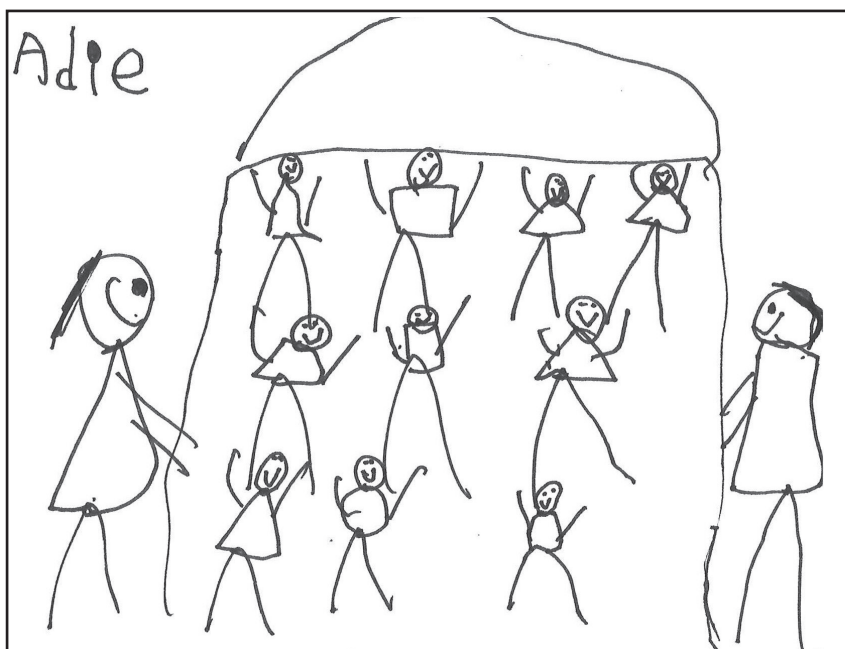




2025 - 2026 SCHOOL HANDBOOK



**27 Conshohocken State Road
Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004**

**Phone: 610-664-6767
Fax: 610-664-6792**

**admin@balahouse.org
www.balahouse.org**

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Bala House Montessori School

27 Conshohocken State Road, Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

Phone: 610-664-6767

Fax: 610-664-6792

www.balahouse.org

Email: admin@balahouse.org

Tax ID #: 23-1720026

Snow closing #3146

United Way of Southeastern PA ID #4838



STAFF 2025-2026

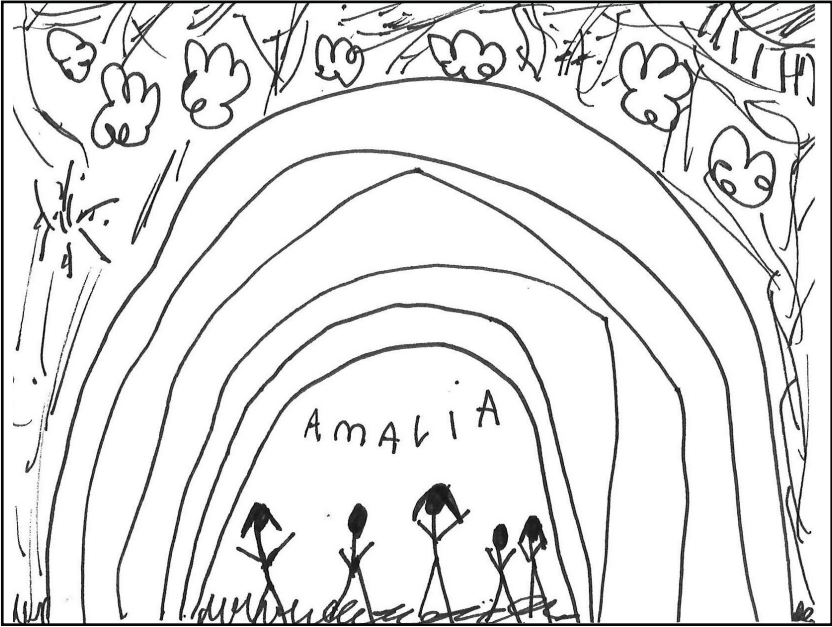
School Director
Assistant Director
Administrative Assistant
Admissions Director
Educational Director
Classroom Teacher
Classroom Teacher
Classroom Teacher
Classroom Teacher
Extended Care Director
Teaching Assistant
Teaching Assistant
Teaching Assistant
Teaching Assistant
Lunch Assistant/ Nap Monitor
Late Care Teaching Assistant
Late Care Teaching Assistant
Late Care Teaching Assistant
Art Instructor
Tumble Tots Instructor
Music Instructor
Spanish Instructor
Consulting Psychologist
Camp Director

Jamie Hoffman
Tynesia McDowell
Carolina Perez
Emily Surovick
Mary Beth Makatche
Soraya Force
Sandy Gayda
Jennifer Heness
Mary Beth Makatche
Samantha Foulke
Lisa Hickman
Annie Olah
Linda Palmer
Jessie Carrington
Carolyn Blackwell
Malaika Davis
Lauren Gaines
Toni Nelson
Isabel Alff
Dana Calafati
Liz Filios
Erika Schell-Rompré
Dr. Lisa Dissinger
Soraya Force



BALA HOUSE MISSION STATEMENT

At Bala House, young children discover themselves as creative, independent learners in a diverse, supportive Montessori environment.



Belief Statements

We believe that Bala House students are in the process of becoming independent critical thinkers, peacemakers, protectors of the environment and responsible citizens. Our respectful classrooms foster these qualities. Bala House Montessori classrooms are based on the principle of respect:

- Respect for the child
- Respect between children
- Respect for the process of gaining knowledge and skills
- Respect for individual and cultural differences
- Respect for the community
- Respect for the environment
- Respect for the teacher, parents and the Montessori materials

We believe that children learn best when they are active participants in their own learning and are expected to work to their potential.

We believe that children need daily indoor and outdoor unstructured play.

We believe that children are elevated when given opportunities to focus attention on intellectual pursuits.

We believe the process, not the product, is the lifelong lesson.

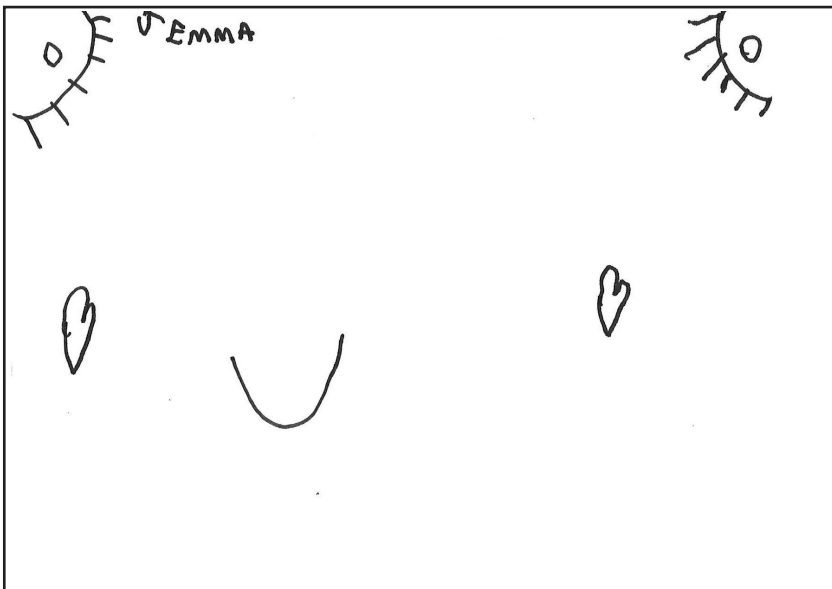
We believe that when families and teachers work together with their children, the Montessori philosophy can facilitate lifelong learning skills and strong self-esteem.

MARIA MONTESSORI AND HER PHILOSOPHY

Born in 1870, Maria Montessori was the first woman physician in Italy. An educator and humanitarian, she devoted her life to the study and observation of children, resulting in the establishment of Montessori schools around the world.

Basic to the Montessori philosophy is the concept that children are motivated from within by both a natural curiosity and love of knowledge. The goal of early childhood education is to cultivate the child's own natural desire to learn. This is achieved within a prepared, orderly environment which allows children to learn at their own pace, according to their own capabilities, and in a non-competitive atmosphere. Children acquiring basic skills in this natural way gain an early enthusiasm for learning while their personal dignity, independence, and self-discipline develop.

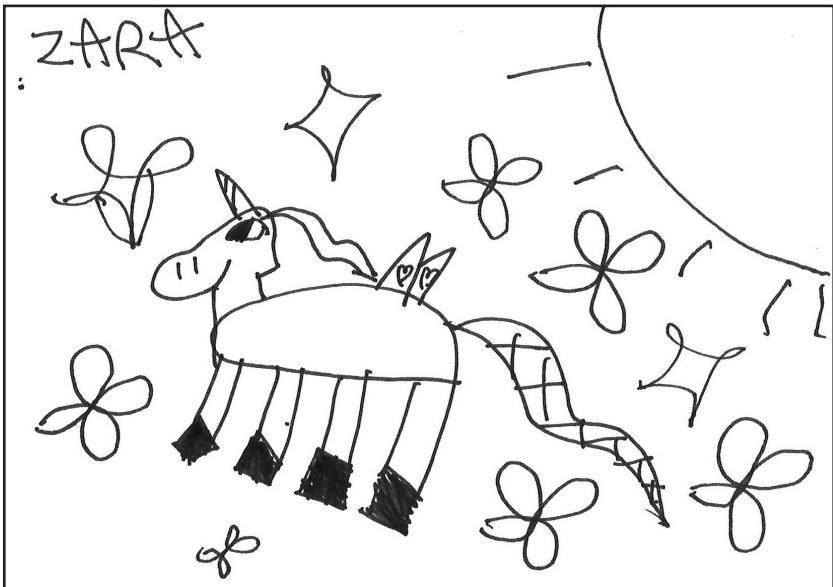
Our Montessori and early childhood classrooms are organized in groups which include children ages 3 through 6. Younger children become stimulated by exposure to the work of older children; older



children build on earlier skills and reinforce their knowledge by helping the younger children. What evolves is a natural and mutual respect for one another as individuals.

Within this supportive, orderly and nurturing environment, children develop according to their own readiness. Everything in the classroom is easily accessible to them. They gain independence as they choose and work with materials and activities they can successfully complete on their own. Children may work alone or with others.

Bala House is a full member of the American Montessori Society and has American Montessori Society trained teachers.



MONTESSORI IN THE HOME

Your children have a tremendous need and love for an orderly environment. If everything has its own place and the environment is well organized, it will be easy for the child to maintain a neat and orderly atmosphere on his own. Here are some ways in which you can support what your child is experiencing in the Montessori classroom.



The Bedroom

Children's bedrooms should reflect their personalities and current interests.

- Ideally, the young child's bed should be as low to the floor as possible, making it easy for toddlers and preschool children to get in and out on their own. Montessori urged parents to modify the bedroom to facilitate both the child's safety and their early independence. Rather than providing a crib, consider a futon or a mattress without a bed frame.
- By the age of five years your child might use a sleeping bag on their bed instead of sheets and blankets. This makes it easy for them to make their own bed in the morning.
- Mount a little coat and hat rack low where your child can easily reach it.
- Hang things at the child's eye level: decorative art work, a mirror, a bulletin board for their use, a wall clock with large numbers.
- Modify light switches with extenders to allow the child to operate them independently.
- Avoid using a toy chest. Use low shelves for books and toys.
- Avoid clutter. Use plastic containers with lids or sturdy plastic bags for toys with many pieces.
- Make sure that your child's clothing chest has drawers that are the right height for them to open and look inside. Label the drawers: underwear, socks, etc.

The Bathroom

- Provide a sturdy wooden stool for the toilet and sink so that your child can reach the water faucet, toothbrush and toothpaste.
- Keep towels and washcloths on a low hook. Attaching round plastic curtain rings or fabric loops to them makes hanging them up on a hook easier than folding over a towel bar.

The Kitchen

- Make room here for a child-sized work table for young cooks.
- Set aside the bottom shelf in your refrigerator to store small drink pitchers, fruit, sandwich ingredients and snacks. Use unbreakable containers to hold peanut butter, jelly, lunch meats and spreads. A child of two can open the refrigerator and get their own prepared snack or cold drink stored in child-size cups. An older child can pour their own juice from a small pitcher and make their own lunch.
- Use a bottom drawer to hold forks, knives, spoons and napkins.

An Art and Crafts Area

- Organize your child's art supplies in separate containers or a utility drawer chest. Empty margarine tubs, baby wipe boxes, yogurt cups – all make great storage containers for markers, crayons, scissors, and glue. Fill an egg carton or ice cube tray with small items for collage, e.g. beans, macaroni, buttons, stickers, sequins, and beads.
- Cover a small table or even an area of the floor with a washable table cloth to provide a special work area to paint, glue, and work with play dough or clay. Discuss the "ground rule" that art activities must be done in this area.

Children can help around the house. If presented correctly, children as young as age two take delight in caring for their environment – dusting, mopping, scrubbing, cleaning, and polishing. They should be able to do these as easily at home as at school. It is perfectly reasonable to ask older children to straighten up their rooms and help with simple household chores.

- Provide a small broom or dust buster.
- Hang a feather duster on a hook.
- Provide a hamper for soiled clothes. Ask your child to carry them to the laundry room on a regular basis.
- The bathroom should have a small bucket with a bathtub scrub brush and a sponge.

Household Jobs a 3 to 6 Year Old Can Do

- Folding towels and napkins
- Setting the table
- Sorting the silverware
- Sorting socks

Adapted from the article "Montessori in the Home", by Tim Seldin, Tomorrow's Child, Vol. 2. No 5

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL OF CHILDREN

Being prompt at arrival and dismissal is for the safety and emotional well-being of your child. Timely arrival is requested by Bala House staff to provide an orderly routine for your child and his or her class.



- **Transfer of Care and Parking Lot Safety Procedures:**

- Arrival begins at 8:20am unless your child is enrolled in Early Care. A staff member will greet children at the door between 8:20am and 8:35am.
- Do not allow your child to cross the driveway unsupervised.
- Be sure you and your child have been seen and acknowledged by a staff member before you leave the premises.
- Adults in car line STAY IN THE CAR. Children are taken out of the car by staff. At pick-up, driver needs to move forward and to the side to buckle their children.
- Drivers should NEVER back-up to get out of line. Move forward after the car in front moves, NEVER BACKWARDS.
- Two children at a time will be placed in cars.
- Please do not park along the driveway adjacent to the building at any time. This is a fire zone and is needed for school bus access.
- If carpooling, we need a note stating who will pick up child, date and time. Driver needs to be listed on Emergency Contact sheet.
- If you are not using carline, please park your car in a parking space. Walk your child into their classroom. Always make eye contact with a staff member before leaving your child.

- **Early Arrival Extended Care children (7:45am) and Late Arrivals** should be brought into the classroom to a staff member and have the arrival noted before leaving. Early arrival care must be reserved by contract or by contacting the Main Office.
- **Dismissal** at 11:50am and 2:50pm will be conducted outside at the red benches under the covered ramp. A staff member will walk your child to the car. You will be asked to sign the release sheet.
- **All other Dismissal times:** Parents will walk to their child classroom or designated pick up location, always make eye contact with the teacher and you will be asked to sign the release sheet.
- **Children will not be released to any escort while in transition, from playground to class or class to class, etc.**
- **Release of children** to persons other than parents is allowed when:
 - The person is designated as an authorized pick-up person on the Emergency Contact Sheet,
 - AND a parent completes the Escort Change Form in Transparent Classroom.
 - In emergency situations, a phone designation will be accepted if we can verify the information.
- **For early dismissal**, parents are asked to provide notice to the Main Office.
- **One drop-off and one pick-up per child**, per day.
- **Late pick up charges:** Extended Care officially closes at 5:45pm. Late pick-ups after 5:45pm are \$1.00 per minute. Arrivals prior to or later than the contracted time will be charged \$15.00 for one full extra hour. All emergency and extra hours are based on full hours; no partial hour calculations.

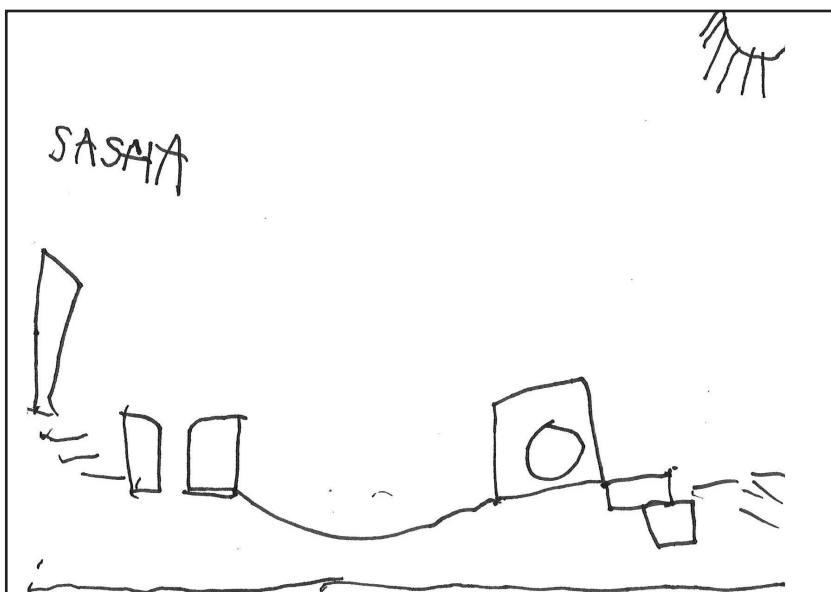
CHILDREN'S POSSESSIONS AND CLOTHING

Items that are best left at home: gum, money, candy, toys that your child is not ready to share (or chance losing) and umbrellas.

Small items that come home with your child may be valuable parts to our Montessori apparatus. Please check with your child's teacher and return to classroom.

Please put your child's name on all clothing. If you are missing an item, please check the Lost and Found box, located under the shelves that are to the right of the entrance doors.

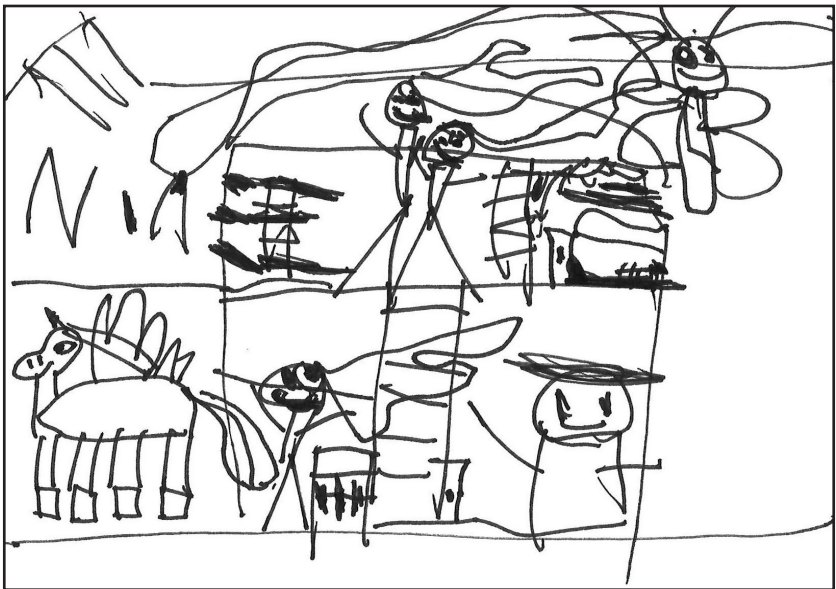
Please dress children in simple clothing that they can manage independently in the bathroom and when going outside. Look for clothes with large buttons and zippers. Hats that pull on and do not tie, mittens rather than gloves, and shoes with Velcro fasteners (not high tops) are easiest for children to manipulate. Remember that painting and playground activities are tough on clothes, so dress your child accordingly. In addition, we go outside everyday that weather permits, so dress your child appropriately for the weather. Send snow boots and shoes when appropriate in winter months.



Children need to wear shoes in the classroom and the boots are too warm (and usually too dirty). Be sure boots and shoes are clearly marked with your child's name, as many shoes and boots look alike. Rain boots are recommended all year long for the mud kitchen.

Please send in one complete, labeled change of clothes on the first day of school (in a Ziploc bag). Change these seasonally, as needed, and return them the next day, cleaned, anytime they are sent home.

Sleeping necessities for children who will be taking naps include a napmat and an optional favorite soft item. Please send a note on the first day of school with any nap instructions to the Extended Care Director.



TOILET TRAINING POLICY

Children enrolled at Bala House must be toilet trained before attending school. Children must wear underwear. A child having accidents daily would not be considered toilet trained. Please note that wearing pull ups is NOT considered toilet trained.

Children must be toilet trained before they begin Bala House because there are strict licensing standards for changing and disposing of wet or soiled diapers/pull-ups and our classrooms are not equipped for this. In addition, when a staff member is busy changing a child's soiled clothing, it takes away from learning time for all students and it removes one adult from the direct supervision of and interaction with the rest of the class for at least 15-20 minutes. This jeopardizes the health and safety requirements required by law.

A toilet trained child is a child who can do the following:

- Communicate to the teachers that they need to go to the restroom before they need to go
- Alert themselves to stop what they are doing and go use the bathroom
- Pull down their clothes and get them back up without assistance
- Male children will have experience aiming directly into the toilet
- Wipe themselves after using the toilet (with minimal assistance for 3 year olds)
- Get on/off the toilet by themselves
- Wash and dry hands
- Postpone going if they must wait for someone who is in the bathroom or if we are away from the classroom
- Wake up during nap time if they need to use the bathroom

We do understand that even toilet trained children will occasionally have accidents. By definition, "accidents" are unusual incidents and should happen infrequently. In these instances, the teachers will help children to change their clothes, encouraging independence as much as possible.

We certainly will ask your child many times throughout the day and before nap time if they need to use the bathroom. A teacher will

assist children as needed, but children should be able to complete toileting activities independently.

It is not uncommon for a child who is fully toilet trained to have a setback when they are in a new environment. Bala House staff are aware of this and will assist the children when necessary. Please have your child dressed in clothing that they can easily manage independently. Please send two complete, labeled changes of clothes appropriate for the season. These will be left at school in case of accidents, and returned at the end of the school year. Parents will be notified if a child has a toileting accident.

We understand that each child arrives at this milestone differently, therefore we will allow 4 weeks from the first day of school for your child to demonstrate accomplishment of this goal. However, if the situation is not manageable within the classroom environment, we will discuss the issue with the parents and reserve the right to suspend attendance of the child at such time. A child will not be considered toilet trained for our program if the child continues to consistently have toileting accidents after the first 4 weeks of school.



After the first 4 weeks of school, the following policies will be in place for children who have accidents:

- If one or two accidents occur in one week, the parents will be notified with the understanding that the issue needs to be addressed and corrected.
- If three or more accidents occur in one week, the parent will be notified with the understanding that if the issue is not corrected by the end of the second week, the child will have to stay home at least one week or longer until they are completely toilet trained.
- If multiple accidents occur in one day, the parent will be notified that day. Depending on the severity of the accidents, the child may need to be picked up. If not corrected by day three, the child will have to stay home at least one week or longer until they are completely toilet trained.

Please note that this policy is not in place to shame or punish a child or inconvenience primary caregivers. This policy is intended to ensure that Bala House remains in compliance with licensing regulations and is able to provide a high-quality, safe learning environment for all of the children in the classroom.



HEALTH OF CHILDREN

Bala House shall exclude any student from school who has been diagnosed by a physician or is suspected of having a communicable disease or infection. No student shall be re-admitted until the School Director is satisfied that the condition for which the child was excluded is not communicable or until the child presents a certificate of recovery from the physician. If your child has been exposed to a contagious disease, please notify the school. Please do not send your child to school when there are symptoms of illness. Children should be kept home if they show any of the following signs of illness:

- Unexplained fever of 100.4 or higher
- Abnormal temperature within the past 24 hours
- Vomiting or diarrhea within the past 24 hours
- Serious congestion as indicated by coughing or runny nose (unless at the end of an illness)
- Red or crusted eyes
- Unexplained rash
- Complaints of headache, unusual fatigue, sore throat, stomach ache, earache or eyes that hurt (often a child's way of describing a headache), head cold, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing.

Bala House staff will call you to pick-up your child if any of these symptoms are observed. Bala House will anonymously share news of a communicable disease or infection (including COVID) with students and staff who have been potentially exposed.

COVID Protocol

- Parents/guardians should monitor their children for symptoms of COVID-19. If symptoms are present or the student is COVID positive, the parent/guardian must keep the student at home and contact the school for further instructions.

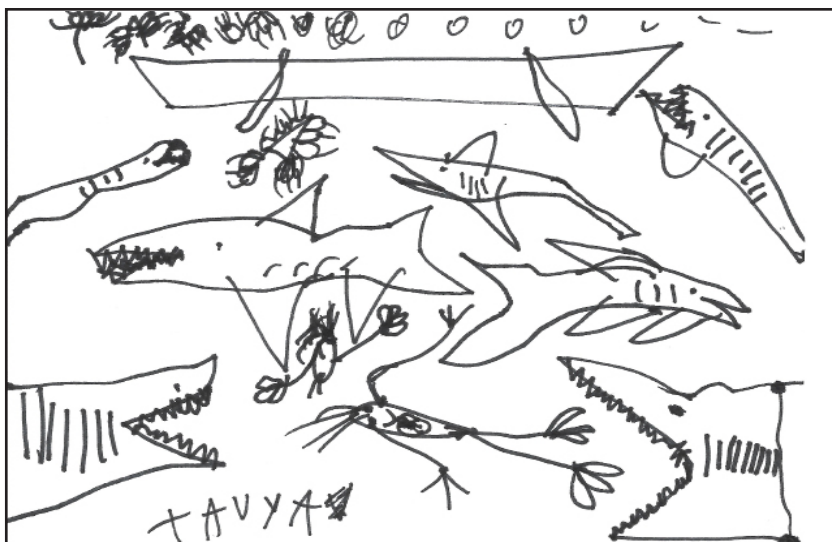
- Students who test positive for COVID-19 can return to school after 5 days of isolation if symptoms are improving and student meets the school's normal criteria for return after an illness which includes fever free, vomiting and diarrhea free for greater than 24 hours without medication. Students must wear a high-quality mask (N95 or KN95 recommended) for an additional 5 days.

Note: The COVID-19 positive student does NOT need a test or a doctor's note in order to return to school.

-Those who have been exposed to COVID will be encouraged to wear a mask for 10 days.

Outdoor play is held every day, even on cold winter days. Be sure to dress your child appropriately. Because all of our staff is utilized on the playground, we cannot accommodate requests to keep a child inside. Medical conditions which are verified by a written physician's statement will be the only exceptions.





Medication: Staff members are not required to administer medication, either prescription or non-prescription. Please work with your medical provider to prescribe medicine that can be administered at home. When absolutely necessary, prescription or non-prescription medicine may only be administered if we have received written permission from the child's doctor specifying the dosage and frequency and written permission from the child's parent. Medication must be in the **original container with original packaging and prescription.** Copies of prescriptions are not acceptable. Bala House can only accept prescription and nonprescription medication in the original container with written instructions for administration from the individual who prescribed the medication. All medications must be labeled with your child's name. You must provide written consent for administration by completing the top portion of a Medication Log form and then uploading the completed form into the Special Medical/Dietary form via Transparent Classroom.

The Bala House Consulting Psychologist is brought in whenever our experienced teachers find that they need help identifying the best instructional approach to use with a particular child. The child benefits greatly when parents cooperate with the psychologist's and teacher's recommendations. Bala House teachers will contact parents if they feel a child would benefit from an in-class observation by the Consulting Psychologist. Teachers will reach out to parents to receive parental consent for this observation.

HEAD LICE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

To help keep our school community healthy, Bala House Montessori School has a No-Nit Policy. This means that if a child has head lice or nits (lice eggs), they must stay home until they are completely free of both. Lice are small, grayish-brown insects that move quickly through the hair, while nits are tiny, whitish or beige oval eggs attached firmly to the hair shaft about ½–1 inch from the scalp. Unlike dandruff or dry skin, which flake off easily, nits do not move when touched.

When a Child Has Lice:

- If lice or nits are found, your child must stay home for treatment.
- Before returning, your child must be checked by a Bala House staff member and confirmed to have no live lice and no nits.
- This recheck will occur the morning your child returns, immediately upon arrival at school.

After Returning to School:

Because lice and nits can sometimes be missed:

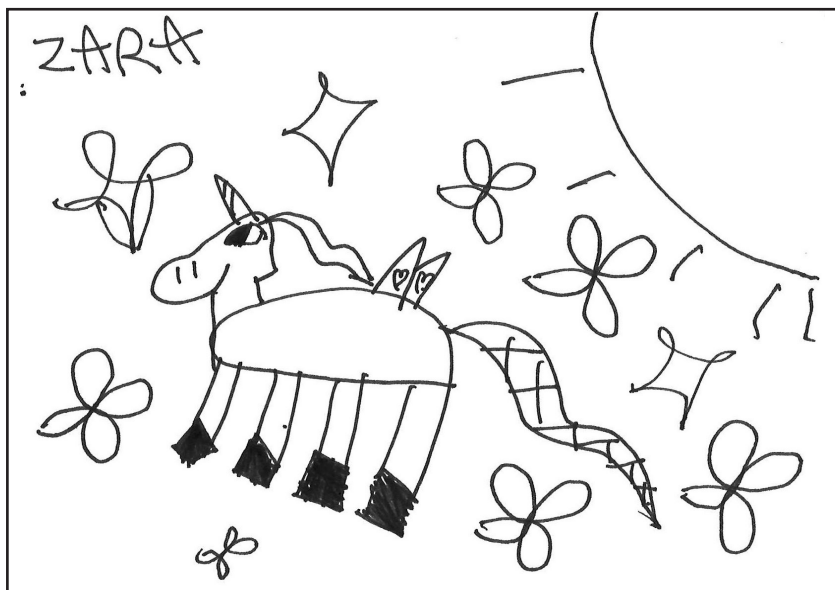
- Staff will check your child's hair each day for three consecutive days following their return.
- Families are asked to:
 - o Check your child's hair twice daily—once in the morning and once in the evening.
 - o Check all family members for lice and nits to help prevent re-infestation.

Confidentiality:

All lice checks and related communication will be handled privately and respectfully to protect your child and family's privacy.

COMMUNICATION WITH BALA HOUSE DIRECTOR AND STAFF

The Bala House office hours are 8:30am to 6:00pm. The office telephone number is 610-664-6767.



Communication with teaching staff is available via email and Transparent Classroom. Mystery Readers and monthly snack contributions are organized via email from teachers.

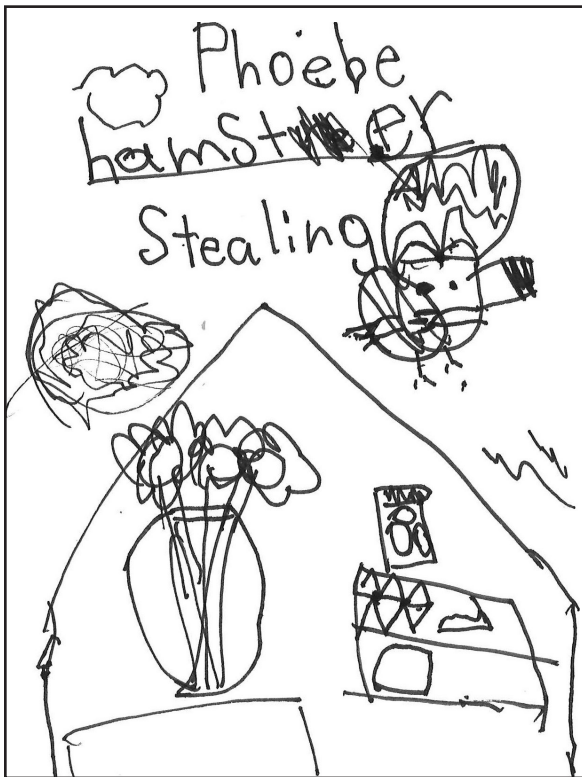
Written communications to parents: Teachers write short activity reports/ notes via Transparent Classroom, where you can also see pictures of your children working. Information from administration is sent through email. Notices about upcoming events also hang on doors around school. Flyers can be found on TC under Happenings.

The Bala House Newsletter is issued monthly via a Constant Contact email during the school year and includes school-wide information.

Parent-Teacher conferences are held twice each year; once in the Fall and once in the Spring. Kindergarten parents meet with both their child's morning and afternoon teachers at the Spring conference.

Parent observations are encouraged, especially for parents of new children prior to the first conferences. All classrooms have observation windows; appointments are not necessary, but are encouraged to avoid schedule conflicts.

Our School Director welcomes parent's questions or concerns at any time throughout the year.



NUTRITION

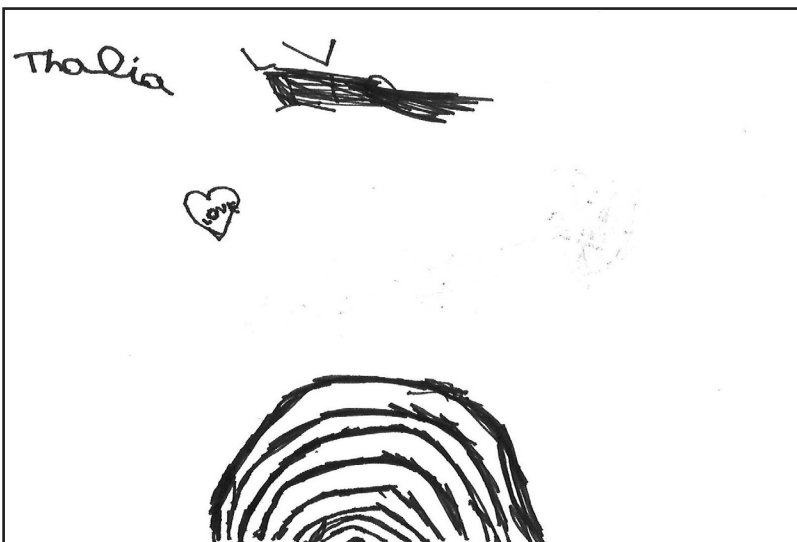
At Bala House, we study and stress good nutrition and request that parents keep this in mind when preparing snacks and lunches. We strongly urge families to provide fresh and dried fruits, vegetables and protein sources for snacks and lunches rather than sugary, fatty and salty snacks. We ask your cooperation in adhering to this policy when donating food and packing lunches.

We also request that parents minimize the amount of trash generated at lunch time by avoiding juices boxes, paper napkins, straws, plastic bags, etc. We recommend using a thermos, cloth napkins, reusable sandwich containers, etc. The children enjoy participating in efforts to help our environment.

Your child's teacher will contact you about Celebrations of Life (birthdays). Please do not bring sweetened foods, candy/chocolate, foods with artificial flavoring, dyes, chemicals or preservatives. **Bala House is a tree and peanut-free school.**

SCHOOL EVENT SAFETY (Before & After School)

During school events (i.e. Fall Festival, Earth Day, etc.) please supervise your child and their siblings at all times. Please do not let your child run or yell in the building. Staff are not responsible for children at these events.





SNOW CLOSING

The Bala House snow closing number, **3146**, will be read over KYW 1060 AM, Channel 6, Channel 10, and Fox 29 when adverse weather conditions cause interruption to or cancellation of classes. Our website and our phone answering machine will provide school closing information (610-664-6767) and you will receive a text (if you have registered for text alerts) / email/ Transparent Classroom message. One hour delay means that all the children arrive at 9:30am. A two hour delay indicates that classrooms will open at 10:30am. When snow conditions necessitate early dismissal, parents or other designated persons will be notified via text message.

TRANSPORTATION

Under Pennsylvania Act 372 non-public school children (5 yrs old by Sept. 1) are provided bus transportation to private schools within a ten mile radius of their residential school district's boundaries at no charge to parents. (This does not include Philadelphia District.) Bala House provides Lower Merion with a list of bus students in the spring prior to the start of kindergarten. Schedules are mailed to Bala House shortly before school begins and are forwarded to parents. Parents are responsible for notifying the school district whenever their child will not be taking the bus. Call 610-645-1940.

SUPPORTING BALA HOUSE



The Bala House Parents' Association (BHPA) was founded as a support to the school and as a resource for parents. Since the Montessori philosophy encourages parents to be “partners in learning with their children”, the goal of the BHPA is to provide our parents with means to blend their collective energies and talents in a way which will ultimately benefit the children, the faculty and the school as a whole. The BHPA sponsors many social and educational functions throughout the year. It is hoped that each parent will support the Association through participation. Each classroom has a Parents' Association representative.

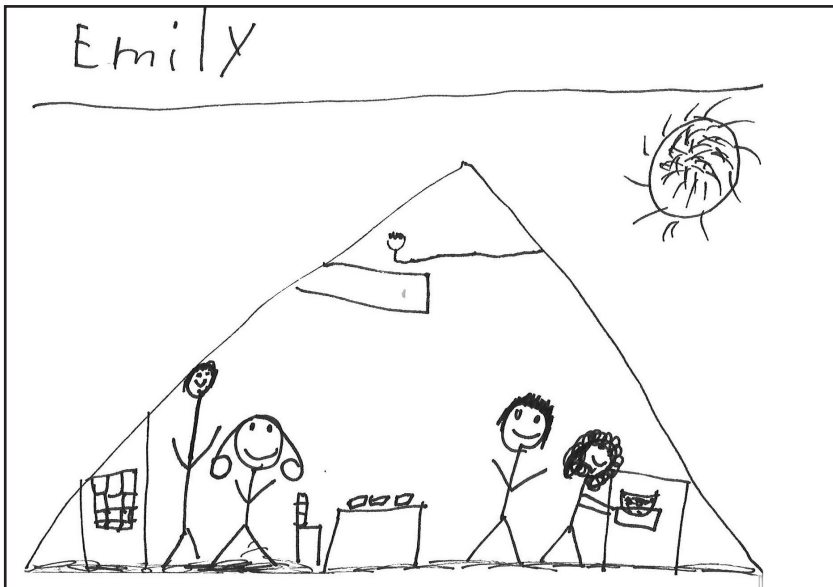
Volunteerism is strongly encouraged at Bala House. **It is asked that each parent volunteers for at least one activity during the school year.** Your support of the Annual Campaign and Bala Gala spring auction help us reach our fundraising goals.

The Board of Trustees is the governing body of Bala House, a non-profit corporation. Board Members are parents of past or present children in the school and interested community members. Trustees serve two year terms, with elections being held at the July meeting. A list of trustees and officers is listed on our website.

The Bala House Tuition Assistance Fund was established at the time of our 21st birthday celebration and has aided several families annually. TA information and instruction packets are available upon request. The deadline for applying is April 30. Tuition assistance policies and procedures are available on the Bala House website. Kindergarten parents who live in Philadelphia can also apply for additional assistance through the Children's Scholarship Fund of Philadelphia (CSFP) at www.csphiladelphia.com.

Bala House is approved to receive funds through the Central Pennsylvania Scholarship Fund (CPSF) Special Purpose Entities (SPE) for individual donations and through the Charlestown Playhouse in Phoenixville, PA for business donations made through EITC (Educational Improvement Tax Credits).

Bala House Montessori is a participating member of the **United Way Specific Care Program**. If your company participates in the annual United Way Campaign, Specific Care Choice Forms are available from your employer. Our identification number is **4838**.



BALA HOUSE ADMISSIONS POLICY

Enrollment Process

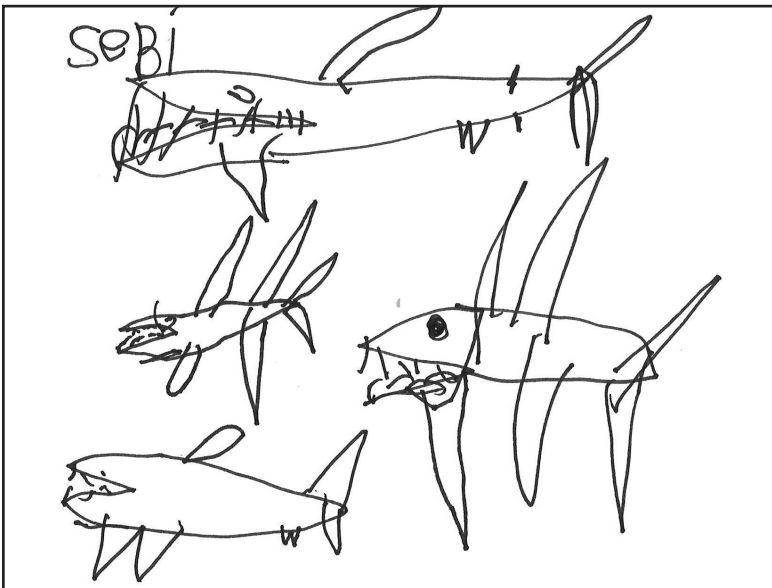
Students must be 3 years old and completely potty-trained by September 15th of the year that they start at Bala House. With our rolling admissions process, students who are not 3 years old by September 15th are eligible to join us mid-year on or after their third birthday. Applicants are required to submit an admissions application and a one-time \$50 application fee. To complete the application process, applicants are required to visit Bala House for a New Child Visit with a Montessori-certified teacher. On occasion, we may ask families to return to school for a second New Child Visit to best assess the needs of the child.

Spaces are offered to families in the order in which applications are completed. A central component of the Montessori philosophy is a co-ed, mixed-age grouping of children in the classroom, therefore admissions consideration is given to age and gender balance in each classroom. Siblings of currently-enrolled or former Bala House students and children of alumni receive priority in the admissions process. A waitpool of applicants is kept by the Admissions Director and spaces are offered to new families as they become available. An enrollment contract is offered to an applicant when a space is available. Families have two weeks from the date of offer to return the completed enrollment contract and non-refundable \$500 deposit, thereby securing the child's spot in the program. After enrollment, parents will receive a signed copy of their contract and a tuition payment schedule for the year.

Children are assigned to a classroom in which they will work with the same teacher for the duration of their time at Bala House, usually two, three, or four years. Parents of children who enter Bala House mid-year are notified that this does not signify early admission to kindergarten. Kindergarten admission is based on having a 5th birthday by September 15th of the kindergarten year and receiving the recommendation of the kindergarten teacher(s). Kindergarten children will be assigned to one of two kindergarten teachers from each of the existing Montessori classes. Kindergarten students will not necessarily have the same kindergarten teacher as their morning teacher.

Summer Camp Enrollment: A camp enrollment contract and deposit are required to hold a spot in our camp program, but no application is necessary. The remaining camp balance (after deposit) is due in two equal payments; one due May 1st and the final due June 1st.

Non-Discrimination Policy: Admissions, the provisions of services, and referrals of students shall be made without regard to race, color, religious creed, disability, ancestry, national or ethnic origin (including limited English proficiency), age, sexual orientation or sex. Program services shall be made accessible to eligible persons with disabilities through the most practical and economically feasible methods available. These methods include, but are not limited to, equipment redesign, the provision of aids, and the use of alternative service delivery locations. Structural modifications shall be considered only as a last resort among available methods. Please contact the School Director with questions or concerns regarding our non-discrimination policy.



BALA HOUSE FINANCIAL POLICIES

The following policies have been developed to offer the greatest flexibility possible to parents, while balancing the needs of the children, staff and administration. They are designed to ensure that staff have an accurate list of the children in their care at all times, that the school operates in a fiscally sound manner, and that extra bookkeeping requests are minimized to keep administrative costs down. We thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Emergency and Extra Hours

- All charges are based on full hours, no partial hour calculations.
- Arrivals prior to the contracted time or later than the contracted time will be subject to the charge of one full extra hour; \$15.00
- Late pick-up after 5:45pm is subject to a \$1 per minute charge.



Tuition Collection

Tuition is due on the first of each month from August through March. There is a five (5) day grace period. If the tuition owed is not received prior to the close of the grace period, a late fee of \$25 will be assessed. If the tuition and late payment fees are not paid after (60) days, the student will not be permitted to attend Bala House until the overdue tuition and late fees are paid in full. The late penalty and suspension can only be waived with the approval of the Bala House Board, through a written request.

Changes to Enrollment Contract

- All requests for schedule changes must be in writing, signed and dated.
- No reduction of contracted hours will be accepted after August 1st.
- Any increase of contracted hours or lateral change to a student's schedule made after August 1 is subject to a \$25 administrative fee per change.
- An Enrollment Contract Addendum, signed and dated, will be attached to parent and school copies of original.



BALA HOUSE DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES

GOAL OF DISCIPLINE:

To guide, teach and mentor desirable behaviors through:

- Role modeling
- Individual lessons
- Grace and courtesy lessons
- Positive reinforcement
- Repetition
- Problem solving
- Building self-esteem and confidence

GOAL OF DISCIPLINE IS NOT:

- To shame
- Publicly humiliate
- Prove right or wrong
- Pass judgement
- Choose sides
- Control
- Withhold affection

MINDFULNESS

- Teaches stress management, emotional regulation and interpersonal skills.
- Bala House classrooms practice “mindful moments” at various times of the day based on the needs of the children and classroom.
- Non-judgmental and inclusive.
- Is an invitation for children and they are not required to join in, but they can quietly watch.
- Sanskrit (the ancient language of India and Hinduism commonly associated with yoga) is not used.
- Utilizes the terms mindful breathing, mindful stretching and mindful bodies.

How MINDFULNESS IS USED

- *Transition times:* Stretching and breathing exercises and changing the tone of their voice
- *Lunch time:* Turning lights down and taking deep breaths helps settle and calm the children
- *Circle time:* Listening lessons - Turning lights down and listening to the sounds.
- *Activities on the shelf*

Teachers practice mindfulness as it will help them to “RESPOND WISELY” during an interaction with a child. Teachers treat all children with respect.

THE FOUR D'S OF CLASSROOM INTERVENTION

- Is the situation dangerous?
- Is it destructive?
- Is it disruptive?
- Does it disrespect the child, the work, or another person?

DISCIPLINE STRATEGIES THAT WORK

- Connecting with the child by giving choices.
- Redirecting behavior.
- Utilizing natural consequences.
- Utilizing older students as role models and teaching helpers in the classroom.
- Having children move their bodies to help them switch gears.
- **Teachers utilize natural and logical consequences-** Natural consequences are the experiences that naturally follow a choice or behavior. Logical consequences follow behaviors that violate the acceptable behavior within the group.

BALA HOUSE DISCIPLINE GUIDELINES CONT'D

PROCESS FOR REMOVAL FROM THE GROUP

Step 1: Remind child of classroom rule/or expectation

Step 2: Offer the child some breathing/stretching help or redirect to a different activity/helping a teacher

Step 3: Child is still unable to calm down - Child is given the option to go for a walk in the hall with teacher/assistant.

Step 4: Teacher has the option to ask for additional help from administrative staff if the teacher needs to return to classroom

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS (PEER TO PEER)

- Determine Feelings - Each child takes turns using the Peace Rose.
- Validate Feelings
- Problem Solve/Come up with a plan - Guide children that have experience with conflict resolution to problem solve independently.
- Utilize the wheel of choice.
- Model/Role Play - help children determine language to use and encourage the use of eye contact. Utilize group time as an opportunity to role play/problem solve/teach language. Read books at circle time.
- Child executes plan.
- Determine feelings and validate feelings again.
- Make sure both parties are ready to move on.

BITING/ AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY

At Bala House it is rare that children bite or are extremely aggressive. But on the occasion that an incident does arise, we follow the following policy.

First incident - Child stands with a teacher and an incident report is written to both parties and parents are contacted. Names are not given. Parent of the child who has bitten is given information reminding them of the biting policy.

Second incident - Child is brought to the office and an incident report is written to both parties and parents are contacted. Names are not given. The biting policy is reviewed again with the parent.

Third incident - Child is brought to the office and parents are called to come and pick up child to take them home for the day. Incident reports are written for both parties. Names are not given. School Director (SD) explains policy and how parents should handle at home. SD explains if it happens again, they will need to be picked up again.

Fourth incident - Same as Third offense. SD calls parents and a date is set to meet with school and parents to discuss action plan. Meet with the parents and SD (and Consulting Psychologist, if necessary). At this point SD will discuss the suspension/expulsion policy with the parents in case additional action is necessary.

*If the incident keeps happening between the same two children, an action plan is put into place to help both children develop a safe and healthy relationship, which may require those students to be shadowed by a head or assistant teacher for the time being.



BALA HOUSE SUSPENSION / EXPULSION POLICY

The state of Pennsylvania has instructed Bala House to provide you with the following information:

Bala House seeks to provide a program that supports children's growth and challenges them to learn, as individuals with unique learning styles and ways of responding to the world. Given the diversity of the families and communities that we serve, it is incumbent upon us to recognize and appreciate the characteristics and behaviors that each child and family brings to our program.

We believe in forming a solid partnership with our families as a basis for their children's success within our program. Rarely, there are situations that can result in the suspension or expulsion of a child from our program either on a short term or permanent basis. These situations are always unfortunate. We want you to know we will do everything possible to work with you, the parents/guardians, in order to prevent this policy from being enforced.

We believe that a constructive and positive working relationship between the school, the student and the parents (or guardian) is essential to the fulfillment of the school's mission. Therefore, Bala House reserves the right to discontinue enrollment or to refuse to re-enroll any student if the school concludes that the actions of the student and/or the parents interfere with such constructive and positive relationship or with the school's ability to accomplish its educational goals. The following are reasons why we may have to suspend or expel a child from Bala House:

Immediate Causes For Suspension/Expulsion:

- The child is at risk of causing serious injury to other children or themselves.
- A parent/guardian threatens physical or intimidating action towards staff members.
- A parent engages in verbal abuse toward staff in front of enrolled children.
- Unsuccessful resolution of an issue where a parent develops an expressed or apparent lack of confidence in the staff.

Parental Actions For Child's Suspension/Expulsion:

- Failure to pay and/or habitual lateness in tuition payments.
- Failure to complete required forms including the child's updated immunization records.
- A parent/guardian demands special services that are not provided to other children and cannot reasonably be delivered by the program.

Child's Actions For Suspension/Expulsion:

- Failure of child to adjust after reasonable accommodations have been made.
- Ongoing, uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts or excessive biting that continue after staff has exhausted all tactics listed in our discipline policy.
- If child is not toilet trained by school start date or shows signs of not being toilet trained once school has started. School will work with parents over a determined period of time to assist child in meeting those expectations. Sometimes this might result in the child not attending school for a period of time or un-enrolling and re-enrolling for the following year. Our license does not allow us to accept a child that is wearing diapers or pull-ups



WORKING TOWARDS A POSITIVE SOLUTION

The decision to suspend or expel a child from Bala House is a difficult one for both the school and the family. In all cases, Bala House's goal is to act quickly, thoughtfully and thoroughly to communicate, address and resolve concerns relating to the children in our care. Bala House staff will attempt to work with a family to take constructive steps in finding a solution that resolves the problems before a suspension or expulsion occurs.

When a child's teacher or an administrator has concerns about a child's behavior or other circumstances, they will document such concerns as soon as they arise. Bala House staff will inform and involve the child's parent/guardian by notes, phone calls and meetings, as necessary, to establish a collaborative plan of action/communication.

If the child's behavior is problematic, a review of that behavior using Bala House's discipline policy and other developmental tools will aid in the understanding of the behavior in its appropriate context. This review includes input from the teaching staff, educational director, Head of School and/or Consulting Psychologist, so that checks and balances are used to analyze the problem.



As Bala House develops strategies to address a child's particular problem, a variety of accommodations will be considered, including the following:

- Changes to the physical environment
- Modification of the daily structure of activities
- Consistency of expectations
- Transition time adjustment
- Re-direction
- Contacting school's Consulting Psychologist to set up an observation/parent teacher conference

In addition, teachers and parents expectations, management skills and intervention techniques will be evaluated and modified as needed in order to adapt to the particular needs of the child.

Whenever possible and appropriate, efforts will be made to help a family understand how they can support the plan at home or encourage a resolution by adjusting their interactions or expectations of a child. Literature and other support resources regarding methods of improving behavior will be provided to the family.

Open communication between school and parents is desired, and parent conferences will be conducted to review the problematic behaviors, the strategies implemented and the possibility of expulsion if we feel we are unable to meet the needs of the child after reasonable accommodations have been made. It is Bala House's ultimate goal to do as much possible to avoid this action from taking place.

Expulsion/Suspension Process

If the behavior has not been resolved after all the remedial actions have been exhausted, a conference will be held with the child's parent/guardian to communicate Bala House's decision to disenroll or suspend child for a period of time. A follow-up letter will be provided which will include, if applicable:

- The reasons for the suspension or expulsion
- The date of the expulsion or length of the suspension, which affords the parent sufficient time to see alternative care (up to two weeks depending on the safety risks presented).
- The expected behavioral changes required in order for the child or parent to return or to resume enrollment at Bala House.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Bala House is committed to creating an environment that is diverse, inclusive, and equitable where all staff, students, families, vendors and board members are treated with respect and dignity.

For the purpose of this statement, diversity refers to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sex, sexual identity, familial status, age, disability and socio-economic status; Inclusion is valuing, respecting, and encouraging the full participation of each individual in the daily work and leadership of Bala House; Equity is a process that ensures all people have the opportunity to contribute, develop, and grow despite historical, structural, legislative, racial and socio-economic inequities.

We are an organization that celebrates the rich diversity of our school community, as well as the greater Philadelphia metropolitan area. We will not tolerate discrimination, biases, harassment, or bullying of any kind.

As an organization, we agree to be guided by these principles. Our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion extends, to our staff, our students and families, vendors, visitors and programs we develop and support.



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