

PARENT HANDBOOK

2022/2023

INTRODUCTION

Bower Tree Preschool is a hybrid Montessori/Waldorf preschool program for children 2 1/2 to 5 years old. The school is located in a beautiful family home in the Eliot neighborhood of northeast Portland. Our pedagogical focus is on both free play and developmentally supportive Montessori-style work. We emphasize reverence for the natural world, daily ritual, singing, storytelling, poetry, art, social-emotional development, and practical life skills. The children spend a large portion of the day outside in the fenced yard of an urban homestead, with several garden beds of vegetables and herbs, a quail hutch, a large sycamore maple, a fig tree, an asian pear tree, a cherry tree, and a variety of native plants including a rain garden. Our schoolyard also includes a pavilion that houses an outdoor classroom and cooking area. The aesthetic of the program is primarily inspired by Waldorf education, though the classroom design is informed by the Montessori approach with small work stations and a rotating selection of prepared activities.

Each day the children are served nutritious meals and snacks, which they are invited to help prepare. They are also invited to help care for our quails, turtles, fish, dog, and gardens, as well as the school environment itself by means of tasks such as sweeping, dusting, sanding, mending, plant watering, and washing. The children enjoy a daily rhythm of activities including free outdoor and indoor play, watercolor painting, baking, gardening, sewing, and crafts. Each day includes a circle time, during which children take part in songs, movements, and poems that celebrate the cycles of the natural world as well as traditional folklore associated with the season. Story time is another important aspect of our daily rhythm, encouraging children to engage with seasonal themes (as well as their spiritual, emotional, and social undertones) through drama and puppetry. Both story time and meal times are held in a reverent manner, with a lit candle and a verse or song to celebrate the act of coming together to share a group experience.

Tuition includes all meals and snacks served at the school, as well as monthly recordings of the songs, poems, and stories that the children are currently immersed in, for your family's enjoyment at home. By the end of the month, the children will know all of this material by heart, with accompanying movements! Bower Tree offers a unique, artistic blend of original and traditional material including songs, poems, stories, finger plays, singing games (simple dances accompanied by a song), poems set to music, verses for daily rituals such as candle lighting and meal blessing, and more. The content of our circles is curated, and often composed or written, for the group of children present in the school at that time. You are warmly encouraged to share your family's cultural background so that it can inform the crafting of each month's spoken language curriculum.

The children at Bower Tree are surrounded by natural materials, age-appropriate tools, simple toys, and opportunities for rich and varied sensory experience. We believe that play is the true work of childhood, and also that play and work need not be strictly differentiated. We strive to blur the line between the two, encouraging and modeling mindful, joyful engagement with the life of the home and with the world of which we are a part. During lengthy play/work periods, children are given the opportunity to move naturally among freely chosen tasks, play, art, Montessori-style lessons and activities, small group gatherings, and a weekly rhythm of activities. Throughout our time together, in the context of both work and play (as well as all other parts of our day), children are encouraged toward an awareness of themselves as part of a sacred web of interdependent relationships.

RHYTHMS

Children live in a world of rhythm: the rhythm of the breath in their bodies, the rhythm of waking and sleeping each day, the rhythm of the world around them as the seasons change. Children flourish when their lives move to a rhythm as well, and they find comfort in the routine of daily activities.

With this in mind, our program follows a daily and weekly rhythm of activities. Each school day includes its own special activity that happens during free play: crafting on Monday, baking on Tuesday, watercolor painting on Wednesday, and cleaning (care of the environment) on Thursday. Special attention is also given to transitioning between different parts of the day. Transitions are signaled with songs or musical phrases, and plenty of time is allowed for them so that they can proceed at a gentle, unhurried pace. Each month is differentiated by its own selection of circle songs/poems and its own story, which all tie into an overarching theme related to the rhythms of nature and traditions related to that time of year, connecting the child's daily classroom experience with the cycles of the greater world.

Daily Rhythm

8:30 – 8:40 Drop offs, greetings, hand washing, helping to set the table, prepare breakfast, make tea

8:40 - 9:00 Breakfast, morning sharing, finger plays & rhymes, read aloud

9:00 - 9:15 Clean up breakfast table, transition to circle time

9:15 - 9:30 Circle time (indoor or outdoor)

9:30 - 10:15 Morning work and play period, morning snack, individual & group activities (indoor or outdoor)

10:15 – 10:30 Clean up and transition to outside if not outside already

10:30- 11:45 Outdoor play and lunch prep

12:00 - 12:30 Handwashing & Lunch

12:30 - 12:40 Lunch cleanup and pickup for half day children

12:40 – 1:00 Story time / self-care (hair brushing, face washing, foot baths) / quiet activities on mats

1:00 – 2:00 Rest time for full day children

2:00 - 2:50 Afternoon play and work period; afternoon snack / tea time

2:50 - 3:00 Clean up, pickup for full day children

Weekly Rhythm (group activities offered during free play/work time)

Monday: crafting day

We engage in a variety of activities that involve making things with the hands, as well as developing fine motor skills, hand strength, and hand-eye coordination: bead stringing, sewing, wet felting, finger knitting, working with wood or beeswax or clay, or crafting with other natural materials such as twigs, pine cones, and leaves.

Tuesday: baking day

We make bread as a class to eat during lunch and take home to families. Occasionally we will have a special baking or cooking project on Tuesday instead of breadmaking.

Wednesday: painting day

Using the wet-on-wet watercolor technique and high-quality materials, children will explore one or two colors at a time to dive deep into sensory appreciation of color, water, and thick paper.

Thursday: washing day

Our activity on Thursday is cloth washing (or stuffie washing) using wash boards and bar soap, plus a smattering of other “care of the environment” activities from Montessori such as dusting, plant care, table washing, window washing, and floor washing. This is an opportunity to mindfully close the week by showing care for our classroom and having a sensory experience of cleansing.

Beginning the Day

What happens during our school day is affected by how the day begins for your child. By keeping mornings as consistent as possible, you are helping your child prepare for a day of learning and activity. We ask that children

not be exposed to electronic media in the morning before arrival. The morning meal will be served at about 8:45am, so please plan accordingly. And most important of all, children need to be dressed for the weather!

Morning Arrival

Drop off time is from 8:30 - 8:40 AM. Please plan to arrive on time. **If you arrive early, please refrain from knocking until 8:30 and wait until the teacher comes to let you in.** If a late arrival is necessary, we appreciate you letting us know via text message (503-201-5469). To report an absence the day of, if earlier notification is not possible, please call or text as soon as you can to let us know that your child won't be attending.

Morning transitions can be tricky, but a warm and brief goodbye is almost always best! We will contact you if your child is having extended trouble adjusting to being at school after you leave, but usually children are right as rain after just a few minutes.

Please refrain from bringing home toys to school, as they can cause conflict and confusion. Bower Tree is not responsible for toys brought from home that are then lost or damaged. Children are, however, encouraged to bring in a found natural object for show and tell!

Afternoon Departure

At pick up time, please bring home all of the belongings that came to school that day. We will do our utmost to gather all of the children's things at the front door and have everything ready to go, but it is your responsibility to take your child's belongings home. Wet or dirty clothes will be placed in a bag for laundering at home and should be replaced with clean clothes the next school day to keep in your child's cubby at school. Also make sure to check your child's mail box for finished art or other school mail. Please arrive on time for pick up, and let us know via text message if you are going to be more than five minutes late. **Beginning at 10 minutes after your child's scheduled pick up time, a late fee of \$1 per minute will be charged.**

School Meals

Food is a very important part of the Bower Tree program. We will work together each day to prepare an organic, whole foods morning meal, morning snack, lunch, and afternoon snack. Morning snack will be largely prepared and served by the children using provided ingredients. We will follow a meal rhythm each week, according to a menu that will occasionally shift based on season, ingredient availability, and the children's response to the food. Certain things will remain consistent throughout the school year, such as eating homemade bread on Tuesdays. On a seasonal basis, you will be asked to send your child to school with an optional donation of a fruit or vegetable to supplement our meals and snacks (such as a vegetable for soup, or a fruit for fruit salad). It is delightful for the children to prepare the ingredients they have brought to school, and to see them in the finished dish! We take time to discuss the produce that children bring, where food comes from, and how it is grown or prepared. As much as possible, we engage with that process ourselves-- by growing a small patch of wheat in the backyard, for instance, then threshing and grinding it in August. We grow herbs, salad greens, broccoli, and a few other annual vegetables. We also emphasize the value of bravely trying new foods. On Tuesdays, we offer the children a "tasting platter" for morning snack, including familiar snack staples such as crackers and apples along with some foods that the children may not have tried before: smoked sardines, arugula, capers, starfruit, different kinds of olives, and more!

Occasionally, the children will be invited to engage in a special food preparation activity such as making butter, pie, pickled vegetables, lemonade, or gingerbread.

Moderate food allergies and vegetarian diets can be accommodated, though if accommodating your child's diet raises the school's food costs significantly then you may be asked to pay a small monthly fee to help cover the

difference. Since Bower Tree is located in a family home, please note that we do not maintain a kosher kitchen and we cannot change the food preparation environment to eliminate all traces of wheat, nuts and dairy.

Our approach to cooking, nutrition, and food ethics is informed in part by *Nourishing Traditions* by Sally Fallon and *Full Moon Feast* by Jessica Prentice.

CLOTHING

Preschool is a place of hard work and active play. We play and work outside in all weather except the most extreme, so be sure your child is prepared to play in wind, rain, snow, and sun! Please do your best to send clothing that is:

- Appropriate for the weather (warm clothes in cold weather including hats and mittens/gloves; sun hats and light clothing in hot weather)
- Easy to move in and take off / put on
- Able to withstand dirt, paint, water, etc.
- Layered for changeable weather
- Free from commercial images

We will keep at least one extra set of clothing on site for each child. We ask that the following items be **labeled with your child's name or initials** and sent with them on the first day of school to be kept in their cubby (additional pairs of underwear and pants are welcome if your child sometimes has multiple toileting accidents per day):

- Two pairs of socks
- Two pairs of underwear
- A shirt or dress
- Pants, leggings, or shorts (based on season)

If you would like your child to wear a special sunscreen or topical cream please apply it before sending your child to school that day and make arrangements with the teacher if reapplication is needed. Please also write your chosen sunscreen or topical cream on the topical cream permission form. Sunscreen will be provided and applied for all children if there will be time spent in the sun during school, as per licensing requirements. The type of sunscreen provided is listed on the topical cream permission form.

We ask that you provide rain gear for your child's use at school during the wet season, to be kept at school during that time in case of unexpected rain. Please label all rain gear with your child's name or initials. Rain gear includes waterproof boots and a rain suit, or hooded raincoat plus rain pants. On chilly days, children should always arrive at school with a warm hat and mittens/gloves, plus a scarf if needed. Weather-appropriate clothing will be a very important factor in your child's enjoyment of our program. We will have a few extra items on hand, such as mittens and hats, but not enough for everyone-- so please plan to dress your child in everything they will need to stay comfortable.

MEDIA

Our children live in a world saturated with media and commercialization. We believe that children need space and time away from the fast-paced, media-driven world. We encourage all parents to minimize their child's screen time and we ask that children not watch television or interact with a screen before they come to school in the mornings. Additionally, we ask that send your child to school with clothing and belongings that are free of

commercial images. Please try to observe this dress code as much as possible, but know that children will not be shamed, forced to change clothes, or sent home if they do come to school wearing media images. We believe above all in creating an environment in which children feel safe, accepted, and loved.

HEALTH & SAFETY

Your child's health is extremely important to us. After all, we soon come to love them too! We look forward to working with you as a team to help your little loved one thrive and grow. Of course, during this sometimes rocky adventure of life on earth, there will be times when your child is not in the best of health. As parents, you know your child better than we do and can recognize when they appear ill. Our lively day is not an appropriate environment for a sick child, and children should stay home and rest if they are not well. During the pandemic, we also ask that everyone in the school community do their part to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Please review the following policies carefully.

General Sick Policy (may be overridden by COVID-19 policy):

Children must be symptom-free for at least 24 hours of the following before returning to care:

- Fever (temperature above 100.4); see COVID-19 policy below
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Unusual yellow color to skin or eyes
- Pink or crusty eye(s)
- Skin or eye lesions or rash that is severe, weeping, or pus-filled
- Stiff neck and headache with one or more of the above symptoms
- Complaints of severe pain
- Head lice

If a child becomes begins exhibiting any of these symptoms during the school day, they will be separated from the other children. The teacher will then call the parents and request that they pick up their child from school as soon as possible.

COVID-19 Policy—*subject to revision based on guidance from CDC and OCC*

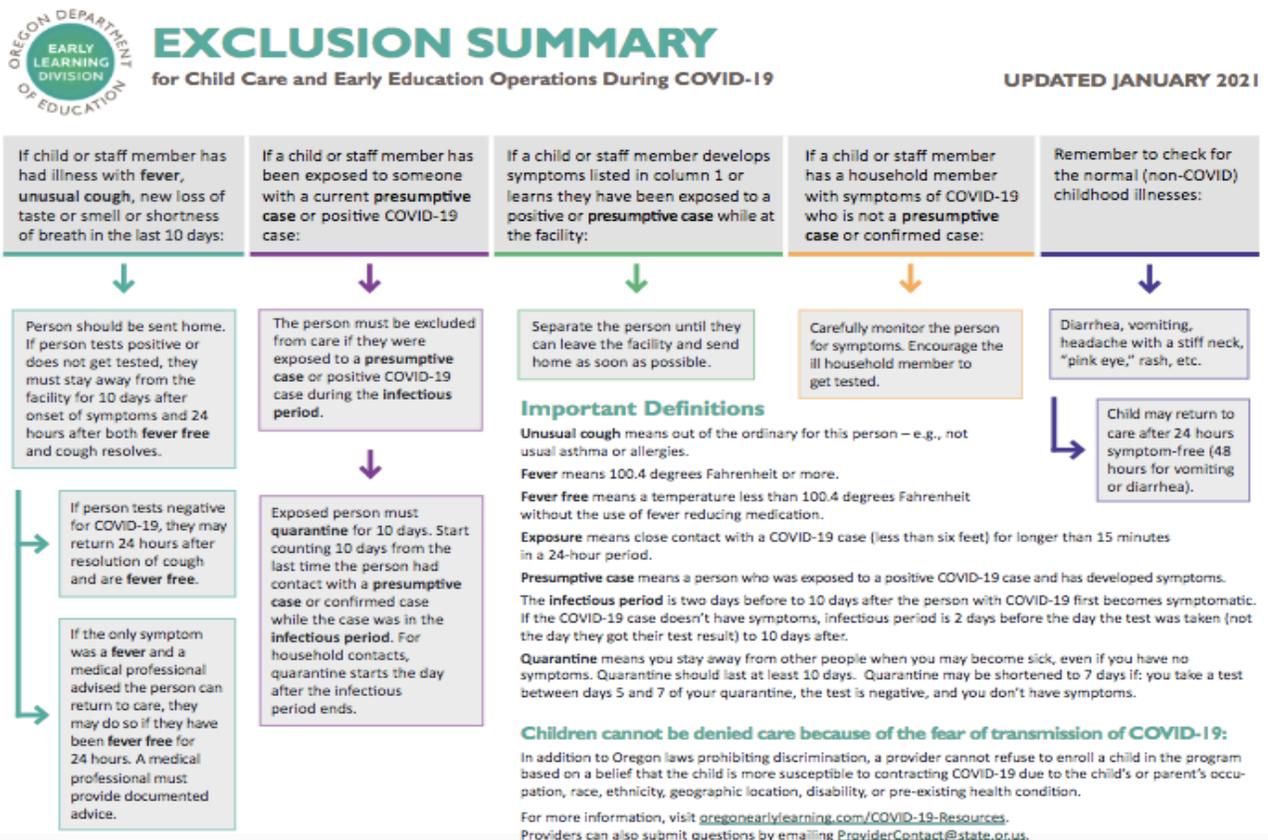
If your child develops any of the below symptoms, please keep them at home until they have received a negative COVID test result **and** until 24 hours after cough resolves and child is fever-free.

- Fever (temperature above 100.4)
- Unusual cough
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Extreme fatigue

- Loss of taste/smell

In the event of a positive COVID-19 test result, or if your child has been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19, please confer with the provider and keep your child at home for a ten-day quarantine period. Bower Tree Preschool is required to notify the Local Public Health Authority (LPHA) of any confirmed COVID-19 cases among children attending the school. If the provider or a member of the provider's immediate family is exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19, the school will close for a 10-day quarantine period. Each family will be granted two school weeks of tuition-free days (twice the number of days their child attends school in a week) to be applied in the event of a required quarantine. Families are required to notify the provider that they wish to apply these tuition-free days, which will then be deducted from the following month's invoice.

Regarding symptoms of illness in children during the pandemic, Bower Tree Preschool will follow the exclusion summary chart provided by the Early Learning Division of the Oregon Department of Education (see below):



Food Safety

The teacher carries a current Oregon food handler's card, and all food for the children is prepared according to these safety guidelines. Substitute teachers are also required to carry this certification. Our tap water has been tested for lead by the Portland Water Bureau and was found to be safe for children to drink. The results of this lead test are posted on the bulletin board by the sign-in area for parents to view.

Physical Safety

The vast majority of injuries at preschool are minor, such as splinters, scrapes, scratches, and bruises. These minor injuries are treated with band-aids, soothing words, snuggles, ice packs, and a visit from the healing basket. The children will become familiar with the healing basket, which contains some beautiful stones to hold (a different kind for each ailment, including missing one's family), the healing feather (to gently sweep away the pain and worry), and Bongo the healing monkey, a favorite toy from my own childhood. Children are encouraged to bring the healing basket to another child who is in distress. Bower Tree also has a fully stocked first aid kit on site, for adult use, which will be brought along on neighborhood walks.

Bower Tree adheres to the safety rules published by the state for the regulation of licensed child care homes. As per licensing requirements and our wish to protect the children from harm, we eliminate hazards from the school environment as soon as they become apparent. It is important to note, however, that we differentiate between hazards and risks. A hazard, in this context, is defined as a danger that the child may not see or be aware of (such as a downed wire, broken glass, or a structure with a wobbly support) whereas a risk is defined as something that the child can see, assess, and decide whether or not to engage in (such as climbing a tree, picking up a spiny chestnut hull, walking a balance beam, or moving a log). In order to support children in learning to assess danger, and thereby decrease their chances of serious injury in the long term, children *are* allowed to take risks such as climbing and jumping and going barefoot (in warm weather)-- with reasonable safety limits imposed, such as the height to which they are allowed to climb and areas where they are not allowed to run (due to surfaces or hard corners). Children are also allowed to use age-appropriate tools with supervision, such as wavy-bladed vegetable choppers, manual drills (augurs), hammers and nails, or small saws, if the teacher feels that they can handle the tools safely. These practices are based on the teacher's experience in established, licensed Montessori and Waldorf schools as well as on her professional training. Appropriate protections such as goggles, cut gloves, or work gloves will be provided.

If your child incurs a moderate injury such as a cut or a hard bump to the head, you will be notified via text during the school day, in person at pickup, or in an email after school. You may also be notified of mild injuries, at pickup or in an email, if the provider feels that the information would be helpful to you. In the unlikely event that a child incurs a severe injury at school, the child's parents will be notified as soon as any necessary immediate action has been taken. Both adults residing in the home carry current certification in pediatric first aid and CPR, and will apply that training when necessary. Any substitute teachers will carry the same certification. If needed, an ambulance will be called to transport a child to Legacy Emanuel Medical Center or Providence Portland Medical Center. Bower Tree Family LLC carries general liability insurance for child care, and parents are asked to sign a general liability waiver before their child's first day of school.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a fire, earthquake, or other emergency requiring evacuation, the provider will follow the emergency plan outlined in the handout "Evacuation Plan" provided to parents at the beginning of the school year. Detailed emergency procedures are as follows:

In the event of an emergency, I will notify parents via text message as soon as I have taken steps to ensure the children's safety.

If the school phone (503-201-5469) is not working, you may contact:

Zachary Wheeler: 971-235-6647

In the event of an earthquake, we will take the following steps:

- Direct children to “DROP, COVER, and HOLD,” and remain that way until the earth stops moving, staying away from windows and furniture that may tip over. (Tall, heavy items have been secured to the wall.) We will take cover under the sturdy dining table.
- If we need to evacuate after a major earthquake:
 - o Gather children at the front door or back gate (depending on whether we are inside or outside when the earthquake occurs), using a call-and-response chant that we will practice.
 - o Make sure that all children are present.
 - o Walk 0.4 miles to the nearest BEECN (Basic Earthquake Evacuation Communication Node), Irvington Elementary School field, at 1320 NE Brazee. Children will have practiced this walk during school hours as part of emergency preparedness procedures, including walking hand-in-hand with a buddy and safely crossing neighborhood streets.
 - o Notify parents via text message to begin the reunification of children with families.

I will stay with the children in the event of an emergency until they are reunified with their families. In the event of an evacuation, I will bring the following supplies in an emergency bag that has been prepared ahead of time:

- First aid kit
- Water bottles
- Non-perishable food
- Wet wipes

Our attendance sheet and emergency cards are located in a cabinet near the front door and will be brought with us during an emergency.

In the event of a house fire, we will take the following steps:

- If the fire requires evacuation (cannot easily be put out with the fire extinguisher kept in the kitchen), evaluate evacuation routes.
- Gather children at the back door (or front door, depending on the location of the fire) and get emergency bag and emergency cards.
- Make sure that all children are present.
- Evacuate children into the backyard or onto the front sidewalk, depending on the location of the fire.
- Check for injury
- Call 911
- Begin reunification procedure, or if necessary due to the area around the school being unsafe, walk with the children to Irvington Elementary School field at 1320 NE Brazee to be reunified with families there.

If we need to shelter in place or lock down the facility, we will take the following steps:

- Make sure that all doors are locked
- Close curtains
- Turn off all lights
- In the case of an intruder, block door from the inside using furniture
- Get emergency bag and gather children in the nap room, sitting on the floor
- Provide books to keep the children quiet
- Call 911
- Communicate via cell phone as needed
- Keep the children together in the nap room until environment is safe

Interpersonal Safety

All providers offering care at Bower Tree Preschool, as well as all adults residing in the home, are required to be enrolled in the Oregon Central Background Registry (CBR). Bower Tree Preschool will ensure that individuals on the child care premises who are not enrolled in the CBR or who are only provisionally enrolled, such as visitors or volunteers, will not have unsupervised access to children at any time. Assistant teachers or visitors who are not fully enrolled in the CBR will remain under the direct supervision of the lead teacher when they are in the same space as the children. Visitors to the school will be required to sign in and out on the daily attendance sheet, which is visible to parents. Unscheduled visitors will not be allowed in the home, with the exception of drop-in visits from USDA inspectors and state licensors.

The adults residing at the Bower Tree Preschool location are Caitlyn Conover Moe (provider) and Zachary Robert Boyer Wheeler (provider's husband). Both are enrolled in the CBR.

To verify that an individual is enrolled in the CBR, you may call the Office of Child Care at 1-800-556-6616.

BUSINESS DETAILS

Bower Tree Preschool is a DBA of Bower Tree Family LLC, and we are licensed by the state of Oregon as a Registered Family Child Care Home. Our license number is RF536679 and our EIN is 85-2689992. We will soon be changing our license to a Certified Family Child Care Home license.

To register a complaint against Bower Tree Preschool regarding adherence to licensing requirements, you may call the Office of Child Care's Central Office at 1-800-556-6616. You will speak to a compliance specialist who will take your information and refer it to a local child care licensing specialist to follow up on.

COMMUNICATION

Respectful, open communication is essential to the success of our program. We believe in treating every child and parent with reverence, respect, and curiosity, and we strive to demonstrate this belief in how we communicate with our school community. To facilitate good communication, the Bower Tree Preschool program includes the following:

- Weekly updates** posted every weekend on the password-protected parent portal of the web site. The update including a written summary of our week, a gallery of new photos, and video snippets.
- Monthly recordings** of the current spoken language curriculum (songs, poems, stories, etc.) will be made available on the parent portal each month for your enjoyment at home.
- Parent-teacher conferences** are scheduled in January to take place during February (about halfway through the school year). These provide an opportunity for sharing impressions, concerns, questions, and observations of your child's development. However, you are welcome to request an additional parent-teacher conference earlier in the year. We always welcome communication from you about your child, including information about significant changes in your child's life. Please do not hesitate to reach out via email to schedule a time for an in-person meeting or zoom/telephone conversation if the need arises.
- We rely heavily on **email communication**. If you do not have daily access to email please let us know and we will plan to communicate last-minute announcements and changes to you by phone.

-The parent portal of the **school web site**, in addition to offerings mentioned above, contains a school calendar and downloadable forms and documents such as the parent handbook.

Other notes about communication:

- **Please feel free to contact the teacher via email** (caitlyn@bowertreepreschool.com) if you have a question or concern, or if you wish to arrange a time to speak on the phone or in person about your child. We are happy to accommodate private parent conversations throughout the school year, and we encourage you to schedule them for any reason including a simple desire for support from outside the immediate family. An important part of Bower Tree Preschool's mission is to offer support to the whole family by companionship parents on their parenting journey by means of private conversations and school events, and we truly wish to be of service to you in this way.

- Please refrain from engaging the teacher in extended conversation about your child during drop off or pick up. Friendly chats are encouraged, and questions or brief updates are welcome regarding the child's day, appetite, sleep, emotions, health, etc., but longer conversations should take place at a scheduled time without the children present, both to show respect for the children and so that the discussion topic can be given full attention.

- The teacher will communicate with parents via text or phone if a child falls ill during the school day, has an unusually protracted emotional meltdown, or incurs a noteworthy injury. News of minor injuries will typically be conveyed at pickup.

FESTIVALS AND CELEBRATIONS

Bower Tree Preschool marks the rhythm of the year through the celebration of non-religious festivals that focus primarily on the changes of the natural world. Each season includes at least one celebration, which typically serves as the culmination of that month's circle and story. Children experience festivals as magical and find great joy in the preparation for these events. Festivals are a time for us to step out of normal everyday life and celebrate what is happening in the world around us-- and also to acknowledge the corresponding changes taking place within us.

We will celebrate three festivals together: Michaelmas (end of September), Lantern Walk (mid November), and May Day (beginning of May). These are some of the traditional festivals celebrated in Waldorf schools around the world.

General information follows about the festivals and celebrations, and more specific information about each one will be provided via the monthly newsletters as the season approaches.

Michaelmas (late September)

Michaelmas is celebrated during the harvest season, close to the autumnal equinox. As we move from the long, warm days of summer to the cool, shorter days of autumn, we begin to turn inward. The story of Michael battling and overcoming the dragon brings strength as we enter the new season. At Bower Tree Preschool, this festival is associated with the call to embark on the hero's journey, both individually and collectively: the journey to our own sacred center. We will tell our September story together (a hybrid adaptation combining the St. George / Michael story with a wonderful Swedish fairy tale) and act out the encounter with the dragon. This is a time for deeds of courage, strength, and derring-do, for empowering the angelic warrior within each of us as we bravely face-- together-- the approach of winter, our own inner monsters, and a strange and complicated world.

Lantern Walk (mid to late November)

A mid-November festival traditionally celebrated at Waldorf schools, the Lantern Walk (inspired by the European festival of Martinmas) is a celebration of hospitality, charity, shelter, and kindness toward others. At Bower Tree we tell a story about a young child who obtains a lantern from a Spindlewood tree to carry on her search for the disappearing fairies (vegetal forces of nature). The child meets Earth Mother underground, who reassures her and tells her about the natural cycles of death and rebirth. The story suggests that the light of the lantern is our own inner light, which guides our way through the gathering darkness as we journey toward the heart of winter, when the days will begin to grow longer again. This is a simple, humble holiday for which children craft their own lanterns and learn lantern songs that they then sing as they carry their lit lanterns through the dark. In our own family tradition, the lantern walk is followed by a simple, candlelit meal with all other lights in the house turned off.

May Day (early May)

This is an ancient, joyous festival welcoming the arrival of spring. We dance around the may pole, singing spring songs (the circle that the children have been practicing all April) and weaving ribbons to celebrate the reawakening of the world. Major imagery for this holiday includes morning dew on grass, ribbons, and the leafy and flowering branches of trees.

Other holidays: In a more low-key way, we will also acknowledge Halloween / Dia de los Muertos, the cluster of nature-based early spring holidays in early February (including Imbolc, Candlemas, and Groundhog's Day), Valentine's Day, and the vernal equinox / Earth Day in late March or April, which we often celebrate with a planting party in the schoolyard.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Birthday celebrations are special times when we show our appreciation for your child's presence in our school, and for their existence in the world. A birthday song is sung and a simple birthday story is told which celebrates your child's life on Earth so far. The story is followed by a birthday snack and a special gift made by the teacher for the child.

CONFLICT & DISCIPLINE

The daily rhythm of the classroom will do a great deal to minimize conflict, as children know out of habit what is expected of them. Teachers model ways of resolving conflicts and teach children the skills they need to solve problems on their own. When necessary, the teacher may use a "time in"—a period of time where the child will work with an adult on a grounding, calming task until the child is ready to rejoin group activities. Generally speaking, in keeping with both Montessori and Waldorf pedagogies, we understand problematic behaviors to be the child's way of communicating an unmet need or unlearned skill. Rather than resorting to punitive action, our approach is to identify and address the unmet need or unlearned skill by modifying the environment (including our own behavior), teaching the social skills needed to prevent or resolve conflict (and big emotions such as anger and anxiety), or by offering different activities or lessons based on observations of the child.

In general, the teacher will follow these steps in response to a conflict among children:

- 1) Draw closer to assess whether the children can safely resolve the conflict on their own.
- 2) Intervene immediately if a child is acting with physical aggression towards another child, using light restraint and/or picking the child up if necessary. Firmly state school safety rules ("We do not hit each other" or "I will not let you hurt your friend"). Tend to any immediate concerns, such as caring for a

crying or hurt child.

3) If the children cannot safely and pro-socially resolve the conflict on their own, first clearly and simply state what is happening ("I see that . . ." or "I'm noticing that . . ."). Comfort all parties and speak to the children about what happened / what is happening, in a way that encourages reflection, empathy, and emotional literacy. For example, we might use descriptive language to help children recognize and name emotions ("Did your heart beat faster when you were angry?" or "When we feel frustrated, sometimes we yell like that. What else can we do instead?") and encourage empathetic awareness ("How would you feel if she did that to you?" or "Do you remember when this happened to you? How did it make you feel?") We generally do not force apology, but we do suggest it as a way to help mend the situation by comforting someone that you've hurt. Lessons such as this one may also be taught at other times in the context of grace and courtesy lessons (a social teaching technique from Montessori).

4) When equilibrium has been restored, comment on that fact. ("Well, this feels better now!" or "We mended the problem! Thank you for helping him feel better.") Then, if needed, suggest or enforce a change in the children's play, for example by separating two children who are repeatedly not respecting each other's boundaries. This is usually easily accomplished by inviting one or more of the children to join the teacher in a centering activity such as peeling carrots for lunch, watering plants, or helping to prepare snack. The teacher may also redirect the children to another play or work option.

5) Make a note of the conflict in order to address the needed skills through future grace and courtesy lessons, true stories, or read-aloud books.

6) Communicate with parents after school via email if the event was noteworthy, or if behavioral patterns emerge that merit a conversation about how to better support the child/children.

There are certain serious behaviors that might result in parent meetings and, if necessary, a child being asked to leave school. These behaviors include:

- Running away or repeatedly trying to run away
- Intentionally and repeatedly injuring/hurting another person or animal
- Aggressive behavior that results in injury (whether intentional or not)
- Causing repeated and intentional harm to plants or other property
- Uncontrollable disruptive behavior
- Repeated refusal of adult guidance

In the event of an incident of serious misbehavior and/or injury, teachers will contact the parents and meet to discuss how to better support the child in the classroom. The parents and teachers will work together to draft a plan that can be addressed both at home and school. Dismissal from the program due to behavioral difficulties will occur only in the case of extreme circumstances that compromise the well-being of the other students and/or provider, after a reasonable effort has been made to remedy the issue.

SCHEDULED CLOSURES

Bower Tree Preschool will be in session Monday through Thursday from 8:30am-3:00pm. **The program is year-round. The 2022/2023 school year will begin on Tuesday, September 6, 2022 and end on August 17, 2023.** Annual tuition (see "enrollment, fees, and tuition" section below) is divided into twelve flat monthly payments, including months with scheduled closures (below).

Scheduled Closures 2022/2023

November 24, 2022: Thanksgiving

December 19 - 29, 2022: Winter Break

March 20 - 23, 2023: Spring Break

June 19 - 29, 2023: Summer Break

August 21 - 31, 2023: Autumn Preparation

Bower Tree Preschool will also be closed on all federal holidays.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

Bower Tree Preschool may cancel or delay school for the day in the event of extreme weather such as freezing rain, snow, ice, or poor air quality. The same policy will be followed in the event of power outage or unsafe building conditions. The decision to close or delay will be made as early as possible so that parents can be notified promptly. In the case of poor air quality, school may be held fully indoors instead of being canceled. Bower Tree Preschool will generally follow the lead of Portland Public Schools in canceling or delaying school due to inclement weather.

ENROLLMENT, FEES, & TUITION

Required Forms (8):

- Enrollment Agreement
- Emergency Card
- Medical Information Form
- General Waiver
- Topical Cream Permission Slip
- Neighborhood Walk Permission Slip
- Parent Handbook Signature Slip
- License Certificate Review Declaration (hard copy will be provided)

Tuition & Payments

Tuition is \$1,100 for the school day schedule (Monday through Thursday, 8:30-3:00). A part-time schedule of three half days per week (Monday through Wednesday, 8:30-12:30) is available at \$600 per month, and a schedule of four half-days per week (Monday through Thursday, 8:30-12:30) is available at \$750 per month. Payment is due to the provider monthly in the form of personal check or Venmo payment (Venmo preferred). Please deliver checks in person rather than via mail. Invoices will be sent out prior to payment due date. **Tuition is due on the first day of the month. If it is paid more than five days after the due date, a \$25 late fee will**

be assessed. Payments more than two weeks late may result in termination of enrollment. Tuition amount is not affected by scheduled breaks or closures due to extreme weather.

A nonrefundable enrollment fee of \$150, and a deposit of one month's tuition, is due upon registration. The deposit will be applied as tuition for your child's last month at Bower Tree if at least 30-day notice is provided before the last day of attendance.

An **annual \$200 materials fee** is due on the first day of August.

Payment is due to the provider monthly in the form of personal check or Venmo payment. Venmo payment is preferred. Please deliver checks in person rather than via mail. Invoices will be sent out prior to payment due dates. **Tuition is due on the first day of the month.** If it is paid more than five days after the due date, a **\$25 late fee** will be assessed. Payments more than two weeks late may result in termination of enrollment. Tuition amount is not affected by scheduled breaks or closures due to extreme weather.

Termination Procedures

This contract may be terminated by the parent(s) or the provider. **Parents are required to provide at least 30-day notice prior to their child's last day of attendance** in order to apply their deposit toward their final month of tuition. Please give the provider as much notice as possible regarding withdrawal from the program. If enrollment is terminated prior to the child's first day of school, the deposit will not be refunded.

The provider may immediately terminate this contract if tuition payment is more than two weeks late or in the case of extreme circumstances that compromise the safety of the other students and/or provider. In the latter case, a reasonable effort shall first be made by parents and provider to remedy the issue, unless the child's continued presence in the program represents an immediate risk of serious harm to the other children, the provider, the provider's family members, or the provider's property.

(Please detach and return this slip.)

I have read and understood the Bower Tree Preschool 2021/2022 parent handbook, and have been given an opportunity to ask any questions that arose while reading it.

Parent/Guardian's name: _____

Parent/Guardian's signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian's name: _____

Parent/Guardian's signature: _____ Date: _____