



# Parent Handbook and Operational Policies

Academic Excellence - Faith Development - Community

Welcome to Learning Their Way! We are so excited to have you join our school family. If you have any questions about our handbook, policies, or classroom procedures, please email us at [learningtheirway@yahoo.com](mailto:learningtheirway@yahoo.com).

## **Our Vision**

Our vision is to nurture the whole child.

## **Our Mission**

Our mission is to nurture the whole child by sharing the love of Christ, fostering emotional intelligence, and growing their physical and academic development through age-appropriate education.

## **Our Core Values**

Our core values are to honor God, provide quality care, be respectful, be innovators, value our LTW family, effectively communicate, work together, and have fun.

The purpose of this handbook is to share information and ideas with our families to promote better understanding of our program.

*Our Policies and Procedures are reviewed annually and updated as needed. If any of our policies change, parents will be notified immediately in writing and on our website.*

## **Parents**

We believe parents are the most significant adults in a child's life. We are so glad that you chose our school to have your child(ren) enrolled in. We strive to create a mutual respect and encourage daily communication between parents and teachers, creating a partnership that will benefit the child.

## **Eligibility**

To enroll at Learning Their Way, each child must:

- Be 3 or older by the first day of school.
- Be potty trained.
- Have proof of current immunizations or exemption form.
- Have complete Admission Form and paid registration fee.

## **Enrollment**

For your child to be enrolled at Learning Their Way, they must have the following before the first day of school:

- Completed Admission Form
- Registration Fee paid in full
- Signed Discipline and Guidance Policy
- Signed Parent Acknowledgment Statement
- Current immunization records or Exemption Form
- A “Well-Child” note from your child’s pediatrician
- Vision and hearing results if 4 or older

## **Withdrawals**

If a student needs to be withdrawn, a 30-day written notice will be required. Failure to provide written notice and fill out the Withdrawal Form will result in a charge of 1-month tuition using the account information you leave on file.

## **Hours of Operation and School Calendar**

Learning Their Way is open from 8:15-2:30, Monday-Thursday. Doors will open at 8:15am each school day for the FROGS class and before care students. The FROGS class is from 8:15am-2:30pm. The LAMBS, FISH, and BUGS classes are from 8:45am-2pm. We do provide a short before and after school care for the LAMBS, FISH, and BUGS classes for an additional fee of \$75 a month. We follow the New Braunfels ISD calendar for school holidays and school closures due to bad weather.

## **Drop Off & Pick Up**

**All students must have their temperature taken and a wellness check completed at home before coming to school. By arriving at Learning Their Way on any given day, you are agreeing that your child has not been diagnosed with a transmissible illness, is free from symptoms of any known communicable disease and has not been in close contact with anyone in the past 14 days who has tested positive for an infectious disease.**

All students MUST sign in and sign out on the BrightWheel app each day they attend school. The drop off time is at 8:15 for the FROGS class and before school care. The drop off time is at 8:45 for the LAMBS, FISH, & BUGS classes and pick up is at 2pm. Pick up for the FROGS class and after school care is at 2:30. Please be respectful of these times to maximize student learning time in the classroom. A late fee of \$10 will be charged for every 15 minutes after your child’s designated pick-up time. If you are more than 30 minutes late without a phone call and a staff member cannot reach anyone on the call list, the police will be called in accordance with state laws.

For the release of children, our staff can only release a child to a parent or guardian on the children’s release/emergency information. We understand emergencies happen. Therefore, LTW will accept an email to [learningtheirway@yahoo.com](mailto:learningtheirway@yahoo.com) or BrightWheel written private message if a friend or family member needs to pick up your child. They must provide a valid

DL and the information must match the name provided in the written message. There will be NO EXCEPTIONS to this policy.

### **Fees and Payment**

Tuition can be done annually or monthly. If paid monthly, tuition is due on or by the first day of each month (September-May). Tuition invoices will go out seven days prior to the first of each month. Payment may be made with card (2.9% fee), ACH (\$0.60/transaction), check, or cash.

Fees are as follows:

- \$415 per month/2 days per week
- \$525 per month/4 days per week
- \$570 per month/Kindergarten
- \$150 non-refundable registration fee due upon registration
- \$175 yearly supply fee due before Meet the Teacher
- \$16 per t-shirt fee due before Meet the Teacher
- \$30 late fee if tuition is not received by midnight on the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month.
- \$35 fee will be charged for an NSF check.
- \$10 late fee for every 15 minutes after designated pick up time.
- \$50 (am OR pm)/\$90 (am AND pm) monthly fee for optional before/after school care
- \$4 Pizza/Nugget Days (\$36 yearly 2 days/\$72 yearly 4 days)

### **Important Dates**

August 26	First Day of School
September 2	Labor Day – Closed
October 14	Columbus Day – Closed
November 11	Veteran’s Day - Closed
November 25-28	Thanksgiving Break - Closed
December 23 - January 2	Winter Break – Closed
January 6	Staff Professional Development - Closed
January 20	MLK, Jr. Day - Closed
February 17	President’s Day – Closed
March 17 - 20	Spring Break - Closed
March 18	Staff Professional Development/Bad Weather Make-up Day - Closed
April 21	Easter Monday/Bad Weather Make-up Day - Closed
May 15	Last Day Splash Pad Party – Closed

The days that we are closed will be on the yearly school calendar, on the message board, and will be announced in the weekly newsletter throughout each month. We encourage our families to prepare to have alternative care on these days. Tuition will not be altered or refunded for days that the school is closed. M/W students will miss several Mondays. A make-up day will be offered during those weeks.

## **Curriculum**

The staff at Learning Their Way provides each child with a high-quality preschool, pre-kinder, and Kindergarten experience to develop a strong foundation for life-long learning. Our program embraces the philosophy that children learn best through play, hands-on experiences, and interactions with people, materials, events, and ideas. Children will be provided opportunities to create, experiment, and problem-solve each day. Learning experiences are based on current best practices and our state standards, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills or TEKS. The Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines that we follow are aligned with the Texas Kindergarten TEKS. Some supplemental curricula that we use are Pocket of Preschool, Heggerty Phonological Awareness, Reading A-Z, Daily Café, and Children's Ministry.

## **Communication**

Learning Their Way has several ways administration and staff communicate with parents. Communication will be through weekly S'more email newsletters, BrightWheel app, daily communication calendars in student folders, and the message board located outside the front door. If you need to contact the director immediately, **PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO: [LEARNINGTHEIRWAY@YAHOO.COM](mailto:LEARNINGTHEIRWAY@YAHOO.COM)**.

Our teachers must always be supervising students, please make conversations quick if it does not pertain to an immediate need regarding your child. Refraining from "door conferences" at pick up time will keep dismissal running safely and protect your child's privacy. We use the daily communication calendar in their folders and BrightWheel to give you a snapshot of their day.

## **Parent Teacher Conferences**

We will not conduct formal academic conferences unless the teacher deems it necessary. Parents are encouraged to request to set up a conference with your child's teacher if you have any concerns or questions. All conferences will need to be scheduled before or after school hours. If you have any concerns about policies/procedures, you can request to meet with the director anytime. We discourage conversations asking to discuss your child's behavior or progress in front of them and other parents at the end of the day. If you would like to discuss a need or concern, please set up a conference to meet with your child's teacher. At the end of the year a Parent Satisfaction Survey will be added to the weekly newsletter. Please take time to fill this out. This survey helps us to serve our families better.

## **Parent Involvement and Resources**

Learning Their Way provides families with opportunities to better understand the child's growth and development by making Parent/Teacher conferences available any time they are needed or desired. We will also share parent resources or events within the community. Digital communication will be distributed such as articles, handouts, activities, etc. at a minimum of three times a school year. Parents will also be referred to other professionals and local community resources when needed.

### **Parent Information Board**

There is a Parent Information Board in the main hallway. This board will have important information like permits, CPR certifications, and our snack menu. A weekly email newsletter will go home on Mondays with important information as well. If you are not receiving these, please contact Ms. Danielle at the front desk.

### **Minimum Standards**

Learning Their Way is a licensed child-care center and must adhere to the standards set by Texas Health and Human Services. There is a copy of the Minimum Standards set forth by the state on site for viewing at any time or you can view them online at <https://www.hhs.texas.gov>. You may also call the in-take line at 210-337-3399.

All staff have had criminal and child protection services background checks. For more information about child abuse/neglect, parents can go to the website listed above or contact the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400. All staff have current First Aid and CPR certifications as well.

### **Licensing Information**

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact:

#### **The Texas Health and Human Services**

How to contact the Local Licensing Office:

830-609-5033

115 Green Valley East #220

New Braunfels, Texas 78130

### **Communicable Diseases**

Your child will NOT be accepted for care if he/she has any of the following symptoms:

- Fever of 100 degrees or above
- Cough with a whooping/barking sound
- Cough lasting more than 1 week without a doctor's note
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Known close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19
- Contagious skin or eye irritation
- Unexplained rash or sore
- Discharge from eye, nose, or ears
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea, more than 3 times in two hours
- Excessive crying, with the inability to be consoled
- Any illness that keeps a child from participating in regular activity

If your child displays any of these symptoms while in our care, we will call you and your child will need to be picked up within one hour. Your child will need to be symptom and fever free for 24 hours without medication before returning to school.

**A child with any of the following sign or symptoms of illness will immediately be isolated from other children:**

- Any of the COVID-19 symptoms
- Unusual spots or rashes
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Vomiting
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Evidence of lice or other parasitic infections

Parents are requested to notify the director if their child has been exposed to or diagnosed with any contagious disease outside of the school. You will be notified if your child has been exposed at school to a communicable disease by the BrightWheel app. Please keep in mind that a child is constantly exposed to some communicable disease such as colds, chickenpox, strep throat, etc. by being in a public setting. If at any time Learning Their Way has reason to believe that your child has a communicable disease, we can request that he/she be seen by a doctor and that a note be provided from the doctor stating that your child is not contagious, is able to attend, and participate in school. Tuition will NOT be refunded for days out sick or quarantined.

**COVID Positive Policy**

By enrolling your child in Learning Their Way, you are acknowledging the risk of being in a public space. Learning Their Way, LLC assumes no liability of any individual entering the school or attending school events off the property if such injuries result from the inherent risks of contracting COVID-19. You are assuming this risk by entering the school or attending any school event off school property. If a classmate or teacher tests positive for COVID, the classroom will not be shut down. The student/teacher will need to have a negative PCR test to return. Rapid tests will NOT be accepted. If you choose not to get your child tested, they will need to quarantine for ten days. The student/teacher who tested positive may come back to the classroom after ten days of quarantine after the positive test and 72 hours of not experiencing any symptoms. Siblings of a positive student/parent will not be able to attend until a negative PCR test is submitted or ten days of quarantine has been completed and no symptoms present. Tuition will NOT be refunded for days out sick or quarantined.

**Immunizations & Exemptions**

Your child must have a current copy of their immunizations, or a valid exemption form as required by Texas HHS. A copy of your child's immunizations/exemption will be kept in their file. For any child that is 4 years or older, current vision and hearing results are also required.

**Medication**

Medications will not be administered at Learning Their Way. The ONLY allowances we will make are for a child's Epi-pen and rescue inhaler. The medication must be in its original

container with the doctor's instructions on it. The Director will be the only member of our staff to administer.

### **Medical Emergency**

In case of a minor injury, we will administer basic first aid. All injuries that require immediate parental notification will be documented in the form of an Incident Report and notified via BrightWheel message, email, or phone call. In case of a minor injury in which an ambulance is not needed but immediate medical attention is required, the director will contact the parents. If parents cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be notified. Learning Their Way staff cannot transport students to a hospital or doctor's office. Injured students shall be transported for medical attention by parents or emergency medical personnel. A staff member will remain with the injured child until the parents arrive. In the case that an ambulance is dispatched because we cannot reach a student's parents or emergency contacts, Learning Their Way is not responsible for the cost of that service.

### **Emergency Preparedness Plan**

This plan informs parents what the responsibilities are of Learning Their Way staff in the instance of a communicable disease outbreak, tornado/bad weather/lock down or fire, accident or illness, explosion, chemical spill, gas leak/bomb threat, and off-site evacuation and relocation. There is a written plan in each classroom and at the front desk to view anytime.

### **Emergency Drills**

Learning Their Way staff strive to make sure all students are safe at school every day. We do this by making sure students are prepared for a variety of emergencies. We will practice fire drills monthly where students will be evacuated to the fenced area in the front playground and then take a face-to-face roll call. We will practice bad weather/tornado/lockdown drills quarterly where children go to the closest restroom/closet away from any windows. They will sit in a tucked position until the warning has passed. A face-to-face roll call will take place.

### **Inclement Weather**

Learning Their Way will follow the New Braunfels ISD guidelines regarding school closures during inclement weather. If a school closure happens during the school day, you will be called to pick up your child immediately. Students will conduct active play minutes indoors if the wind chill is below 45 degrees Fahrenheit or the temperature is over 99 degrees Fahrenheit.

### **Behavior Guidance Policy and Expulsion**

At Learning Their Way, we are committed to providing a safe environment for learning. Universal support strategies are available to all students to support their social emotional development by teaching expected behaviors (e.g.: visual supports, reteaching, class meetings, etc.) and teaching various social skills (sharing, taking turns, problem solving) all year long. We try our best to provide a consistent, challenging learning environment with

opportunities for physical activity which will help prevent boredom and promote desired behaviors. Children will do well when they can. If they can't, it is up to us to understand why and what skill they may be lacking that needs to be taught.

Behavior modifications begin with redirection, verbal warnings, when-then statements, stating the expected behavior, giving behavior choices, providing a visual support, and/or going to the Regulation Station. The Regulation Station is a quiet, cozy place in the classroom a child can go to when they are feeling upset, sad, or just want to be alone. The Regulation Station also has a toolbox with items and visual support to help a child get regulated so they can rejoin the group. We use Sunny Day and Cloudy Day Choices to teach students desired classroom behaviors.

A discussion will take place with your child where we will gather information and try to understand your child's concern or perspective. Our goal is to help our students define the problem or concern we have in the classroom. Then we will continue the conversation with an invitation to brainstorm solutions that are realistic and meaningful to both your child and the teacher and that they both feel good about. You will receive a digital copy of the discipline and guidance policy form.

At Learning Their Way, our goal for students is to be happy, confident learners who can problem solve and work collaboratively with others. Being able to make safe choices when they are alone and interacting with others is a big part of that. We use Good-Will Bucks as a positive reinforcement tool when students show empathy and care toward their peers or teachers. These get to be "spent" twice a year in the Good-Will Bank Store.

We will communicate daily and document when a student is struggling. It will be after we try all available options that we will schedule a conversation about if expulsion/dismissal will take place. We do reserve the right to refuse or discontinue educational services if a student exhibits a pattern of defiance toward authority, uses excessive harsh language, hits/kicks, or poses a threat against oneself, teachers, or the other children in care.

### **Other Options Prior to Expulsion**

Prior to the expulsion of any child from Learning Their Way, the staff and director will follow these guidelines:

- Identify and engage mental and behavioral health consultants and community resources after obtaining parent permission.
- Reduce the number of days or amount of time in care for a specified amount of time.
- Conference with parents to discuss positive behavior interventions and development of goals.
- Document efforts to prevent and reduce expulsion.
- Provide reasonable accommodation.

### **Transition Procedures**

If an expulsion must occur, Learning Their Way will assist the child and family in transitioning to another program by identifying and engaging mental/behavioral health consultants and community resources to assist in determining the most appropriate placement for the child.



### **Procedures for Supporting Inclusive Services**

Learning Their Way will provide a child with special care needs with accommodations recommended by a health-care professional; or a qualified professional affiliated with the local school district or early childhood intervention program. We will utilize as recommended any adaptive equipment that has been provided to Learning Their Way for your child's use. We will ensure that your child who receives early intervention services or special education services can receive those services from a qualified service provider at our school, with parental request and approval. Our staff will ensure that activities integrate all children with and without special care needs and that our teachers adapt equipment and procedures and vary methods as necessary to ensure that you care for a child with special needs in a natural environment.

### **Visitation**

Please know that parents/guardians are ALWAYS welcome to visit our classroom during the hours of operation to observe your child, the Learning Their Way operation and school activities without having to secure prior approval.

### **Breast Feeding**

We have a designated area for you to breast feed your child if you desire.

### **Snack & Meals**

Each day we will provide a healthy snack and drink. The snack menu is posted on the parent board. If at any time you would like to bring a snack for your child's class, please make sure it is store bought. There will be a snack sign-up sheet available in the classroom. Parents will be responsible for providing lunch daily and overseeing its nutritional value. Learning Their Way will have a Chicken Nugget Day and a Pizza Day each month for a charge of \$4 each meal. To pay for the year, it is \$72 for 4 days and \$36 for 2 days. These days include the main (nuggets or pizza), two sides, and 100% fruit juice.

### **Food Allergy or Special Diet**

If your child has a known food allergy or special diet, you are required to provide us with their food allergy plan to keep in their file. Their food allergies will be listed in the kitchen, in their classroom, and on their snack tray.

### **Birthdays**

A birthday is a very special day for children. To celebrate your child's birthday, you may bring in store bought birthday treats. We cannot serve homemade treats. If you decide to pass out invitations to students for your child's birthday party, we ask that you send an invite for each student in the class.

### **Parties**

Learning Their Way will have several parties throughout the year. Parents will be provided with party information and given the opportunity to help. We love to celebrate with Comal

County Fair Week, Halloween dress up, Thanksgiving Feast Days, Christmas parties and program, Snowball Fight Day, Valentine's Day parties, 100th Day of School, Easter Egg Hunt, Earth Day picnics, Spring Program & Awards, and the End of the Year Splash Pad party. Parents are welcome anytime.

### **Water Activities**

Water may be used in sensory bins, in pails/spray bottles, with sponge exploration, and with pails/sponges. There may be times we use sprinklers and wading pools during our Summer Enrichment Program.

### **Field Trips**

Our goal is to go on two field trips each school year. At Learning Their Way, we aim to go on a Fall field trip and a Spring field trip. A permission slip will be signed for each field trip as well as the field trip section of the Admission Information Form. We require that an adult attend the field trips with your child to help with transportation and to build those special memories.

### **Dress Code & Extra Clothing**

We request that students wear play clothes that are practical, comfortable, and washable. We will get dirty at school. Please dress children for active play. We will go outside for large muscle activities twice a day whenever the weather allows us. We ask that you provide your child an extra set of seasonally appropriate clothing that can be kept in their backpack (socks too). Students will be running and jumping. **Students must wear tennis shoes to school.** No crocks, flip flops, sandals, or western boots. Shorts under a dress or skirt are also required. Please make sure all clothing items are labeled with your child's first/last name.

### **Lost and Found**

Clothing and personal items unclaimed will be put in the Lost & Found box by the front door of the school.

### **Rest Time – NEW Policy 2024-25**

Our Pre-K3 program will have an hour of rest time and will need a nap mat. We will provide a rest time in our Pre-K4 program based on student's individual physical needs.

Kindergarten does not have a required rest time. We do not have a Safe Sleep policy due to not enrolling infants.

### **Backpacks & Water Bottles**

Please make sure that your child has a backpack that is large enough to fit a folder inside. Each student will bring a water bottle daily that they may refill when needed from the water fountain. We ask that the water bottle have a straw/suck style top and is spill proof. We ask only for water to be sent to school in your child's water bottle. Juice and milk will not be permitted.

## **Parent's Rights**

A parent or guardian of Learning Their Way has the right to the following:

- Enter and examine our school during its hours of operation and without advance notice.
- File a complaint against our school.
- Review our school's publicly accessible records.
- Review our school's written records concerning their child.
- Receive inspection reports and information about how to access our school's online compliance history.
- Have our school comply with a court order that prevents another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the child.
- Be given the contact information for our school's local Child Care Regulation office.
- Inspect any video recordings of an alleged child incident of abuse or neglect involving their child provided that: video recordings of the alleged incident are available; the parent or guardian does not retain any part of the video depicting a child that is not their own; and the parent or guardian of any other child in the video receive prior notice from the center. (Learning Their Way does not have recording devices.)
- Obtain a copy of our school's policies and procedures handbook.
- Review our school's staff training records and any in-house training curriculum.
- Exercise these rights without receiving retaliatory action by the childcare center.

Parents will sign a Parent Acknowledgement Statement upon enrollment stating that the Parent Handbook has been read.

Revision Date: 6/21/2024

# Learning Their Way Team

**Danielle Budnik - Owner/Director**

830-358-7718 (school)

[learningtheirway@yahoo.com](mailto:learningtheirway@yahoo.com)

Administration

**Angel Blakey**

Phonological/Phonemic Awareness & Substitute

**Carla Perez**

Pre-K3 - [Lambs](#)

**Tammy Jackson-Magott**

Pre-K4 - Young 4s- [Fish](#)

**Katie Kolinek**

Pre-K4/5 - [Bugs](#)

**Melanie Burnett**

Pre-K4/5 - [Bugs](#)

**Kara Baese**

Kindergarten Teacher - [Frogs](#)

We are all mothers with families. Please make any BrightWheel messages regarding your child **before 6pm**, unless it is an emergency. Thank you so much!