



Big Blue Marble  
Academy



**PARENT HANDBOOK**

# ALL CHILDREN DESERVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO REACH THEIR HIGHEST POTENTIAL.

At Big Blue Marble Academy, we provide that opportunity by igniting a child's natural curiosity through a curriculum that focuses on global education, language immersion, and character development through giving back to communities around the world.

## Welcome to Big Blue Marble Academy!

At Big Blue Marble Academy you can expect a safe, productive learning environment. Our teachers are trained and dedicated to helping children develop the skills to prepare your child for global citizenship.

This handbook serves as your guide to our program to help you understand the policies, procedures and goals of Big Blue Marble Academy. It is considered part of the contractual agreement between the parent and Big Blue Marble Academy. You may also receive additional information in your enrollment materials that further describe your local school's policies.

Big Blue Marble has an open door policy. You may access this facility anytime your child is in care, but you need to immediately make your presence known to the person in charge of the facility.

We reserve the right to modify these policies and procedures at any time to comply with state regulations or company directives.

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### HOLIDAY CLOSING SCHEDULE

- New Year's Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Open until 12:00 PM Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

# General Operating Procedures

## CLASSROOM AGE GROUPS

Infant (6 weeks - 12 months), Toddler (12 - 24 months), Twos, Threes, Fours & After School Group

## GENERAL PROCEDURES

### Attendance

For the benefit of your child, we ask that you maintain a regular pattern of attendance. If you are receiving subsidy from social services or any other program and your child does not meet the agency's attendance requirements, you will be responsible for tuition charges not paid for by the agency.

In order to maintain a quality program with proper staffing, we ask that you notify the director if your child will be absent or late. If your child uses Big Blue Marble Academy transportation and will not be riding that day, please notify the director at least two hours before the scheduled pick up or drop off time.

### Payments

Tuition payments are due every Monday. Our preferred payment method is electronic draft, however, we also accept payments online, via credit card, money order or check. For safety reasons, we do not accept cash. Any payment returned for non-sufficient funds will incur a \$30 fee. Parents wishing to pay bi-weekly or monthly must pay in advance. Please see the Center Director for questions on payments and for details on our online payment system.

### Payments that are Late

Late payments incur a \$25 fee if not paid by Wednesday. If payment has not been made by the end of business on Friday, your child may not attend on Monday of the next week until past and current tuition is paid. We reserve the right to cancel services to parents who have payments overdue. Parents wishing to pay bi-weekly or monthly must pay in advance. Please see the center director for questions on payments and for details on our online payment system.

### Records

For your child's safety, and to comply with state regulations, we require that all enrollment forms, emergency medical information, medical forms, parent contracts, immunization records and feeding plans must be completed before your child's first day of attendance. It is the parents' responsibility to update their files regularly and inform the director of any changes. If a natural parent is unauthorized to pick up a child, we REQUIRE copies of court documents stating so in the child's file, as it is unlawful for us to prohibit a parent from picking up the child.



### Registration

Families are responsible for a non-refundable registration fee due at the time of enrollment. Annual registration fees are charged in the first full week of September each year. Late registrations are subject to a fee and will only be accepted if space permits. Ask your director for specific fees and dates.

### Staff

Each staff member has been selected based on their educational background, experience and their enthusiasm to work with children. For all employees an FBI criminal records check and fingerprinting will be performed and comply with all local, state and federal laws and regulations.

### Transition Policy

Throughout the course of each day, your child's teacher is required to do a name to face visual attendance check to verify the safety of each child in his/her care. These counts are visually done and documented every 30 minutes in the classrooms or more often when outside or on field trips. They are also used when children transition to other classrooms.

### Vacation

Each child will receive one week of vacation per year. The child is eligible after 6 months of enrollment. This only applies to families with a clear account balance. On public school holidays, there is an additional daily charge for school age children in our program (but not to exceed the full-time rate for the school age group). Children not enrolled in our programs will be charged the daily drop-in rate up to the full-time rate for the week.

### Weather

During severe weather, or other emergency, the director will contact local emergency personnel for information. Should an emergency requiring evacuation occur, you will be notified immediately and the children will be re-located to a designated station. The director can provide you with more information regarding your school's local emergency plan. In the event there are extreme temperatures, we will adhere to licensing guidelines for outside playtime.



If it becomes necessary to close due to inclement weather or other circumstances, calls will be made to parents. Please check our website, social media pages, local news channels, and/or radio stations for announcements and updates. If local schools close due to weather, transportation will not operate.

In the event of hazardous weather conditions or water/power outages beyond our control, we reserve the right to close for the safety of the children and our staff. Full tuition for the week will be due.

### Withdrawal

A two week written notice is required if you choose to withdraw your child from our program for any reason. The notice is not effective until given to the director.

## Getting Ready for Your Child's First Day

Many young children are anxious about new experiences, especially starting at a new school. Our teachers and staff will do everything possible to make your child's adjustment as smooth as possible.

### VISIT OUR SCHOOL

Before your child's first day, make arrangements for a visit for your child to share lunch or story time with new friends before the first full day.



### ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD

Listen to your child's feeling about going to school and encourage him/her to feel good about this new experience. Please share any concerns or fears that your child has with the teacher, so that he or she may pay special attention to these issues right from the start.

### WHAT TO BRING

Children will spend time indoors and outdoors daily. Please dress your child in weather-appropriate play clothes, suitable for all types of activities including painting and eating. Closed-toed shoes with at least a strap on the heel must be worn at all times. Expensive clothing or shoes should not be worn for daily play. Every child should have a full change of clothing in their assigned cubby or locker. Items to include (as applicable): undergarments, socks, diapers, labeled bottles with caps, blanket for naps.

Big Blue Marble Academy is not responsible for lost or damaged clothing. We also recommend that you label all apparel. Please check the lost and found if an item is missing. While we recommend that ALL children not wear jewelry to school, it is our policy to prohibit children under the age of two to wear jewelry or earrings, as they can injure a child, especially in a group environment. Loose jewelry may be removed by teachers for safety.



## Arrival and Departure Procedures



### ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

#### Morning

Parents are required to bring their child inside and accompany them to the classroom each day. You must notify the teacher in charge when your child has arrived and when they are departing with you. All children must be signed in by an adult at least 18 years old.

#### Afternoon

Children must be picked up by the center's closing time or as directed at your Big Blue Marble Academy location. All children must be signed out by an adult at least 18 years old. Parents/guardians or emergency contacts will be contacted by telephone if the child has not been picked up by the designated pick up time. If no contact can be made with a parent/guardian or emergency contact 30 minutes past closing, appropriate local agencies will be called.

Children may not be picked up over the fence or off the playground.

#### Late Pick-Up

Whenever possible, parents should call the center when they will be late for pick up. Alternate pick up arrangements should be considered. Continued late pick up may result in suspension or termination of services. Late pick up fees will be \$10.00 for the first 15 minutes and \$5.00 for each additional 15 minutes, per child (i.e. 30 minutes late would be a late fee of \$15.00). Fees must be paid upon arrival of the next attended day.

### SIGN IN/OUT PROCEDURES

When you drop off or pick up a child, you must sign your child in or out. A child will be released ONLY to the persons who are listed on the authorized pick-up section of the enrollment form. If unauthorized persons come to pick up a child, the parents will be notified. The persons authorized to pick up a child must be 18 years old and must show a photo ID. All unknown visitors must present a valid photo ID in order to pick up a child.

If a parent or authorized person arriving to pick up a child, is observed as being under the influence of drugs or alcohol, the child will be kept on Big Blue Marble Academy property pending notification of properly authorized personnel.

## Discipline and Behavior Management

We want each child to enjoy the activities planned and benefit from their experience with Big Blue Marble Academy. Please make sure your child is aware of our rules.

Parents will be informed by phone, in writing and through parent conferences if their child continues to display behavior problems. Discipline techniques involve positive reinforcement for good behavior and explanation of behavior that is unacceptable. Children may be denied the opportunity to participate in an activity if poor behavior continues, that child will be directed to an alternative activity. Corporal discipline will not be used nor will food or other care needs be denied as punishment.

### BITING

Although common in young children, biting can be a frustrating problem. If a child bites frequently, staff will utilize a more intensive approach which involves carefully observing the child to determine precipitating events and maintaining a log to track the behavior. Conferences with parents may also be utilized to discuss the child's actions at home, search for outside resources, etc.

Parents will be notified if their child is bitten at school. However, in order to protect the privacy of all our families, parents will not be informed of the identity of the biter.

Biting incidents will also be communicated to the parent of the biter to ensure that staff and parents work together to understand and prevent this behavior. In order to ensure the safety of all the children, if all the attempts to stop the biting fail, we reserve the right to remove the biting child from our program.

### CORPORAL PUNISHMENT

Corporal discipline will not be used at anytime on the Big Blue Marble Academy premises by anyone. Corporal Punishment includes but not limited to spanking, biting, pinching, jerking or popping body parts.

### DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The following behavior problems may lead to disciplinary action, suspension and/or termination from Big Blue Marble Academy:

- Repeatedly engaging in fighting.
- Stealing or defacing the school/site or other property.
- Refusing to follow basic safety rules.
- Continued disrespect of staff and other children.
- Discourteous behavior toward staff and other children.
- Continually not following established rules, guidelines and/or instructions.
- Bullying on any level will not be tolerated. Big Blue Marble Academy reserves the right to immediately suspend and/or terminate services due to violation of this policy.



### SUSPENSION AND/OR TERMINATION

Parents will be given written notification of termination with a one-week period for obtaining new services. Immediate termination could occur if Big Blue Marble Academy staff feel it cannot maintain the safety and well-being of the child or other children.

### PARENT AND VISITOR CONDUCT

Parents and visitors are reminded to refrain from using profanity or any other inappropriate behavior in front of children. Any inappropriate behavior will result in the person being asked to leave the premises.

## Health, Illness and Safety



### CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT

Big Blue Marble Academy is required by law to report any and all forms of abuse and neglect to the appropriate local agency. We will cooperate with the authorities in the investigation of any reported cases.

### COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

Parents must contact the center within 24 hours of their child or any member of the household being diagnosed with a communicable disease so that other families can be notified if their child has been exposed. We will provide parents with written and verbal notification, as well as posted notices on bulletin boards or signage on doors.

If a child has a serious illness, the parents must have a doctor's statement that the child is able to participate in the normal routine before they return to the classroom. Directors may deny admission to a child until they deem that he/she is healthy.

## EMERGENCIES

In the event of an emergency, parents will be contacted by the director via telephone and informed of any change in location. If parent/guardian cannot be reached, Emergency Contacts will be contacted. If no one can be reached within two hours, the appropriate local agency will be contacted. A copy of each center's Emergency Action Plan including evacuation location is available upon request.

## HYGIENE

It is important to keep your child's fingernails trimmed and well groomed at all times. Proper maintenance will reduce the incidences of children scratching themselves or others. This is especially true for children age two and under. It will also help reduce the spread of germs and assist children with their hand washing skills.

## INJURIES

All staff will be certified/trained in CPR and First Aid based on local licensing requirements. In the event of an accident at our school we will follow the proper procedures outlined below:

- Administer First Aid for minor accidents (cuts, scrapes, bruises, etc.) according to the proper procedures.
- Complete a written Accident Report concerning the injury, signed off by management and given to parents upon arrival.
- Contact parent/guardian/emergency contact if the injury is above the shoulder or appears to require attention by the parent. We will record all attempts made to contact the parent.
- If the injury requires immediate medical attention we will contact Emergency Medical Service authorities (911). Your child may be transported by ambulance to a designated hospital. A staff member will stay with the child until the parent/guardian/emergency contact arrives. Any injury requiring medical treatment, will be report to any required state agency within 24 hours.



## MEDICATIONS

Prescription and over the counter medications will only be administered to children with written parent permission and also required by a doctor to be given during the time of care at Big Blue Marble Academy. All paperwork must be filled out completely. Only designated staff members are to distribute medicine and will do so according to the center medicine administration schedule. Staff will monitor children for any adverse reactions, and will contact management, the parent and medical personnel (as applicable) if any such reaction is noted. We give medication out only under strict guidelines as dictated by our regulatory agencies except in the state of Virginia. Prescription medications will only be

given to the child whose name is typed on the original prescription label. Expired medicine will not be given to a child under any circumstance. Please talk to the Center Director for specific details on the Medication Administration Policy.

## SICKNESS

Illness impacts how children learn, develop, and participate in their environment. We want all children to come to school knowing that they are able to participate. Often it is hard to decide whether or not your child is well enough to come to school. It is important that sick children stay home to limit the spread of illness. If your child comes to school or develops any of the symptoms below while at school, you will be asked to pick up your child within 1 hour. Children will be kept in an isolated area from other children until they are picked up.

### Colds

Constant green or yellow nasal discharge indicates infection. Children should not return to school until they have been treated.

### Conjunctivitis or Pink Eye

Children with red, itchy, draining or crusty eyes may have a highly contagious eye infection. Child should not return to school until 24 hours after successful antibiotic treatment.

### Diarrhea and/or Vomiting

Child must be symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school.

### Fever

100 degrees or higher. Child should be fever free for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

### Lice or Scabies

Child should not return until 24 hours after the child and home have been treated and are found to be lice free.

### Pain

Including headache, stomach ache, ear ache, etc.

### Skin Sores and/or Rash

Please have a doctor evaluate that have been diagnosed that they are not contagious before returning to school.

## SMOKE FREE

Big Blue Marble Academy is a smoke-free facility. No smoking is allowed in the center or on our property.

## SAFE SLEEPING PRACTICES FOR INFANTS

Based on the Academy of Pediatrics guidelines, infants will be in individual cribs, initially placed on their on their backs for sleep with no cover or soft items in their crib. Appropriate sleep clothing for infants should be provided by parents/guardian. Infants who fall asleep in other equipment shall be moved to a crib to sleep; no swaddling or positioning devices will be used.



## Meals and Snacks



### MEALS

Big Blue Marble Academy serves balanced and nutritious breakfast, lunch and snack each day. There is no charge for our meals. Our menu meets the USDA food program guidelines.

We do not allow children to bring food to school, the only exceptions will be for documented religious or medical reasons. If a special diet is required, parents may be asked to supply the necessary food.

Some states require infant bottles to be prepared by the parent check with your center director for your location's requirements. All parents must provide clean bottles labeled with the child's first and last name, contents and date. Unused portions of bottles will be discarded after one hour from the beginning of the feed. All infants are held while being bottle fed and are placed in cribs only to sleep.

Menus are posted in all centers.

### SNACKS

After school students will be given a snack in the afternoon.

We are also peanut-safe, meaning please do not send your child with any snack containing any peanut products.



## Transportation



Any child that is transported in a Big Blue Marble Academy vehicle will abide by the following safety procedures:

- Children will be picked up and dropped off in a designated area
- Children waiting for the vehicle must remain in the designated area until we arrive at that location.
- Any child riding our vehicle will be seated in a seat and restrained by a seat belt or other seat restraint system as required by law based on the child's age and weight.
- Children are expected to act in an orderly manner.
- Continued disruptive behavior by any child on the vehicle may result in termination of transportation and/or child care services.
- If there is no one at the drop-off site, the child will be escorted into the school by the bus driver.
- We do not pick-up or drop-off from homes.

### Field Trips

Children participating in field trips will only be transported in Big Blue Marble Academy vehicles. Children must follow the same safety procedures as our regular transportation.

### Cancelling Transportation

Parents must notify Big Blue Marble Academy two hours in advance if their child is not riding our transportation on a regularly scheduled day.

# Important Statements

## CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Information pertaining to your child is considered confidential and will not be released by Big Blue Marble Academy to third parties without first obtaining your written permission. However, it may be necessary to share relevant information relating to your child's family situation, medical status and behavioral characteristics with authorized members of the state child care licensing agency or with persons authorized by the state licensing regulations or law to receive such information. Big Blue Marble Academy is required to comply with subpoenas for information and documentation, without parental consent.

## USDA NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Big Blue Marble Academy does not discriminate based on disability in its application and enrollment processes or access to services. Please inquire of the center director for further information regarding the Americans With Disabilities Act and accommodations.

# Parent Acknowledgement

This is to certify that I have received, read; understand the **Big Blue Marble Academy Parent Handbook**.

I agree to and will abide by all policies and procedures set forth in the **Big Blue Marble Academy Parent Handbook** and understand that this form will be made part of my child's registration packet and placed in his/her file.

My signature acknowledges that I understand these policies and that I will be notified of any changes to them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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