

# **Tiny Seeds Nature School**

## **Policies and Procedures for Parents**

### **Introduction**

Our goal at Tiny Seeds Nature School is to provide a safe and loving environment for your child to learn socially, behaviorally, and academically through play and interaction with other children.

As the director and primary teacher/caregiver at Tiny Seeds I hope that our relationship will be one of confidence, learning, and positive enthusiasm. I have over 18 years experience as a parent of four children, daycare assistant, preschool teacher, prekindergarten teacher, elementary school teacher, elementary school assistant principal, and school district central office administrator. In all of my educational experiences I have found that I truly enjoy working with preschool children.

First and foremost all policies and procedures are meant to protect your child. But, policies and procedures are also meant to assure our school is in compliance with state regulations - which ultimately are to protect children.

With this in mind, please take the time to read through our policies and procedures so that we may have a great experience together as parent and teacher. I will inform you in writing when a policy or procedure changes and you will then sign and date the updated information. I will keep up to date signature pages in your child's record.

### **Policies and Procedures**

#### **Release of children**

If a child is to be picked up by someone other than a parent listed on the registration form, please let me know in advance VERBALLY (NOT by email, but by phone call or in person that morning or prior to that morning). Verbal notification is required because I cannot guarantee that email will be checked (or go through) prior to the release of the child. Please let the person picking up know that I will require photo identification and that it must match what I have on file. If I am not told in advance that someone other than a parent will be picking up, I will not release the child to them. Similarly, if the photo identification does not match what I have on file, I will not release your child to them. If this results in a late pick-up by a parent, all late fees will apply. Please let me know upon registration or as soon as it occurs if there are any custody issues involving release of your child.

## **Illness**

A child will not be allowed to attend or stay at school if one or more of the following exists:

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in activities including outdoor play.
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than I or my designee can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care.
3. The child has one of the following (unless a medical evaluation by a health-care professional indicates that you can include the child in the child-care activities):
  - a. An oral temperature above 101 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
  - b. An ear temperature above 100 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
  - c. An armpit temperature above 100 degrees that is accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness; or
  - d. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours, rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, or other signs that the child may be severely ill or
4. A health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.

The director will notify the parent immediately in the following instances:

1. There is an allegation that your child has been abused, neglected, or exploited as defined by Texas Family Code 261.001 while in our care,
2. The child shows signs or symptoms of an illness that requires hospitalization,
3. The child is injured and the injury requires treatment by a health-care professional,
4. The child has been involved in a situation that placed the child at risk (for example - leaving a child in a car or having a child wander off from Tiny Seeds Nature School.
5. There is a situation which has rendered the school unsafe (fire, flood, damage to the home caused by severe weather).

## **Required Health Statement**

Tiny Seeds must have a health statement for each enrolled child who does not attend pre-kindergarten or school away from Tiny Seeds within one week after the date of admission, if not sooner.

A health statement is:

1. A written statement, from a licensed health-care professional who has examined the child within the past year, indicating the child is able to take part in the child-care home's program;
2. A signed affidavit from the parent stating that medical diagnosis and treatment conflict with the tenets and practices of a recognized religious organization of which the parent is an adherent or a member; or
3. A signed statement from the parent giving the name and address of a health-care professional who has examined the child within the past year stating that the child is able to participate in the program. This must be followed by a signed statement from a health-care professional as specified in (1. Previously stated) within 12 months of the date of admission.

## **Immunizations**

Immunization records are required upon submitting an application to Tiny Seeds. What documentation is acceptable for an immunization record?

Acceptable documentation includes:

1. A signed statement from the child's parent that the child's immunization record is current and on file at the pre-kindergarten or school that the child attends. The statement must be dated and include the name, address, and telephone number of the pre-kindergarten or school listed in the statement.
2. An official immunization record generated from a state or local health authority, including a record from another state. Examples include a record from the Texas Immunization REgistry, a copy of the current immunization record that is on file at the pre-kindergarten or school that the child attends, or the health passport for a child in the conservatorship of DFOS. The record must include:
  - a. The child's name and DOB;
  - b. The type of vaccine and number of doses; and
  - c. The month, day, and year the child received each vaccination; or
3. An official immunization record or photocopy. An example includes a record from a doctor's office or pharmacy. The record must include:
  - a. The child's name and DOB;
  - b. The type of vaccine and number of doses;
  - c. The month, day, and year the child received each vaccination;
  - d. The signature (including a rubber stamp or electronic signature) of the health-care professional who administered the vaccine, or another health-care professional that administered the vaccine is documented; and
  - e. Clinical contact information, if the immunization record is generated from an electronic health record system.

## **Dispensing Medication**

Medication in this section refers to a prescription medication or a non-prescription medication, excluding topical ointments such as diaper ointment, insect-repellant, or sunscreen. Parent authorization to administer medication can take the form of:

- Written, dated, and signed authorization, or
- Electronic authorization - that can be viewed and saved, or,
- Telephone authorization *for a single dose*.

Authorization to administer medication expires on the first anniversary of the date the authorization is provided. Medication will only be dispensed per the medication's label instructions or directions from the child's health-care professional. Parent authorization is not required to administer medication to a child in a medical emergency to prevent the death or serious bodily injury of the child provided it is administered as prescribed, directed, or intended. Medication must be in the original container labeled with the child's full name and the date brought to the operation. Medication will not be administered after its expiration date.

### **Sunscreen and bug spray**

Since this is a nature school, we will be spending a large amount of time learning outdoors. I have sunscreen and bug spray on hand at all times. In the application packet there is a consent form to allow sunscreen and bug spray. If you would rather use your own, please send it in a Ziploc bag labeled with your child's name.

### **Medical emergencies**

In the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be called. All providers are trained in CPR and First Aid and will follow guidelines outlined in said training. As soon as it is medically safe, I will call the parents of the child(ren) involved (if they were not already called prior to the medical situation becoming an emergency). In the event that your child's doctor or your hospital of preference needs to be known, I will refer to the application that is on file. Therefore, if there are changes to your medical preferences in the case of a medical emergency, please request a new form, complete, date, and sign it.

### **Discipline and guidance - 747.2703 (Subchapter L)**

Discipline must be:

1. Individualized and consistent for each child.
2. Appropriate to the child's level of understanding.
3. Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control, and
4. A positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, including the following:
  - a. Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior,

- b. Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- c. Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
- d. Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age. A time out from the group is most commonly used for aggressive behavior (hitting, biting, etc.). Time-outs will be recorded on the Communication Log or discussed with parents at pick-up.

Destructive or inappropriate *patterns* of behavior will be discussed with parents as soon as the behavior is becoming repetitive so that we can work together to come up with solutions.

#### PROHIBITED DISCIPLINE

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

- 1. Corporal punishments or threats of corporal punishment;
- 2. Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- 3. Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
- 4. Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- 5. Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
- 6. Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
- 7. Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- 8. Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet, and
- 9. Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age, including requiring a child to remain in a restrictive device.

The Highscope method of social and behavioral development uses a method of problem solving when "problems" occur and children are old enough (some three year olds, most four and five year olds) to understand and communicate a problem. By utilizing this method, young children begin to learn how to solve problems that arise independently. In our morning messages/greeting time we will talk about our feelings so that children become accustomed to expressing feelings appropriately.

Every effort will be made to work with parents for the benefit of a child - cognitively, behaviorally, and socially. That being stated, the owner/Monica DeLaCruz, reserves the right to withdraw a child whose behavior is negatively affecting the other children in such a way as to make learning and working together dangerous.

#### **Rest time**

All children need a rest during the day, especially those who are active throughout the day. We will have a designated rest/nap time. Children do not need to sleep (as they will be told and will learn), but they do need to rest quietly so that their friends can rest.

### **Mealtime**

Our school participates in the meal program. Menus are published once a month and are subject to *minor* changes based on food availability. Part of your child developing socially and behaviorally is trying new things and foods. We will have a variety of foods, and I always encourage the children to try new foods.

### **Birthdays**

We are more than happy to celebrate birthdays at our school. You are more than welcome to bring or send a birthday treat. We will celebrate with any birthday food treats at the end of day (2:45 - 3:00).

### **Holidays**

Holidays and other special days will be celebrated.

### **Animals**

There is a dog onsite. His name is Bandit. We adopted him from ACS when he was six weeks old and he is an important member of our family. He is fully vaccinated. You may view his vaccination records upon request.

Because even the best natured dogs can react in an unpredictable way when in a situation causing stress or anxiety, he will not interact with children or adults unless on a leash and only for purposes of moving him into the house or from the house into his gated, fenced dog run.

It is normal for him to bark when he is still becoming accustomed to people he doesn't know. This will subside once he gets used to new situations.

### **Promotion of Indoor and Outdoor Activity**

Tiny Seeds Nature School is a school which promotes active learning through nature for a large portion of the day. We are primarily **screen free** (computer screen will occasionally be used for learning videos such as brain breaks for no more than 10 minutes per viewing no more than once per day: Jack Hartmann, or GoNoodle.)

The research validating the importance of outdoor play is abundant. Here are two links for your review:

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/toddlers/play-learning/outdoor-play/outdoor-play>

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1108430.pdf>

We will play outside *at minimum* two times per day for a total minimum duration of 90 minutes. Water and shaded areas will be available at all times. Outdoor activities include but are not limited to: water play, sensory play, play with balls and bubbles, “house,” music wall, art wall, sandbox play, balance work, and gardening.

We will get messy. Although sanitation is key, your child will get messy with sand, dirt, mud, paint, chalk, and water. This list is not comprehensive. It is critical that you send your child in clothes that can get dirty and appropriate footwear (closed toe with socks). I also request a ***labeled*** pair of rainboots and a raincoat to ***keep at school***. ***Please dress your child for the weather.***

Cold weather: coats, hats, boots (if your child uses them), gloves or mittens.

Warmer/cooler weather: shorts or pants, short sleeve, long sleeve.

Hot weather: shorts, tank tops or sleeveless, sun hats, sunglasses, (if used).

Unless there are severe weather warnings for our area, we will be outside for our allotted outside time. On days that severe weather is occurring, children will have more movement/music activities to make up for the time they are missing outdoors.

Learning indoors is equally active. We follow a Highscope curriculum <https://highscope.org/>, utilizing Reggio Emilia approaches. Children will have greeting time and then move into centers or areas of play including: house, sensory bins, reading, writing, art, science/math, and blocks. During the day we will have movement (songs and dance) and music. All of this play is active with movement time (10-15 minutes twice during indoor play) being the most active.

## **Transportation**

Tiny Seeds Nature School does not provide transportation of any kind to students at this time. Although we do not go on field trips, we hope to be able to bring special guests to our school for events.

## **Water Play**

Children will participate in water play in the form of playing in a water table (water is approximately four inches deep) most days. Children will at some points (hot weather days)

play with water soaked balls (soaked in the water table), and (weather permitting and calendared) sprinkler play, along with splashing pool days. Please complete the parent permission form for your child to participate in these water events.

### **Visiting parents**

Parents can visit their child at Tiny Seeds Nature School any time during all hours of operation to observe their child, program activities, our home, our grounds, and the equipment without having to secure prior approval.

**Review of licensing inspection report access to minimum standards (link):** A copy of the most recent Licensing Inspection Report will be posted and available for your review. The Minimum Standards for Child-Care Homes can be accessed at this link:  
<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/provider-portal/protective-services/ccl/min-standards/chapter-747-homes.pdf>

**Contacting local licensing office:** The local licensing office number is: 210-337-3399

**Texas abuse and Neglect hotline:** 1-800-252-5400

**DFPS website link:** You can access the Texas Health and Human Services website here:  
<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/>

**Emergency Preparedness plan:** The Emergency Preparedness plan is a separate document. Your signature on the signature page indicates you have received and read it.

**Hours of operation:** School hours - 7:00 - 3:00 AFTERSCHOOL - 3:00 - 5:30

**Dates of operation:** The Tiny Seeds annual calendar is attached to this document. Limited enrollment summer camps will operate during the month of June with information sent home in March. Tiny Seeds Nature School is closed completely during the month of July.

**Meals:** Tiny Seeds Nature School participates in a meal program. Included in your tuition is daily breakfast, lunch, and AM and PM snack. All meals and snacks are in compliance with the regulations and guidelines set forth in the meal program. Attached please find parent



information for the meal program. Your signature on the signature page indicates you have received and read it.

### **Tuition and Fees**

Payment is due the first of the month for that month. Payment is considered late after the third of the month and incurs a \$20/day late fee. After the fifth day of the month if payment is not received, your child will not be accepted into the school. If this occurs two times, your child will be withdrawn from the program.

The monthly fee is \$850/month for school hours 7:00 - 3:00 and \$150/month for after school hours 3:00 - 5:30.

SIBLING DISCOUNT: \$25/MONTH per attending sibling

The fee is made monthly for 12 months. The July payment assures your spot for the following year. ***There are no refunds given for absences of any kind.*** Please notify the school if your child is sick or will not attend school for some reason. If your child is absent for five consecutive days and you have not communicated with me, your child will be withdrawn from the program.

Upon being accepted into the program the following tuition and fees are due:

\$100 non-refundable application fee  
\$100 supply fee  
\$1700 first and last month's tuition\*

\*THIRTY DAY NOTIFICATION IS REQUIRED IN THE EVENT THAT YOU ARE WITHDRAWING YOUR CHILD. If 30 day notification is not received, I reserve the right to keep the unapplied last month's tuition. (This does not apply to children who are beginning kindergarten the following year.)

Registration for the following school year will occur beginning in March.

LATE FEES: Children are to be picked up at 3:00 if they are not enrolled in after school and at 5:30 if they are enrolled in after school.

If your child is picked up after 3:10 more than three times in a calendar year, your child will be enrolled in the after school program and you will be charged \$150/month for after school care.

If your child is already enrolled in after school care and your child is picked up after 5:05, you will be charged \$1/minute for the time you are late.

**THE OWNER/MONICA DELACRUZ RESERVES THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW A CHILD DUE TO FAILURE TO PAY TUITION AND FEES ON TIME or REPEATEDLY LATE PICK-UP.**

### **School Supplies (not covered by fee)**

If your child is not potty trained (more than two pee accidents/day or one poop accident/day) 12 diapers and two boxes of wipes will need to be on hand at all times. I will send a note in the communication folder, or a text, or a phone message, or let you know in person when you need to send more. We will be actively working with you to get your child potty trained when they are ready.



- Nap mat as shown I will label it with your child's name. If it is torn or ripped, I will request that you purchase a new one.
- Towel or TOWEL sized blanket to use at rest time. NO PILLOWS or stuffed animals, please.
- Complete and labeled extra change of clothes (pants or shorts, shirt, underwear, socks, shoes). This will be kept at school unless soiled then it will be sent home to be washed and returned.
- One pair of rainboots

Due to sanitation and safety, I do not allow pacifiers, sippy cups, bottles, or any attachment item. Your child will gradually become very comfortable at our school. It will take some time, but that is normal. Keep the comfort supplies and personal feeding items at home so that you always know where they are and can access them easily.

**Signature Page**

Student/Child Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
PRINTED PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME

have received and read a copy of Tiny Seeds Nature School Policies and Procedures,  
Emergency Preparedness Plan, and Meal Participation Parent Information.

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE