Riverbend Christian School, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization.
RBCS was founded in 1985 and has been licensed by the *Texas Health and Human Services Commission* since 1987.

The Directors are members of the *National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)*, the *Half-Day Directors Association of Austin* and the *Early Childhood Christian Network*.

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Introduction

Parent Welcome Statement:

Welcome to Riverbend Christian School, where we are growing young hearts and minds!

This handbook has been prepared to provide you with information about our school policies. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with our handbook and feel free to ask the Director or Assistant Director any questions. Parents will need to sign an acknowledgement that they have received and understand the handbook.

We welcome you to our school and are proud that you have chosen us to create a foundation for your child's future education.

School Contact Information:

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Mission Statement

The mission of Riverbend Christian School is to serve children infants-5 years of age in a Christian, loving, environment. Emphasis is placed on the child's Christian education, emotional, social, mental and physical development, communication skills and creativity.

Goals of Riverbend Christian School's Program:

- To create a happy and secure environment.
- To increase self-esteem.
- To understand that God created and loves each individual.
- To gain knowledge of Bible stories.
- To develop curiosity about the world and encourage creativity and imagination.
- To understand and respect social and cultural diversity.
- To provide experiences to increase physical ability.
- To teach a child socialization skills.
- To provide experiences for creativity in art and music.
- To encourage mental growth by establishing a sequence of learning to prepare for grade school.

Our Philosophy:

The purpose of Riverbend Christian School is to provide a loving, Christian environment in which each child can develop fully in all domains of life: emotional, social, physical, cognitive and spiritual. The child's first school experience is a foundation for future attitudes and success, so RBCS strives to make each child feel positive and excited about school, self and learning. We believe that each child is understood best in the context of the family, so RBCS endeavors to provide support and encouragement for parents and other family members.

Our first priority is to see that each child is given the opportunity to develop emotionally, socially, mentally, physically, and spiritually. A child's first school experience is the foundation for his/her attitudes and involvement in the following school years. Together, parents and teachers can make this beginning experience an exceptional one for the preschooler.

Our Work is Our Play:

The program at Riverbend Christian School is structured to be developmentally appropriate. Through much study we have come to believe that young children learn best through play. A group of children in the block center or home living area are learning to solve problems, create new objects, take risks, and think in new ways.

As children play with each other, they learn to see another child's point of view and begin to be more empathetic and caring. Children who play alone may be practicing new ideas they have developed. They may be trying out a new way to do something before bringing the idea to the group.

Research indicates that intrinsic motivation, when we learn something primarily because we find the task enjoyable, is a more effective and satisfying way to learn. We make an effort to provide materials and activities that provide choice and are of interest to the children. By doing this we encourage higher level thinking and problem solving, while providing an appropriate educational setting for your child. Play is a child's work. It is the vehicle for developing emotional, social, physical, cognitive and language skills.

Brightwheel:

Riverbend Christian School has subscribed to brightwheel, a childcare management app. This keeps communication and billing all in one place! Once enrolled at RBCS, it is imperative that all RBCS parents download the app to stay informed and connected. Please stay logged in and have your notifications turned on to ensure you receive messages in a timely manner. Parents and authorized pick-up persons are expected to check child in/out each day on the app in order for us to keep accurate attendance records.

Curriculum

Our curriculum is based on Developmentally Appropriate Practices, the research based on studies by NAEYC concerning the ways children learn successfully at each age. Our curriculum goals and objectives are based on the *Creative Curriculum's* domains of social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language development. We also follow the Texas Pre-K Guidelines outlined by the Texas Education Agency. Our school also endorses the *Handwriting Without Tears* handwriting curriculum adopted by the State of Texas as the handwriting curriculum for many area elementary schools. We are sensitive to the fact that not all children develop at the same rate in all domains. We will make every effort to provide care that is consistent with a child's habits, interests, strengths, and any special needs, including any special supervision needs or care.

Indoor and Outdoor Physical Activity:

RBCS strongly believes and supports the need for physical activity each day. When children participate in physical activity each day, multiple health benefits accrue. Regular physical activity builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk for developing chronic disease risk factors, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety. Beyond those known health effects, physical activity may also have beneficial influences on academic performance. In addition, cognitive skills and motor skills appear to develop through a dynamic interaction. Research has shown that physical movement can affect the brain's physiology.

Infants will be given opportunities for physical activity, including supervised tummy time.

Toddler age children will participate in a minimum of 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Preschoolers and Pre-K children will participate a minimum of 45 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day. Opportunities for active play may overlap with outdoor play when weather permits.

RBCS will promote all children's active play every day. Children will have many opportunities to do moderate to vigorous activities, such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping and jumping, to the extent of their abilities. All children will participate each day in two occasions of active play outdoors when weather permits. There will be two or more structured or teacher-led activities or games that promote movement over the course of the day. The children will have continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills.

When weather permits, physical activity will take place on one of our playgrounds or outdoor play areas. When weather conditions prohibit outdoor play, physical activities will occur in the classroom or one of our "rainy day" rooms during the

scheduled outside time. "Rainy day" activities are planned in advance to ensure physical activity even when outdoor time is not possible.

Specials Classes & Library:

Specials classes will be offered for 15-20 minutes each day for children in our non-napping classes, 18 months and older. Creative Movement & Music classes are a part of our daily curriculum. Research suggests that promoting movement and activity in young children can help increase memory, perception, language, attention, emotion and even decision making. When language is combined with movement, learning increases 90 percent. Specials focuses on hand-eye coordination and the gross motor skills through non-competitive games, obstacle courses and movement activities. Included are songs, fingerplays and the use of rhythm instruments, and the older preschool children are invited to participate in special music programs at various times of the year. Children gain self-awareness, develop motor and listening skills, explore cause and effect, improve balance, rhythm and coordination, and learn to express feelings and creativity.

In addition to Specials, the school has a library and all classes will receive new books each week for their quiet center. The preschool children visit the library weekly for story time. The Librarian also does special story times at various times of the year for our youngest students. Parents are invited to check out books for home as well. We have a good selection of parent and teacher resource books. Parents should contact the librarian to set up an account for check out.

Chapel:

Chapel will be presented weekly for all preschool children in class ages 3 years and up. Each chapel session will include songs, a Bible story and a short prayer time. Chapel lessons include age-appropriate concepts such as being thankful, love one another, kindness, we are all unique and made special in God's eyes, forgiveness, etc.

Chapel is held each Wednesday at 11:45 a.m. in Room 113. Parents are always welcome to attend chapel. Out of respect for this special time and to avoid interruptions, we ask that parents do not drop off or pick up during chapel.

Admission Policies

Riverbend Christian School admits students of any race, color, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies and other school-administered programs.

Application Process (New Families):

Any parent interested in their child attending our program may contact our school office either by phone, e-mail or through our website to request a tour. During the tour, parents will have an opportunity to meet the Directors and office staff, visit classrooms, meet the teaching staff and visit outdoor play areas. Parents are given an overview of the school's policies and their questions are answered.

To apply for enrollment, parents must complete a waitlist application and submit a non-refundable application fee for their family. After receipt of the application and fee, their child(ren) will be placed on the waitlist and will remain on the list as long as they are of age to attend our program or we receive notice that the parent is no longer interested in enrollment. Waitlists are used to fill any openings that occur before or during the school year. Priority on the waitlists will be given to currently enrolled families, former families and Riverbend Church members. A copy of the full waitlist policy is available on our Admissions page on our website as well as the link to apply online.

Waitlists carry over from one school year to the next and will automatically be processed for registration for the next school year during our regular school year registration period, after currently enrolled families register.

Registration Process (Current Families):

Each January, our current families will go through the registration process to re-enroll their children at Riverbend Christian School. Current enrollees and their siblings register before we process waitlist applications on file. Each child already enrolled in our current school year is guaranteed a place for the following year. However, we cannot guarantee that parents will receive the combination of days desired (i.e. MWF or TTh) or the combination of days that the child currently

attends. The date of registration is published on the school year calendar. Prior to the registration date, current families will submit their schedule request via online form and to secure their desired schedule, the online registration form and registration fee must be paid by the due dates provided during registration. Failure to do so could jeopardize placement. Siblings register at the same time as currently enrolled children. Although we can't guarantee placement of siblings, every effort will be made to enroll siblings in a schedule that coordinates. If there are any changes in our enrollment procedures, parents will be notified immediately in writing.

Volunteer Chairmen play a key role in planning and organizing our fundraisers and special events during the school year. As a show of appreciation for this commitment, our chairmen are given an opportunity to pre-register their children for the following school year to ensure they receive the schedule they prefer.

Classes Offered:

Children will be divided into classes based on their age as of September 1, 2023.

Program	Age Group	Birth Date Guidelines	Schedules Offered	Max Ratios
Mother's Day Out	6-11 months	September 1, 2022-February 28, 2023	MWF, TTh or M-F	2:6
	12-17 months	March 1, 2022-August 31, 2022	MWF, TTh or M-F	2:8
	18-23 months	September 1, 2021-February 28, 2022	MWF, TTh or M-F	2:8
Preschool	2 years	September 1, 2020-August 31, 2021	MWF, TTh or M-F	2:10
	3 years	September 1, 2019-August 31, 2020	MWF, TThF, M-Th or M-F	2:14
	Pre-K/4 years	September 1, 2018-August 31, 2019	M-Th or M-F	2:18
	Kinder Bridge	5 years by September 1, 2023	M-F	2:18

Class placement is at the discretion of the administration. We DO NOT take teacher requests. However, we do take friend requests, and if their schedule and birth dates are similar, we will make efforts to place them together. The birth date guidelines are general guidelines for placing children into classes with peers of similar birth dates and in classes with peers who can start kindergarten at the same time. If your child's birth date is near the cut off, the child may be placed in a different age group than is specified above as long as the age range of the class is appropriate.

Whenever possible, our 2 year old and Mother's Day Out classes will have birth date ranges within a 6-month span. In these younger age groups, depending on enrollment, a class may be formed that include summer and fall birthdays. However, this is corrected when children move into the 3 year old classes, since those classes have a larger span of birthdays. Children who are not yet 5 years by September 1 may be considered for Kinder Bridge if space is available after the initial registration period, and if it is developmentally appropriate for the child based on assessment.

During the school day, children are divided into classroom groups according to the guidelines above. Those attending extended care will be combined into groups that may have greater ranges in birth dates and different ratios.

Required Admission Forms:

It is a requirement of our licensing agent that **ALL** of the following forms be completed for a child's enrollment into the Riverbend Christian School Mother's Day Out and Preschool Program:

- **Registration Form, including Medical Emergency Authorization & Emergency Contacts**
- **Immunization Record meeting the Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Child-Care**
(Children not meeting the state requirements must provide a notarized affidavit of exemption for reasons of conscience.)
- **Signed Health Statement** from child's doctor
- **Vision & Hearing Results** (required for 4 & 5 year olds each calendar year; optional for 3 year olds)
- **Pick Up Authorizations**
- **Child Information Sheet**

- **Signed Handbook Acknowledgement**
- **If your child has a food allergy, a Food Allergy Action Plan will be required along with medications.**

All forms MUST be completed and submitted to the school office by the child's first day of school.

Parents who fail to turn in forms in a timely manner may be asked to withdraw their child until the forms are returned. No refunds will be given, and parents will be responsible for paying tuition if they would like to continue to hold their child's spot until all the forms have been received by the school office.

Each child must have on file TWO emergency contacts who are not the child's parents or legal guardians. In the event of emergency, we will always attempt to contact parents first. However, it is important that we have emergency contacts in the event that we cannot reach you.

During the year, if your address and/or phone number changes or any other information changes on your school forms, please come by the school office and update them immediately. Parents should also ensure that their contact details are correct on their profile within brightwheel.

Required Health Records:

A current immunization record and statement of child's health condition from your doctor must be turned in to the office by the FIRST day of school. As your child is vaccinated throughout the year, an updated vaccine record must be submitted to the office. If your child already has a record on file at the school office from a previous school year that fully meets the state requirement, those records will be forwarded. All immunization records must be validated by the child's doctor's office. Print outs from Patient Portals cannot be accepted, unless they have been validated with doctor's stamp or signature.

Visit www.immunizetexas.org for information about Vaccine Requirements in Texas.

Children aged 4 & 5 years old are required to have a vision and hearing screening. Screening is conducted on-site in the fall for a small fee or a parent may provide documentation of the screening by their health care professional. The Texas Department of Health requires the school to have vision results that are recorded for both right and left eye individually and hearing must be an audiometric test done on the right and left ear separately at 25dB's or less at 1000, 2000, 4000 Hz. The words "Pass" or "Fail" are not sufficient to meet the state's requirement for reporting. All screening reports should have child's name, date of birth, name of screener, screening date, type of screening and detailed results.

Child's Special Care Needs:

It is important to share any special needs or accommodations that are needed for your child. We are here to partner with you to provide the best care possible during these crucial first few years of development. Parents are asked to complete an information sheet that includes providing information about environmental allergies, food intolerances, existing illness, previous serious illness, injuries and hospitalizations (past 12 months), limitations or restrictions on child's activities, reasonable accommodations or modifications, adaptive equipment, symptoms or indications of complications, medications prescribed for continuous long-term use or any other need your child has. If any of this information changes during the year, update your child's teacher.

Should your child's special care needs require accommodations, please provide recommendations from a health care professional or a qualified professional affiliated with a local school district or early childhood intervention program. If adaptive equipment is needed, the parent is responsible for providing and maintaining the equipment as well as providing instructions for use.

Riverbend Christian School believes early intervention can make a huge difference in a child's life and future successes. If your child needs early intervention services or special education services, parents may request and approve those services to be received from a qualified service provider at our center. When needed, activities, equipment and procedures are adjusted to ensure success for all children in our program.

If you suspect that your child may have a special need, RBCS will provide you with information regarding early intervention services in the community. Parents should request an evaluation of their child's development from experts who are

qualified to assess the child's development and recommend appropriate services for the child. Sharing your child's Individualized Educational Program (IEP) from a school district or an Individualized Family Service Plan (ISFP) from ECI will allow RBCS staff to better serve your child. The staff will make every effort to incorporate the plan, where applicable, into the child's daily activities.

Child day care operations are public accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Title III. To learn more, visit <https://www.ada.gov/resources/child-care-centers/>. If you believe that such an operation may be practicing discrimination in violation of Title III, you may call the ADA Information Line at (800) 514-0301 (voice) or (800) 514-0383 (TTY).

Dismissal Policy:

Occasionally a child's behavior becomes a chronic issue and is unresponsive to the teacher's attempts to alter the behavior through positive guidance techniques. RBCS may follow any of these steps below to address the situation. Parents are expected to comply with requests in an expedient manner.

- Staff will reassess classroom environment, appropriate activities and supervision
- Child's behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality
- Staff will use positive methods and praise appropriate behaviors
- Child will be given time and space to regain control
- Director, teacher and parents will have a conference to discuss how to promote positive behaviors
- Parent may be asked to keep child home for a specific amount of time, without refund of tuition
- Parent will be provided resources to address behaviors
- Parent may be asked to have the child examined by a pediatrician at the parent's expense
- Parent may be asked to have the child evaluated by a child guidance professional at the parent's expense
- RBCS may recommend the child's established therapist observe the child in the RBCS setting, to gain insight into classroom dynamics and provide teachers with additional assistance and managing classroom behaviors at the parent's expense
- Parent may be asked to provide a classroom aide for the child at the parent's expense

When there is little or no improvement in the child's behavior, safety incidents are not reduced, we must take into consideration the safety and well-being of the other children in the school. RBCS reserves the right to request the immediate withdrawal of a child or family. We will do everything possible to work with the family of the child(ren) in order to prevent this policy from being enforced.

Riverbend Christian School expects that all adults in contact with the staff, program, families, administrators and children always act respectfully and appropriately. RBCS reserves the right to dismiss any family if a parent or a guest that a parent has brought or invited to the school exhibits behavior that makes any child, staff member or another parent feel threatened or unsafe on our campus. Behaviors may include but are not limited to yelling, acting confrontational, making threats, using inappropriate language, or being disruptive. Such behaviors can result in immediate termination.

It is against RBCS policies and procedures for RBCS staff to testify in court regarding children and families currently enrolled.

RBCS reserves the right to remove any family for delinquent or insufficient payment of tuition or incomplete enrollment forms.

In case of dismissal for any of the described reasons, registration fees and one-month tuition will be forfeited by the family.

Tuition & Fees

- There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$250 per child enrolling for the 2023-2024 school year. If an application fee has been paid for the child, the fee will be credited toward the registration fee. The registration fee is due at the time of registration and is NOT refundable at any time. In the event of withdrawal, it cannot be used toward a future school year.

- In June 2023 or at the time of enrollment, whichever comes later, May 2024 Tuition Deposit is due. This is simply the last month's tuition paid ahead of time. For any withdrawal before March 1, 2024 (notice given by February 1), the May deposit will be applied to the last month attended or refunded if no fees are outstanding. **If a child withdraws after March 1, 2024 (the child's last day falls after March 1) the May deposit is not refunded and cannot be applied to outstanding tuition.**
- **Riverbend Christian School requires a written notice of withdrawal at least 30 days in advance.** Notices may be sent to rbc schoolatx@gmail.com, sent via brightwheel message, or turned in to the school office in person. The May Deposit will be applied to your child's final 30 days, unless the child's last day of attendance falls after March 1, 2024. The May Deposit will be refunded fully or partially if tuition has already been paid during the 30-day period. If a child is withdrawn after August 1, 2023, the May Deposit will be applied to September tuition in part or whole in accordance to the 30-day policy. Parents are responsible for tuition for the 30-day period regardless of their child's attendance during the notice period.
- **Tuition is due on the FIRST DAY of each month. May tuition is paid first (see above), then September through April on the first of each month.** A late fee of \$25.00 per month will be assessed on the 6th. Each month, an invoice will be sent via brightwheel to remind you that the next month's tuition due date is nearing. Failure to receive the reminders or your child's absence from school does not void late fees if you do not pay on time. You may choose auto-pay in brightwheel and payment will automatically process on the due date of the invoice.
- Tuition is billed on a monthly basis, however, parents may choose at any time to pay multiple months or the full year at one time. No discounts are given for pre-payment of fees.
- Personal checks and money orders payable to "Riverbend Christian School" or "RBCS" may be mailed or dropped off at the school office. Checks are accepted through your bank's bill pay.
- Parents may pay tuition and fees directly on the brightwheel app either from their bank account or by credit card. No processing fees will be incurred if paying in brightwheel via your bank account. Credit cards result in additional fees. Parents may choose auto-pay, if desired.
- Parents are able to access statements on the brightwheel app, should they need a payment receipt or tax statement. Our Tax ID is 74-2811584.
- No refund or tuition credit is given for absences whether planned or unplanned, bad weather days, teacher in-service days, holidays, closures caused by pandemic or government orders, or any day the school is closed due to unforeseen circumstances. Absences may not be made up.
- There is a \$20.00 returned check fee per returned check. You will be responsible for re-submitting payment.
- In the event that tuition becomes past due, Riverbend Christian School, Inc. holds the right to withdraw a child from the program. Any child may be withdrawn at the end of the second month in which tuition is not paid, and the spot will be filled immediately. If circumstances arise that make it difficult to pay tuition, please contact the school office to set up a pay schedule and sign a pay agreement. RBCS holds the right to require auto-pay set up for accounts that become past due.
- In the event that your withdrawal from the program results in a credit balance on your tuition account, RBCS will send a refund via brightwheel or provide a refund check to you within one week of your notice of withdrawal.
- Any overpayments of your tuition will be held as a credit balance on your account and will be used to pay future month's tuition and/or fees owed as long as your children remain enrolled.
- Pick up time is no later than 1:30 p.m. If you are late picking up your child, late fees will be charged to your tuition account at a rate of \$1.00/minute. You will be responsible for paying for all late fees incurred for tardiness.

Registration fees and tuition rates are subject to change each school year. These increases are crucial to be

able to support our amazing teachers by providing annual pay increases.

Tuition is billed over the course of 9 months, with May tuition being paid first then September through April invoiced on the first of each month.

2023-2024 School Year Tuition Rates					
Monthly Tuition	TTh	MWF	TThF	M-Th	M-F
MDO	\$ 410	\$ 515			\$ 800
2 years	\$ 390	\$ 495			\$ 760
3 years		\$ 495	\$ 515	\$ 600	\$ 705
Pre-K/4 years				\$ 600	\$ 705
Kinder Bridge					\$ 745

Extended Care rates will be invoiced on your regular monthly invoice. If a child is enrolled after the session begins, tuition will be prorated starting from the date of enrollment.

2023-2024 School Year Extended Care Tuition Rates					
Extended Care	Mondays	Tues, Wed or Thurs	2 days/week	3 days/week	4 days/week
Fall per month	\$ 60	\$ 65	\$ 130 \$ 125 (Mon)	\$ 195 \$ 190 (Mon)	\$ 255
Spring per month	\$ 65	\$ 80	\$ 160 \$ 145 (Mon)	\$ 240 \$ 225 (Mon)	\$ 305
Drop-in Rates	\$ 35 per day \$ 20 per day (after Enrichment)		\$ 100 per week (Monday-Thursday, same week)		

Hours & Calendar

All age groups meet from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Class begins at 9:00 a.m. and children may not be taken to their classrooms before 9:00 a.m. Teachers use this time for planning and set up.

During the 2023-2024 school year, the Riverbend Christian School program will operate August 28, 2023 to May 16, 2024. The school calendar can be found under Documents on brightwheel. The calendar is also available on our website at www.rbc.school.com/calendar. Please note school closings and holidays. During Thanksgiving, Christmas and Spring Break, the school may be closed longer than 5 days in a row.

Extended care is offered Monday through Thursday, 1:30-3:30 p.m. The Fall Session runs September 11 to December 14 (13 weeks). The Spring Session runs January 16 to May 9 (16 weeks).

Open House:

Open House for all classes will be held on Friday before the beginning of the school year. This is an opportunity for the children to become better acquainted with their class. Children and their parents will meet the teachers, other class

families and see the classroom. Open House is held between 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Parent/Teacher Conferences:

Conferences are offered twice during the school year to allow teachers and parents to discuss the child's developmental progress in the classroom. An initial conference is handled at the beginning of the school year at Open House or by phone and the other conferences are midway through the school year. During the main conference, parents will choose a time to meet with their child's teacher one on one in person, by phone or via Zoom. If at any time the parent would like to meet with the teacher outside of the regularly scheduled conference period, parents may request an additional conference time.

Fundraising & Special Events:

During the school year, there will be many opportunities for parents to become involved in the school through fundraising and other special events. Our school is funded with a combination of tuition and philanthropic gifts. The tuition we receive from families does not fully cover the operating costs of the school, and it is through your generous gifts that allow us to continue expanding the educational resources and play areas available to our children. Profits from our fundraisers and monetary donations are used to support our mission of providing an exceptional early childhood education program for our children. Riverbend Christian School is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization and all donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowable by law. Proceeds from our fundraisers are used throughout the school to update our outdoor play areas, replace classroom equipment and educational materials, make building improvements and enhance our security. A Christmas Celebration is held in December and is a fun event for the whole family. As part of the event, our 3 year, Pre-K and Kinder Bridge students perform a special music presentation. A Gala or other event is held in the spring and includes a live and silent auction. Other fundraising activities may include Book Fair, Spirit Gear sales, and raffles.

Each school year we hold a Trike-a-Thon benefitting St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Our parents also organize an annual Teacher Appreciation Luncheon. Many other activities are organized to enhance your child's educational experience, such as on-site field trips including Fire Truck Visits, Dental Visit, Pumpkin Patch, Zoo Shows, Author Visits and Dr. Seuss's Birthday Celebration. We will also hold special events that give parents a sneak peek into our daily schedule, such as Specials Visitation, Superhero Day, Mother's Day Teas, and Music Programs.

Additional events have been noted on the school year calendar, such as Holiday Parties, Pizza & Spirit Days, Vision & Hearing Screening, and Individual & Class Portraits. More detailed information will be provided as the events near.

Parent Involvement:

We have an exceptional Parent Group to support our school in areas such as fundraisers, hospitality, special events, class parties, etc. Volunteer Chairmen are needed to lead the organization of each event committee and will receive the perk of pre-registration for the next school year. Other volunteers are welcome to help in more minor roles. We would be delighted to have any interested parent be a part of our special events. Meet & Mingle meetings are held in September, which provides parents with opportunities to learn more about special events, commit to volunteer for the various committees and to learn more about participating in our program.

Parents and family members are encouraged to participate in school events and host a holiday party in their child's class. Parents are also welcome to schedule a time with their child's teacher to participate with the classroom by sharing something special about their family or culture, or to read a story with the class. Parents are welcome to visit our program at any time. For security reasons, parents should check in at the office and receive a visitors badge to gain access.

In addition to volunteering for our various special events during the school year, parents are welcome to substitute in our classrooms. If you are interested in being a substitute, contact the school office for additional information.

Our school families are also encouraged to participate in the many family events organized by Riverbend Church. These events include Riverfest (where RBCS will host a drink booth), Daddy Daughter Dance, and Vacation Bible School, to name a few. We invite moms in our program to join Real Moms, a group that meets twice a month to share stories, gather helpful tips, support one another while navigating the fullness and messiness of mom life, and just enjoy some rejuvenating time.

Holiday & Birthday Parties:

Teachers schedule holiday parties at various times during the year. Parents are asked to plan and carry out these parties, which may include providing a snack or lunch for the class, party decorations, simple craft and/or party favors. It is recommended that parents bring in commercially prepared or food items that have been prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by local health officials.

If you plan to bring a special treat for your child's birthday, please let the teacher know. If you would like to attend when the treat is shared, planning for the last part of the day is best. Healthier options are always preferred over sugar treats. Check with your child's teacher to ensure that there are no allergies in the classroom that prevent serving certain foods.

Snacks & Lunches

A mid-morning snack will be served in every classroom. The parent will provide the individual snack for their child. Please bring the snack in a small baggie clearly marked with the child's first and last name. All parents should make an effort to provide healthy and nutritious items. In our infant and young toddler classes, we do not feed breakfast, only snacks and lunch. Breakfast should be served at home.

Children should bring a nutritious lunch and drink in their lunch box every day. Teachers will not be able to refrigerate or warm food. Ice packs and thermos containers are recommended. All children in Mother's Day Out (under 2 years) typically have lunch before 12:00 noon. Infants (under 1 year of age) may bring baby food or finger food along with bottles. Bottles must be labeled with infant's first and last name. Young toddlers over 12 months old should bring finger foods along with juice or milk in a spill-proof cup.

Please send whatever you think your child will eat; however, we do encourage that nutritious food be sent. Please try to avoid sending foods with high sugar content such as pudding, cookies, pop tarts, donuts, gummy snacks, etc. Do not send candy, gum or soft drinks in your child's snack or lunch. To help facilitate the development of motor skills and proper self-feeding, we discourage the use of puree pouches in our preschool classrooms.

A water bottle or spill-proof cup should be sent daily. To keep your child hydrated throughout the day, water bottles will be brought outside with the class during outdoor play time. Please avoid milk or sugary drinks in their bottle. Water is best.

Due to safety concerns, please do not send your child with glass bottles or containers.

Because you are providing your child's snack and lunch from home, Riverbend Christian School is not responsible for the nutritional value or for meeting your child's daily food needs. Foods that may be choking hazards will not be served to children under 4. These include whole grapes, nuts, pretzels, popcorn, marshmallows and hot dogs sliced into rounds. Teachers reserve the right to remove any food they feel might be a choking hazard.

Riverbend Christian School is a NUT-FREE environment (see page 16). Due to allergies, RBCS reserves the right to limit or ban any food items on a class by class basis to ensure the safety of all children attending our program. We request your understanding and respect should the need to limit or ban certain foods arises in your child's classroom.

Pizza Days:

Riverbend Christian School will provide pizza one day per month for the children in our 18-23 months through Kinder Bridge classes, at no additional charge. Pizza days are included on our school year calendar, and will coincide with RBCS Spirit Days. On these days, you may choose to send your child fruit or another side to eat along with their pizza and should send a drink. You may opt out of pizza day simply by sending your child a regular boxed lunch. If your child is not participating due to an allergy, be sure you notify your child's teacher.

Breastfeeding Policy:

Parents have a right to breastfeed or provide breast milk to their child while they are in care. There are comfortable adult-sized rockers located in Room 303 and 304 for parents to breastfeed their child.

Drop Off & Pick Up Policy

Between the times of 9:00-9:15 a.m. the doors will be opened for parents to enter the building to bring their child to class. Starting at 9:15, the doors will be closed but will be monitored to let parents in for drop off at their child's class until 9:30. If you arrive after 9:30, the child will need to be brought to the Nursery & Preschool building to the doors closest to the school office. We will accept the child and deliver them to class for you.

At 1:00 the doors will again be monitored to allow parents and pick up persons inside to pick up children at the classrooms. Between the times of 1:15-1:30 the doors will be opened for pick up.

Between the hours of 9:30-1:00, parents are not permitted in the building without checking in at the office and receiving a visitor pass. All arrivals during these times must report to the school office. If you know ahead of time that you will need to pick up your child early, please notify us on brightwheel, and we will get the child from class and have them wait at the office to help expedite your pickup.

Except those who have checked in as a visitor, parents or other visitors should not enter the classroom. This will allow for a smoother drop off and pick up, as well as encouraging preschool children to be independent by walking into their classroom and putting their items in their cubby.

For security, please do not hold the door open for any unknown person. The back door in our downstairs building near the kitchen is marked as an Emergency Exit Only. Please do not exit through this door. Do not let anyone enter through this door; it is not an entrance.

Children should be escorted by an adult and dropped off and picked up from the child's teacher. Sick children or sick parents should not enter the building. If you are sick or have a sick child, please notify the school office and make arrangements for drop off and pick up of your well child. If needed, call the school office and we will help escort your well child to and from their classroom. Children will not be released to a sibling or anyone under the age of 18 years.

Parents are responsible for checking their child in and out each day using the brightwheel app. QR codes are displayed at key areas around campus, which are used for check in/out. Authorized pick-up persons should also be instructed to download the app and check the child in/out so that our attendance records are accurate. All children should be picked up by 1:30 p.m. or late fees may apply. Cell phone use at drop off and pick up is prohibited. This is a time to focus on communication between staff, parents and children. Children must be supervised at all times while on campus.

If you need to pick up your child from the playground, please be sure to inform your child's teacher. Also, please be sure to close and latch the gate behind you after entering or exiting our playgrounds.

Children will only be released to the parents or those persons who you have authorized to pick up. If you would like someone other than yourself to pick up your child, please provide written authorization to the school office and notify your child's teacher. Non-parents should be prepared to show valid identification to the teacher and have his/her identification photo-copied or scanned via tablet upon picking up a child.

Please utilize parking spaces when coming to school for pick up and drop off. Do not park in fire lanes, drive through coned areas or block such areas. Do not park in handicapped parking spots unless you have the appropriate permits. Please do not use the church staff parking lot near 360. This area is not "5-minute parking for preschool drop off and pick up" so please do not enter this reserved parking area. Parking in these prohibited areas may result in your vehicle being towed, per City of Austin fire code, at your expense.

Children who are not picked up by 1:35 will be brought to the office to await pick up. Late pick up fees will apply. If an emergency situation arises that you may be late in picking up your child from school, please contact the school office at 512-327-4067 or send a message via brightwheel as soon as possible to make proper arrangements.

For Enrichment and Extended Care pick up, doors will be monitored between 2:20-2:35 and again 3:15-3:30 to let parents in when they arrive. Parents can always come to the school office if they are having trouble gaining access to pick up.

Health, Illness & Incidents

A child with the following signs and/or symptoms within the past 24 hours should not be brought to school:

Unexplained rash

Diarrhea

Fever*

Vomiting

Purulent eye drainage

Constant coughing or wheezing

Symptoms of a communicable disease such as chicken pox, ring worm, strep throat, abdominal pain, headache, pink eye, head lice, etc.

*This includes temperature of above 100°F and accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness. The child must be fever free without the aid of a fever reducing medicine for 24 hours to return to school.

If a child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease or other serious health condition, you will be required to submit a Doctor's Note for your child to return to school. The note should state the diagnosis and the date the doctor has approved for re-admittance. This offers protection for the child who has been ill, as well as the children enrolled and the teachers on staff at the school. Children who are seen by a physician for symptoms of a common cold, allergies or other viruses are not required to provide a note but must follow the 24-hour symptom-free policy.

Please notify the director if your child becomes ill with a contagious disease so parents of other children may be notified. To avoid the spread of illnesses, please do not bring any sick person either child or adult into the school buildings. Please call the school office and we will help you escort your well child to and from class.

If your child should become ill while at school, they will be brought to the school office. We will call you to pick them up immediately. It is very important that we have a phone number where we can reach you during the day. RBCS reserves the right to send a child home who is not feeling well and not participating in regular classroom activities, even if they don't have any of the symptoms outlined above.

For minor injuries, parents will be notified via brightwheel. For more serious injuries, a parent will be notified by phone call and the parent may be asked to come check on the child at the school or take the child to be seen by a medical professional. All incidents are documented on an incident report, which should be signed by parent. **If the child's injury results in a visit to the emergency room or doctor's office, the parent must notify the school within 24 hours.**

Parents will be notified if your child is injured, has a symptom requiring exclusion from school, has been involved in a situation that placed him/her at risk for injury or harm, or a child in the classroom has a communicable disease that must be reported to the Texas Department of Health. In the event of a head bump, we ask parents to acknowledge receiving the notification on brightwheel or the teacher may call the parent to ensure they are aware of the incident.

Any child sent home due to illness cannot return to school the next day as the child must be symptom free for at least 24 hours.

Guidelines to Illness at School		
Illness/Infection/Symptom	Should child stay home?	When can child return?
Chicken Pox	YES Must notify school office	When all pox have scabbed over
Common Cold	NO (without fever) YES (with fever)	See fever guidelines RBCS reserves the right to send any child home with cold symptoms and require them to stay out until symptoms subside or to see a doctor to rule out a more serious illness.

COVID	YES Must notify school office	Child should stay home if they are awaiting the results of a COVID test. If positive, child can return after a full 10 days of isolation and child has been fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications
Coxsackievirus (Hand, Foot & Mouth)	YES Must notify school office	When child has been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications AND all blisters have completely dried.
Conjunctivitis/Pinkeye	YES Must notify school office	24 hours after treatment has begun
Diarrhea	YES	24 hours after last diarrhea symptoms
Ear Infection	NO (with doctor diagnosis)	Child can come to school as long as he/she is able to participate in normal school activities
Fever of 100° or greater (undiagnosed illness)	YES	24 hours fever-free without the use of fever reducing medications during that period
Fifth Disease	NO (without fever) YES (with fever) Must notify school office	See fever guidelines
Giardiasis	YES Must notify school office	When diarrhea subsides, or doctor approves return (bring note to school)
Impetigo	YES Must notify school office	24 hours after treatment has begun
Influenza	YES Must notify school office	24 hours after symptoms subside
Lice	YES Must notify school office	After one treatment has been given and no live lice or nits are present. Report to school office for re-admittance.
Unidentified Rash	YES	When rash is gone, or child's doctor approves readmission (bring doctor's note)
Ringworm	NO	Child can come to school as long as infected area is covered
Roseola	YES (with fever)	24 hours after symptoms subside (fever and rash)
Rotavirus	YES	24 hours after last diarrhea symptoms, or child's doctor approves readmission (bring doctor's note)
Strep Throat/Scarlet Fever	YES Must notify school office	24 hours after treatment begins and fever-free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medications
Thrush/Yeast Infections	NO	Child came come to school as long as he/she is able to participate in normal school activities
Vomiting	YES	24 hours after last vomiting

Medication & Allergy Policy:

No medication (including prescription) will be given by the teachers and no medical testing will be performed, with the exception of medication needed in emergency situations as authorized by the parent and child's doctor. Any medication given to a child will be administered by office staff only. Parents and the child's physician must provide written instructions that include: name of medication, dosage, time and date which medication is to be given. Parental instructions must be consistent with labeling on the medication or doctor's note. Medication must be in the original container with the full name of the child to whom it is given, and must not be expired. All emergency medications such as EPI pens, Benadryl, inhalers, etc. and signed action plan MUST be on file at the school BEFORE the child can attend the program.

Nut-Free Policy:

For the protection of the children in our care, a list of the children with food allergies will be posted in each classroom, "Nut-free" postings will be displayed in our preschool buildings and parents of children with known food allergies must provide a completed Food Allergy Action Plan with the appropriate medication before a child attends the program. A "Nut-Free" environment will include peanuts and all tree nuts.

We cannot guarantee a completely nut-free environment since other activities take place in our preschool buildings and on our campus outside of our school program hours. We will, however, maintain a nut-free environment in our classrooms during our school hours. If your child brings any foods that are nuts or contain nuts or tree nuts or coconut, it will not be served to the children and will be returned to the parent at the end of the school day.

If your child has a specific allergy, please be sure to notify your child's teacher and school administration. If your child's allergy requires emergency medication such as Benadryl or an EpiPen, you must submit a Food Allergy Action Plan and provide all the medications. Food Allergy Action plans must be updated every 6 months.

All emergency medications must be checked in at the office and will be kept there in a locked cabinet. If there is a need for this medication, the directors will contact parents by phone before administering, if time allows.

In cases of severe allergies, RBCS will ban or restrict certain foods on a class-by-class basis to ensure the safety of all children attending our program.

Topical products, such as diaper rash lotion or lip balm, require a signed permission slip. As a part time program, we do not provide or apply any insect repellent or sunscreen products. Parents are encouraged to apply these products before they arrive at school.

Vaccine-preventable Disease for Employees:

While the safety of our employees and the children in our care is paramount, we have elected to make immunizations for vaccine-preventable diseases OPTIONAL to the employees.

Vaccines that we currently **recommend** our employees receive:

- *Influenza (annually)
- *Pertussis (Tdap)
- *COVID-19

If the employee is not exempt from having these immunizations, Riverbend Christian School recommends that employees consider these immunizations.

If the employee decides that these immunizations are appropriate and beneficial for their health and well-being, and receive the immunization, they are asked to provide the Center Director with documentation that the immunizations have been received.

Riverbend Christian School will encourage the use of protective medical equipment to protect employees and children in care from exposure to possible disease. In addition to hand washing, the protective medical equipment would include gloves, masks and hand sanitizer. The use of protective medical equipment will be based on the level of risk the employee presents to children by the employee's routine and direct exposure to children. Employees should not be in direct contact when they are ill or exhibiting signs of illness. Riverbend Christian School will monitor information provided to the public through the Center of Disease Control and/or other sources to determine the level of risk the employee presents.

There will be no discrimination or retaliatory action against any employee who does/does not receive immunizations for vaccine-preventable illness. The use of protective medical equipment will not be considered retaliatory when used by employees of Riverbend Christian School.

All employees will be required to sign this policy and the signed policy will be retained on file. The information related to whether or not an employee chooses to have immunizations for vaccine-preventable diseases will be kept confidential. Failure to sign this policy will result in the employee not being able to work directly with children.

Health Checks:

Daily Health Checks will be conducted on all children each morning and it consists of the following:

- A visual check for general mood and changes in behavior,
- fever or elevated body temperature,
- any noticeable skin rashes, unusual spots, swelling or bruises.
- Teachers will look for signs and symptoms of diseases such as severe coughing, sneezing, breathing difficulties, and discharge from nose, ears or eyes, diarrhea, vomiting, etc.

Teachers may ask parents additional questions if a child complains of pain and is not feeling well. RBCS reserves the right to turn away any child that doesn't appear well. Parents should assess their child's health before arriving at school to prevent putting the staff in the difficult situation of asking the parent to take the child home.

Hand washing Procedures:

Children's hands must be washed by the parents of children in attendance of the classrooms in the downstairs preschool building. Our Pre-K and Kinder Bridge classrooms do not have hand washing sinks in the classroom; therefore, children must be taken to the hallway bathrooms to wash their hands upon arrival to their classroom each day. This is a mandatory standard that must be followed by all parents, regardless of what time they arrive at the preschool. The upstairs preschool building is equipped with sinks in the classrooms and staff will wash children's hands upon arrival.

Diaper Changing Procedures:

Children's diapers will be changed in the upstairs preschool building and our downstairs 3 year old classes as these classrooms are equipped with sinks for hand washing in each classroom. Each room has a diaper changing table in the restroom area where children are placed on a washable surface where they are changed. Children's soiled or wet diapers will be changed promptly. Staff will use gloves when changing all diapers, ointments or creams will only be applied with written permission. A **four-step sanitizing process** takes place after each diaper change. This includes: washing the surface with soap and water, rinsing with clear water, using a disinfecting spray for 2 minutes, rinsing with cool water and allowing the surface to air-dry. Disposable diapers should be used; cloth diapers are not permitted.

Toilet Learning:

Children in the upstairs preschool building will begin potty training usually around 24 months depending on the developmental age of the child. When children begin to show signs of readiness such as using the potty at home, being able to sit on the potty, recognizing and communicating with their teacher when they need to use the restroom is a good time to start the potty-training process. To help your child be successful, potty training and potty-trained children should be dressed in clothing that is easy for them to get off and on without assistance. Avoid onesies, overalls and other one-piece outfits. Pull ups are not permitted in any age group. Children in the 3-year classes in the downstairs preschool building do not have to be potty trained. With the exception of one class, the 3-year-old classes have access to a restroom in their classrooms.

We consider a child fully potty trained when they are able to communicate their need to use the facilities, can manipulate and remove their clothing to use the restroom and to wipe themselves without assistance. We find the most success with potty training when parents are practicing these same skills at home.

Safety & Security

Keypads are installed on all exterior doors leading to the downstairs and upstairs preschool buildings to prevent access by unknown persons. Only staff members have codes to enter without assistance. All other persons must be let in at the appropriate times as outlined in our Drop Off & Pick Up procedures (see page 13). All visitors as well as parents who would like to visit between 9:30-1:00 must report to the school office and should wear a visitors badge during the duration of their

time within the building.

All children must be accompanied by an adult while on campus and in the school buildings. This includes re-entering the building after school hours. The playgrounds on campus cannot be used from the hours of 9:00 to 1:30, but are available for use before and after school, with proper supervision. Please pay attention to the signs posted that indicate the appropriate age requirement for each playground. You may play at your own risk and realize that Riverbend is not liable for any accidents.

Fire/Severe Weather/Lockdown/Emergency:

If an emergency situation develops such as severe weather, fire, physical damage to the building, or any other situation that poses a threat, the safety of the children is our first concern. The center is equipped with a weather band radio, a fire alarm and fire extinguishers. Emergency evacuation plans are posted in each classroom.

In the event of **fire**, teachers will evacuate the building according to evacuation notices posted in each classroom and lead the children to the designated areas. Teachers are responsible for taking class tablet and emergency backpack on the way out and **Complete a Name-to-Face Check immediately after they exit to be sure each child is accounted for.** Fire drills are conducted each month.

In the event of **severe weather**, all children will be escorted to Room 113 in the lower level of the Community Center. This is the safest and most secure area in our school. If the severe weather prevents classes from going to lower Community Center, teachers will go to their assigned safe place listed on the emergency evacuation floor plan posted in their classroom. If there is an emergency situation and it becomes necessary to close the school, parents will be notified via brightwheel or by phone, if needed, to make arrangements for early pick up. Severe weather drills will be conducted quarterly.

In the event that a **lockdown** on the school campus is necessary, children will report to their designated classroom or an alternative classroom if the classroom has large visible windows. During a lockdown or lockdown drill, staff are to close and/or lock their classroom door, turn lights off, keep children silent or as quiet as possible, remain out of sight as much as possible and take attendance of children in care. The class will remain in place until you receive further instructions from the director, assistant director or police department. Lockdown drills are conducted four times per school year.

In the event of **bad weather**, we will follow Eanes ISD school closures. **If Eanes is closed or opens later than their regular time due to severe weather, RBCS will be closed.** Since we have so many staff and parents in different parts of Austin and surrounding areas, we ask that you please use your own judgement when deciding how safe it will be to travel to the school. The Director reserves the right to cancel classes if other nearby schools close, even if Eanes ISD is open. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the severity of the weather conditions in the Austin and surrounding areas.

Bad weather days will not be made up and no refunds will be given for missed days. Please watch your local news for information about Eanes ISD closings. Whenever possible, we will provide closing information via the brightwheel app.

Firearms:

No firearms are allowed on the premises of our campus unless you are a law enforcement officer. No firearms are allowed even for those who open carry and/or have a concealed handgun license.

Discipline & Guidance

Discipline will be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child;
- Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

Riverbend Christian School Mother’s Day Out and Preschool staff will only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
- Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child’s age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child’s age.

There will be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- Grabbing or pulling a child;
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- Putting anything in or on a child’s mouth;
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed or open;
- Placing a child in a restrictive device for time out;
- Withholding active play or keeping a child inside as a consequence for behavior, unless the child is exhibiting behavior during active play that requires brief supervised separation or time out appropriate for the child’s age and development; and
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child’s age.

Additional Policies

Outdoor Play:

Outside play facilities are available for your child to develop his/her gross motor skills. On rainy days the teacher will provide activities for the children indoors. RBCS will refer to the Child Care Weather Watch chart to determine when it’s appropriate to play outside and for how long.

Understand the Weather



Wind-Chill

- 30° or below is *chilly* and generally uncomfortable
- 15° to 30° is *cold*
- 0° to 15° is *very cold*
- -20° to 0° is *bitter cold* with significant risk of *frostbite*
- -20° to -60° is *extreme cold* and *frostbite* is likely
- -60° is *frigid* and exposed *skin will freeze* in 1 minute



Heat Index

- 80° or below is considered *comfortable*
- 90° beginning to feel *uncomfortable*
- 100° *uncomfortable* and may be *hazardous*
- 110° considered *dangerous*

All temperatures are in degrees Fahrenheit

Child Care Weather Watch

		Wind-Chill Factor Chart (in Fahrenheit)								
		Wind Speed in mph								
Air Temperature		Calm	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
	40	40	36	34	32	30	29	28	28	27
	30	30	25	21	19	17	16	15	14	13
	20	20	13	9	6	4	3	1	0	-1
	10	10	1	-4	-7	-9	-11	-12	-14	-15
0	0	-11	-16	-19	-22	-24	-26	-27	-29	
-10	-10	-22	-28	-32	-35	-37	-39	-41	-43	



		Heat Index Chart (in Fahrenheit %)												
		Relative Humidity (Percent)												
Air Temperature (F)		40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100
	80	80	80	81	81	82	82	83	84	84	85	86	86	87
	84	83	84	85	86	88	89	90	92	94	96	98	100	103
	90	91	93	95	97	100	103	105	109	113	117	122	127	132
	94	97	100	103	106	110	114	119	124	129	135			
	100	109	114	118	124	129	130							
104	119	124	131	137										

Heat Index

Less than 90 – Classes can stay out for 30 minutes or longer.
 90-95 – Classes may spend 15 minutes in the sun, then 15 minutes in full shade.
 95-100 – Classes will only be in the sun for 5 minutes, then up to 25 minutes in full shade.
 Over 100 – Only shade play is permitted and must be limited to 10 minutes.

Wind Chill

Over 55 – Classes can stay out for 30 minutes or longer.
 50-55 – Classes can stay out for 15 minutes.
 45-50 – Only 5 minutes outdoors.
 Under 45 – No outside time permitted.

All age groups play outdoors daily when weather permits. If your child cannot participate in outside time, please keep him/her home. Please dress children appropriately for the weather.

Children will not go outside for outdoor play when thunder and lightning is present.

Parents are asked to bring a labeled water bottle daily for children to bring outside on the playground to stay well hydrated. Spill proof cups are permitted in our toddler classes. Sunscreen and insect repellent should be applied by the parent before arrival at school.

We have three outdoor play areas available for school use. One of our play areas known as “The Park” is not connected to the school building. “The Park” is a grassy area located on the West side of the school and is fenced. Another play area is located near the lower preschool building. Children walk to the play areas along a sidewalk with one teacher at the front of the class and one at the back. Attendance is taken before leaving the classroom and upon arrival and vice versa to ensure the safety of the children during transitions. The children are not required to walk in the street or parking lot in order to enter the play areas. The gates to the playground are kept closed while the children are present.

Due to our license by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, only children in care by our staff may use the playground areas during the school hours of operation. When using the play areas after school, play at your own risk and adhere to the age requirements for each play area. Children must be supervised at all times while on our campus.

Our Playland playscape is designed for children ages 3 years and older. The playscape located near Playland and the Indoor Playscape in the Student & Children’s Center are approved for children over the age of 5 years. State Licensing requirements do not allow our facility to use the larger playscape or the indoor playscape.

Clothing:

Label all items your child brings to school with their first and last name. Please do not bring personal toys unless needed for security or as requested by teacher for show and tell or special events.

Please send your child with a coat, hat and gloves/mittens for cold weather since the children will play outdoors even in winter weather. In sunny weather, children’s clothing should protect them from sun exposure, which may include hats. Dress children in clothes that do not bind, that are comfortable and are appropriate for outdoor play as well as paint and play-dough activities in the classroom. Clothing should permit easy movement and all walking children must wear closed-toe shoes. Footwear should provide support for running and climbing. Examples of appropriate footwear include gym shoes or sturdy shoe equivalent that do not come off when running or climbing. Examples of appropriate outerwear include breathable jackets and clothing that cannot catch on playground equipment, such as those with drawstrings or loops.

Send multiple pairs of extra underwear for potty training 2- and 3-year-olds, as well as multiple sets of extra changes of outer clothing. It is often helpful to have an extra pair of socks and shoes. Pull-ups are not permitted in any age group. Teach your child to be independent—to dress himself/herself, to button and zip. Dress your child in clothes that they can manipulate themselves so that they have more success in potty learning. We recommend shorts be worn underneath dresses.

Quiet Time:

Children under the age of 18 months on September 1st will nap during the school day. Even though nap time is generally after lunch (12:00-1:30), the staff may provide a quiet/nap time for the children that is more consistent with their regular daily routine, which may include a morning nap. You may choose to pick your child up early in order to have your child nap at home, however, no refunds or discounts will be given.

All children who attend extended care, regardless of age, will have a rest time. Children who fall asleep will be permitted to sleep as long as needed. Children who do not fall asleep will be given books, puzzles and other quiet activities and will be allowed to get up after a 30-minute rest. Children who fall asleep and then awake before pick up time will be allowed to get up to play. Activities during play time may include art activities, blocks, dramatic play, sensory, science and outdoor play.

Parent Communication:

Riverbend Christian School has subscribed to brightwheel, a childcare management app that helps staff and parents have a channel for communication. We believe communication between our staff and school parents is essential to a successful school experience. Teachers in our MDO classes will provide daily posts about the child's day at school such as diaper changing and meals. Teachers will provide weekly notes so that parents are informed about learning activities and special events. Weekly lesson plans and the class schedule are posted in each classroom for parents to see.

Photos are also shared on the app, creating a record of the child's school year. Please note that the supervision and safety of the children is first priority, and it may not be possible for staff to take and send photos of the children every day. Staff are expected to at least send photos two times per week, or more frequently, if time allows.

All written communication is done within the brightwheel app. **Please be respectful of teacher's time when they are off the clock. If messaging in the evening or on the weekend, your child's teacher may not be able to reply until their next workday.** Please do not ask for your teacher's email. Unless there is an emergency, please do not ask your child's teacher to call you outside of school hours. We recommend scheduling a time during your teacher's workday for them to phone you or to meet in person about any questions or concerns you have about your child.

Brightwheel has two messaging options for parents and staff. Regular messages can be seen by parent, staff assigned to the child's class and RBCS Admin. Admin – Parent Messages cannot be seen by your child's teacher, they can only be seen by parent and Admin. This is a good option for billing questions or other questions you do not want your child's teacher to see. When letting us know about changes in pick up person or late pick up, it is helpful to use regular messaging so that your child's teacher sees the message.

There is NO parent to parent messaging on brightwheel, so no other parents in the class or school can see any messages you send or receive through the app. Class lists with contact information are posted in the Documents section of brightwheel so that parents can email, text or call each other.

The school office will communicate with parents through brightwheel newsletters, emails and texts and will often point parents to specific pages on our website for detailed information about school happenings.

Whenever possible, teachers will provide opportunities for verbal communication with parents which may include conversations at drop off and pick up times and conferences, when requested.

Infant Safe Sleep Policy:

All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers will follow these safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS):

- Always put infants to sleep on their backs unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.
- Place infants on a firm mattress, with a tight-fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full size cribs and for non-full-size cribs.
- For infants who are younger than 12 months of age, cribs should be bare except for a tight-fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector. Items that should not be placed in a crib include: soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts, or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys/animals; soft objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices. Also, infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing.
- Do not use sleep positioning devices, such as wedges or infant positioners. The AAP has found no evidence that these devices are safe. Their use may increase the risk of suffocation.
- Ensure that sleeping areas are ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- If an infant needs extra warmth, use sleep clothing such as a sleep sack or footed pajamas as an alternative to blankets.
- Place only one infant in a crib to sleep.
- Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. But the pacifier must *not be attached* to a stuffed animal or the infant's clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk.

- If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing, or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), move the infant to a crib immediately, unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.
- Our child care program is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas child care operations (this includes e-cigarettes and any type of vaporizers).
- Actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound.
- If an infant is able to roll back and forth from front to back, place the infant on the infant's back for sleep and allow the infant to assume a preferred sleep position.
- Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time" several times daily. This will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally.
- Do not swaddle an infant for sleep for rest unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.

Biting Policy:

We recognize that biting is a terrible thing for the victim, the parents of the victim, the teachers, and the parents of the biter. We also recognize that biting is "developmentally appropriate". Please do not infer that statement to imply that it is acceptable. The problem is that it is natural for most children under three years of age to bite. Children who have not acquired verbal skills do not have the ability to tell us when they are anxious, hurting, upset or stressed. As a result, they have a tendency to bite. Children who are in pain due to teething also have a tendency to bite.

Each time a child bites, an incident report is written for the victim's parents and the biter's parents are also informed. We follow privacy acts and will not release the children's names to the other parent involved. Our staff is trained to give all of their attention to the child who is bitten. TLC and hugs will be given to the injured child while the child who did the biting will be told very sternly "No Biting". First aid will be provided, if needed. We recognize that some children bite just to get attention even if it is negative, so attention goes first to the child who was bitten.

If a child is biting consistently, the parents will be asked for support at home to help end the biting. During the school day, the child who is biting will be shadowed and be provided with more one-on-one supervision so that caregiver can intervene quickly. Teething toys will be provided, and we will encourage the biter to use those objects to bite when they feel the urge. Teachers will make observations about when the biting is taking place to see patterns in the child's behavior. If the situation doesn't improve, a parent conference will be scheduled.

Photo Policy:

RBCS staff take photos and videos of the children during school activities to use for classroom and school purposes. These photos and videos are most often shared with class families and to provide the parents with a highlight of the child's school year by posting on the feed in brightwheel. Photos may also be printed to display in the classroom or sent home as memorabilia.

On your child's registration form you indicate whether the school has permission to use your child's photo or if you would only like the child's photo to be used by the child's teacher in the classroom. Children will never be identified by name in photos used on the school web site, on social media or in marketing materials. Contact the school office if you are unsure what photo permissions you have provided for your child.

During parties and special events, attendees of the events may take photos or videos that may include other children. RBCS is not responsible if these photos are shared with people outside of the school or shared on social media.

Riverbend Church has placed cameras in various areas on campus for security reasons. RBCS does not have control over when these cameras are in operation or access to live feeds or recordings. As part of the continued security improvements, more cameras will be placed around the children's buildings and to monitor the playgrounds, and they will continue to be used for security purposes only.

Water Play & Jump Houses:

Due to safety concerns, RBCS does not allow swimming/wading pools at school or during school parties. Sprinkler play may be used. Sprinkler equipment may not be used near a hard, slippery surface. On occasion, the classes may also do foam in

conjunction with sprinkler play. Children frequently have sensory play in the classroom as well as outdoors, which typically includes using a water table. The water play policy is acknowledged with parent's signature on the registration form.

State Licensing does not permit the use of jump houses during regular school hours, even at off campus school parties.

Field Trips & Transportation:

During the school year, classes may have opportunities to leave campus and visit area businesses and parks or celebrate the end of the school year. Parent participation is essential to the success of our field trips. Riverbend Christian School does not provide transportation. Teachers are not permitted to drive, so we require the child's parent to drive their child to and from the class's destination in their privately owned vehicle. If this is not possible, parents should arrange transportation for their child. Teachers are not permitted to arrange transportation for children in their class.

Classroom Pets:

Some of our classrooms may have small pets such as hamsters, mice and guinea pigs. Children will participate in the feeding of the class pet. Please let your child's teacher know if your child is allergic to animals. Unless a pet day is scheduled through the office, Riverbend Christian School does not allow animals to accompany parents at drop off or pick up. The health and safety of all children is the consideration. All approved pets visiting from home must have proof of current vaccinations.

Visitors:

All visitors to our campus should report to the school office. They will be required to show proper identification and receive a visitor badge, which they should wear at all times during their visit. Parents who would like to enter the building or visit their child's classroom between 9:30 and 1:00 must report to the office to receive a visitor pass.

Hold Harmless Policy:

Riverbend Christian School is not liable for anything that happens while one of its employees babysits or provides other services to school parents outside of their work hours.

Policy Changes:

Please read the school newsletter and watch for any policy changes during the school year. Important information will also be provided through brightwheel communication and updated on the school website.

Additional Information

Child Care Licensing:

Riverbend Christian School is regulated by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. A copy of the minimum standards and our most recent licensing inspection report is available for review at the school office.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHS) website is www.hhs.texas.gov.

The Child Care Licensing website is childcare.hhs.texas.gov/Child-Care.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) website is www.dfps.state.tx.us.

You may contact the local Licensing Office at 834-3195.

The 24-hour toll free child abuse hotline is 1-800-252-5400.

The director and assistant director are available to address any questions or concerns that you might have.

Preventing & Responding to Abuse & Neglect of Children:

All teachers receive annual training on child abuse and neglect that includes the following:

Physical abuse includes actions such as beating, burning, or punching a child.

Emotional abuse may involve criticizing, insulting, rejecting, or withholding love from a child.

Sexual abuse includes rape, touching or fondling, or involving a child in pornography.

Neglect includes failure to provide for a child's basic physical, medical, or emotional needs. Leaving a young child home alone or failing to provide needed medical care may also be considered neglect.

Signs of Abuse

Children who are abused might show physical signs or sudden changes in their behavior or school performance. These signs don't prove that children are being abused, but they could be a signal that the children or their families need help. When children talk about being abused, take them seriously. Take steps to get help!

General Signs of Abuse

Abused children might seem:

- Nervous around adults or afraid of certain adults.
- Reluctant to go home (coming to school too early or staying late, for example)
- Very passive and withdrawn or aggressive and disruptive.
- Tired a lot, or they might complain of nightmares or not sleeping well.
- Fearful and anxious.

Signs of Neglect

- Missing school a lot
- Begging for food, stealing food, or stealing money for food.
- Lacking needed medical or dental care.
- Being frequently dirty.
- Using alcohol or other drugs.
- Saying there is not one at home to take care of them.

Signs of Physical Abuse

- Unexplained burns, bruises, black eyes, or other injuries.
- Apparent fear of a parent or caretaker.
- Faded bruises or healing injuries after missing school.

Signs of Sexual Abuse

- Difficulty walking or sitting, or other indications of injury in the genital area.
- Sexual knowledge or behavior beyond what is normal for the child's age.
- Running away from home.

Signs of Emotional Abuse

- Acting overly mature or immature for the child's age.
- Extreme changes in behavior.
- Delays in physical or emotional development.
- Attempted suicide.
- Lack of emotional attachment to the parent.

Prevention Techniques

Being a parent is hard, and every parent needs help from time to time.

- Are your kids driving you crazy?
- Do you yell at them a lot?
- Are you stressed out?
- Trouble paying the bills?
- Are drugs or alcohol a problem?
- Feeling hopeless and don't know where to turn?

Abuse and neglect affect people of every age, race, and family income level. The majority of parents who abuse their children love their children, but many factors can lead them to do things they regret.

- **Trouble managing stress.** Problems with work, money, or relationships put a strain on family life. If a parent or caretaker has trouble managing stress, it can lead to abuse.

- **A lack of parenting skills.** Some parents might not understand how to care for a child's basic needs or they might have unrealistic ideas about a child's abilities and behavior. They might punish behavior that is natural for a child.
- **A history of abuse.** Many child abusers were abused or witnessed abuse as children.
- **A problem with alcohol or other drugs.** Alcohol and other drugs impair a person's ability to act as a responsible, caring parent. They can also make it harder to control emotions—especially anger.

These factors can be overcome, and abuse and neglect can be prevented. Don't lash out when you are angry with your child—instead:

- Take a deep breath.
- Call someone or ask a friend to watch your kids while you calm down.
- Call [1-800-252-5400](tel:1-800-252-5400) to find someone to talk to.
- Find a [parenting class in your community](#) to learn about ways to handle the stresses of dealing with kids.
- Use this website www.dfps.state.tx.us to help you resolve any underlying issues, such as alcohol or drug abuse.

Community Organizations:

Get to know your neighbors.

- Develop friendly relationships with your neighbors and their children and grandchildren.
- Make your neighborhood your extended family. People feel better and safer when support is nearby.

Help out a family under stress.

- Offer to babysit, help with chores, or run errands.
- Suggest resources in the community such as faith community leaders, doctors, and teachers.

Volunteer in the community.

You can volunteer with a local organization or donate to them. Call [2-1-1](tel:2-1-1) or visit your local [United Way](#) to find an organization to get help.

Get involved in a local school.

- Join the parent-teacher organization.
- Attend school events such as plays, sporting events, and music performances.
- Start a neighborhood watch.

Parent Grievances:

If you have a concern about a classroom, staff member, or other school-related issue, please first discuss your concern with your classroom teacher. If needed, a conference can be scheduled between you and the teacher to allow for privacy.

If a conference has not satisfied the issue, then the complaint shall go straight to the director's attention. Together the director, teacher, and parents will develop a plan of action. By keeping open lines of communication, parents and teachers can avoid conflicts together. All complaints will remain confidential.

Unsafe Children's Products:

Recalls of unsafe consumer products, including children's products, are available. Visit the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission web site at www.cpsc.gov or you may access the recall information through the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services web site www.dfps.state.tx.us. A link is also provided on the resource page of our web site.

Gang Free Zone:

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. The Riverbend Christian School campus is a designated gang free zone. Gang related activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of a childcare center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

Pest Control:

Our school buildings and other areas on the Riverbend campus are serviced by ABC Pest Control once a month.

Riverbend Church:

Riverbend's message is simple: come just as you are and experience God's grace. It doesn't matter where you are on your journey – you're invited to come and visit.

You and your family are cordially invited to participate in worship as well as the many activities here at Riverbend Church.

Sunday Worship: 9:00 – Traditional Service – Intimate, hymn-based worship in Smith Family Chapel
 10:30 – Contemporary – Engaging worship in Home for Hope

Please visit www.riverbend.com for more information.

Dr. Dave Haney is Riverbend's Senior Pastor. Nick Steinloski is the Executive Family Pastor and is liaison to Riverbend Christian School.
