

The Acorn - A School for Young Children  
3501 Broadway SAT 78209; (210) 826-8804  
Monday through Friday AM Class: The Blue Stars

August, 2018

Dear Parents,

As an orientation, we would like for you and your child to come to school Thursday, August 30<sup>th</sup> at 10:00, for about an hour. This will give your child a chance to see the classroom and meet the teachers before Opening Day. If, on Opening Day, you feel your child needs for you to stay for part or all of the day, please feel free to do so. After the first day or two, however, most of the children will be ready to stay on their own; we encourage you to drop off your child as the teacher greets you at your car near the gate.

Your child's first day of school will be Tuesday, September 4<sup>th</sup>. This will be a special day, lasting only two hours from 8:40 - 10:40. On Wednesday, September 5<sup>th</sup>, we will begin the regular class time: 8:40 - 11:30. Please remember there will be no extended session for lunch on Wednesday, September 5<sup>th</sup>. If your child is enrolled in the Thursday Afternoon Adventure Club, it starts the second week as well.

The Five-Day AM Class (Monday through Friday AM Class) will be using our new upstairs classroom, and your child's Head Teachers are Allyson Jones and Colleen Petty. Allyson is in ninth year at The Acorn, having taught in the Five Year Old Class. Allyson earned her Bachelor's Degree in Human Sciences with a concentration in Human Development and Family Studies from Texas A&M Kingsville. She has definitely put down roots here and calls San Antonio, and The Acorn, home! Allyson builds such natural relationships with her students, and brings out their best. Her developmental approach creates a fun learning environment for them. In her spare time, she enjoys movies and working in her yard. She is excited about another year of adventure with the Blue Stars, and we are so excited to have her!

This is Colleen's second year at The Acorn. She has a background in music education and has taught in Texas public schools for 11 years. She earned her Early Childhood through 12th grade music-teaching certificate/Bachelor's Degree from Howard Payne University and a Master's Degree in Music Education from Baylor University. Her husband Mike works for the US Army, which brought the family to San Antonio for their first duty station. Mike and Colleen have two wonderful girls, Julia (10), who is in 5th grade at Cambridge Elementary and Erin (5), who is an Acorn graduate! In her spare time, Colleen likes to read, scrapbook, drink coffee, take walks, do yoga/Pilates, cook, and play board games. She will also be teaching music to our class, as well as a few of our other preschool classes. Colleen has a sweet, positive nature; you and your child will love getting to know her!

Pertinent contact information will be given you on the home visit; please add these to your lists so you will have them handy. Allyson and Colleen will introduce to you the other classroom teacher in their September Newsletter.

The first day of school we would like for you to bring a change of clothing for your child, which we will keep here all year, just in case we need it. Please include underpants, socks, a shirt, and pants, and put them inside a zip-lock bag with your child's name clearly marked on it. If your child ever needs these clothes and wears them home, please return them the next day to replenish their bag. For day-to-day wear, please dress your child in play clothes so that he or she can move around freely and comfortably and participate in all motor and outdoor activities without worry. Every child will get dirty on the playground or in the art room from time to time, so please expect it and dress your child so it won't matter to you. Please have your child wear closed toe sport type shoes, as they are the safest footwear. Crocs, sandals, or boots are not safe for play.

Many thanks; we do appreciate your cooperation! We are really looking forward to classes beginning on September 4<sup>th</sup>.

Enjoy the rest of the summer, and we'll see you soon! Rich, Jo and Wendy

## **Tuesday/Wednesday Lunch Bunch**

If your child is enrolled in the Tuesday and/or Wednesday lunch bunch, as a reminder, there is no extended day session the first week of school. Extended day will start the second week of school.

The children stay to eat their sack lunches, and are dismissed no later than 2:00. Any child left after 2:00 will be brought to the office and the parent will be charged a late fee. Please remember to send a nutritious lunch and avoid sweets or any sugar desserts.

If you are informed about other children having food allergies or sensitivities, we appreciate your cooperation in refraining from sending foods that would affect your child's classmates. (See Nutrition Policy section of Policy Information.)

The first few extended days we would recommend coming to pick up your child between 1:00 and 1:30, since those first lunch days can seem very long to the children. Also, the heat and hard play takes a lot out of them so they can get quite tired. If you find your child is still full of energy, you can visit with other parents while he/she continues to play. Most of the children will wear out earlier than usual those first few weeks, though.

While you are always in contact with your child's classroom teachers, the lunch bunch teachers are available if you have any questions or concerns regarding lunch or afternoon activities.

Please note that the last week for extended days is the week of May 6<sup>th</sup>. There are no extended day programs the last week of school.

Should you decide not to keep your child's space, we would appreciate your informing us as soon as possible, as there is a waiting list for the positions. Thank you very much!

Rich, Jo and Wendy



**Mondays until 2:00**

If your child is enrolled, as a reminder, Adventure Club will start on the Monday of the second week of school. They will be dismissed no later than 2:00.

Their adventures will be led by Kindergarten teachers Lisa Turpin and Christa Trippy.

Any child left after 2:00 will be brought to the office and the parent will be charged a late fee. Please remember to send a nutritious lunch and avoid sweets or any sugar desserts.

If you are informed about other children having food allergies or sensitivities, we appreciate your cooperation in refraining from sending foods that would affect your child's classmates. (See Nutrition Policy section of Policy Information.)

Please note that the last week for Adventure Club is the week of May 6<sup>th</sup>. There are no extended day programs the last week of school.

Should you decide not to keep your child's space, we would appreciate your informing us as soon as possible, as there is a waiting list for the positions. Thank you very much!

Rich, Jo and Wendy



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Tall Oaks from Little Acorns Grow

2018 – 2019 Policy Information

Welcome to The Acorn!

As the school year begins, there is a great deal of information we need to pass on to you. **We urge you to read this entire booklet** and save it to refer to throughout the year. If you ever have any questions regarding The Acorn policies or your child’s program, please feel free to call us.

In this brochure please find information on the following:

- Calendar
- Home Visits/Children’s Records
- Arrival and Dismissal - Carpools
- Visiting and Observing
- Teacher Pre- and Post- Sessions
- Late Fees
- Parent/Teacher Communication
- Tuition Payment
- Children’s Appropriate Dress for Play
- Outdoor Play
- Absences/Attendance/Health
- Policies and Illness
- Nutrition Policy
- Food Allergies/ Medical Requirements  
Photographs, Media, Web site
- Birthday Gift Traditions
- Personal Belongings
- Child Safety
- Guidance and Discipline
- Parking
- Parent Participation
- Subbing Opportunities
- Field Trips

Smoking is prohibited everywhere on The Acorn property, including in vehicles and on field trips.



### Acorn Calendar for the 2018-19 School Year

Aug.	30	New Child Orientation	See Class Letter for Scheduled Time
Sept	3	Labor Day	No School
	4	First Day of Class	
Oct.	8	Columbus Day	No School
	9-25	Dad's Days	Details TBA
	19-21	Kindergarten Campout	Lost Maples State Natural Area
	22	Kindergarten Day Off	Preschool Classes in Session
	TBA	Family Picnic at Kiddie Park	4:30 - 7:00; Potluck - Details TBA
Nov.	TBA	Tour for Prospective/New Parents	10:00 a.m. (1 3/4 hr.; adults only)
	5	Parent Conferences Start	Scheduled through mid-January
	19-22	Thanksgiving Holiday	No School
Dec.	24-Jan. 4	Holidays	No School
Jan.	7	Staff Work Day	No School
	8	Classes Resume	
	21	Martin Luther King Day	No School
	14	Enrollment for 2019-20 Begins	Current Families
	TBA	Tour for Prospective/New Parents	10:00 a.m. (1 3/4 hr.; adults only)
	23, 24	Alumni Enrollment for 2018-19	
	30	Enrollment for New Families	by Appointment
Feb.	22	Acorn Fundraiser	6:30 p.m. Radius Center
	18	Presidents' Day	No School
	26-Mar.5	Grandparents' Visits	Days TBA
Mar.	11-15	Spring Break	No School
Apr.	19	Good Friday	No School
	22-25	Class Fiesta Events	See April News for Scheduled Time
	26	Battle of Flowers Parade	No School
May	TBA	Tour for Prospective/New Parents	10:00 a.m. (1 3/4 hr.; adults only)
	TBA	High School Reunion	1:00 p.m.
	6-10	Mother's Day Celebrations	Days TBA
	13, 14	Mud Days	
	17	Last Day of Classes	
	20	Teacher Workday	
	21,22	Parent Conferences	As Scheduled

## Home Visits/Children's Records

Each child will receive a home visit from his/her Head Teacher to help make the transition to school a successful one. The home visit gives the opportunity for your child to get to know his/her teacher in the comfort and security of their own home. (If a child has attended the same class in which he/she is enrolled for the upcoming year, and has had the same head teachers, the family has an option of attending a "classroom visit" day, rather than scheduling a home visit.)

This policy book is one of several informative letters for parents. You were sent a link to a packet of several forms upon enrollment, which you should have completed and turned in at that time. There are a few additional forms now available on the website, theacornschool.net, which we ask you to download, print, and complete before your child's home visit. Please complete all forms IN TOTAL, so they will be ready on your home visit day. The teacher will be picking up the completed forms, which are required for each student's file. If there is any remaining information needed for your child's file, the teacher will obtain it on the home visit, as well.

Forms for which you were provided a link due July 10<sup>th</sup> include:

- **Student Directory Information**
- **Emergency Information**; Please include all information required on the form. If a space is intentionally left blank, please write "NONE". Please do not skip any spaces. The Texas Licensing Board requires an alternate person (**not mom or dad**) be listed as a contact in case of emergency. You must complete the section "Persons Other Than Parents to Be Notified In Case of Emergency When Parents Cannot Be Reached". Please make sure to bring any food allergies, such as to milk products, peanuts, wheat, etc., or any other chronic or contagious conditions to the attention of your child's teacher.
- **Permission Slip/Operational Policy Receipt/ Waiver and Release of Liability**
- **Volunteer Waiver Form** (one per person)
- **Parent Questionnaire**
- **Health and Immunization Form**, completed by a physician, including an attached immunization record, with DTP, polio, MMR, Hib, Hep A, Hep B, and varicella. Please note that children four years of age and older need an annual vision and hearing screening. All new students will need a Health Form completed before school starts. Those students who attended The Acorn last school year should have a current health form in their records; an updated form will need to be completed and turned in after their birthday.
- **Consent for Hearing & Vision, Speech and Language Screening**
- **Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan** (for allergies), as needed

Texas Child Care and Health Standards legally require that each preschool child have this information on file at school within one week of admission in order for that child to participate in the program. To ensure that we will not have to exclude your child from classroom activities, please make sure required school records ARE COMPLETE by the first week of school. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Additional letters and forms now available on the website:

- Policy Information
- Lunch Bunch/Adventure Club information (for those enrolled; please confirm with your child's teacher)
- Volunteer Opportunities Form
- (Kindergarten Only) The Race: Tortoise and the Hare Geography information
- Class introductory letters
- Annual Fundraiser Information

## Arrival/Dismissal Procedures

Due to the large number of children arriving and departing at the same time, we will be using a drop-off and pick-up system so the parents do not need to get out of their vehicles. Never leave your vehicle in the car line. If you choose to leave your vehicle, you **must park** to allow for the continued flow of traffic in the driveway. (See Parking). The school driveway is a one-way, so please enter from Avenue B and exit onto Broadway. Please remember to pull forward as far as possible just past the gate or to the car in front of you. This will help keep vehicles off of Avenue B and minimize waiting times for all involved. Please do not use your cell phone or audio visual players during this time. This is for safety reasons and also allows you to greet your child and have brief communication with the teacher. If you need to speak at length to your child's teacher, a time to call can be arranged. Thank you very much.

We ask that all children stay buckled up in their car seat until a teacher comes to greet and escort your child to their destination. **There should be no lap sitting or standing in the vehicle while moving.**

If you arrive late for drop-off, you will need to bring your child inside the building and make certain he/she is met by one of the teachers. See your child's Arrival/Departure Schedules.

Departure times can be a bit confusing in the beginning until we learn to recognize the vehicles and get the carpools straight. Please be patient. Until this time we ask that you roll down your window, so the teacher can see you clearly. The glare from the sun hinders the teacher from seeing through the windshield.

If you arrive late for pick-up, your child will be brought to the office, where you may pick him/her up. See your child's Arrival/Departure Schedules, pg. 6-7. A late fee will be added to your account. (See Late Fees.)

In case of rain, all children will be dismissed from the covered porch off the drive.

A child will be released only to his/her parents, family, or those whose names are on the emergency form, unless other prior notification has been made. A parent should write a note or call us personally in a pinch. We will not accept calls from secretaries, employees, etc., only parent or guardian. We appreciate your cooperation and patience as we try to make pickup time go as smoothly as possible.

Dismissal times for the preschool and Kindergarten classes are staggered to help with traffic flow. If your family or carpool is picking up children in both preschool and Kindergarten, please be prepared to pick up your preschool child, then park and wait for the Kindergarten student to be dismissed from class. You are welcome to supervise your own child or carpool briefly on the playground, but know that the teachers will be going back inside to complete their classroom duties.

## Carpools

Past experience has taught us that it is best to avoid carpooling the first few weeks or so of school, or perhaps longer, to ease the transition of starting school. If you are interested in forming a carpool, a map is displayed in the meeting room on which the residence of each family at The Acorn is marked. You can find those who may live in your area who you could contact to see if arrangements might be made.

On the subject of carpooling and sharing rides, because of our teacher's duties for forty-five minutes

before, and for an hour after school, it is our policy that teachers cannot bring any other children to school or keep them after school prior to going home. (See Teacher Pre & Post Sessions.) Thank you very much for your understanding.

### **Kindergarten Arrival/Departure Schedule**

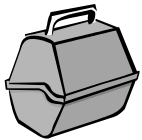
Kindergarten teachers will greet their class from 8:40 to 8:55 on the driveway each morning. On Mon., Thurs., and Fri., pickup time is 12:00. Starting the second week of school and throughout the first semester, dismissal on Tues. and Wed. will be at 2:00 from the playground. Thurs. will be added as a longer day in the second semester the last week of January, with dismissal at 2:00. These longer days will allow for field trips and more extended activities. Please pack a nutritious lunch for your child on these days. (Please refer to our Nutrition Policy.) A late fee will be charged for those arriving after these times. (See Late Fees.)

### **Morning Preschool Arrival/Departure Schedules**

The morning preschool classes are scheduled from 8:40 to 11:30. There will be a teacher outside to greet the children and take them out of the cars from 8:40 - 8:55. Pickup time is 11:30. A late fee will be charged starting at 11:45. (See Late Fees.)

### **Afternoon Preschool Arrival/Departure Schedule**

The afternoon preschool classes are scheduled from 12:40 - 3:30. There will be a teacher outside to greet the children and take them out of the cars from 12:40 - 12:55. Pickup time is 3:30. A late fee will be charged starting at 3:45. (See Late Fees.)



### **Adventure Club / Tuesday, Wednesday Extended Day/ Early Thursday Lunch**

Adventure Club and Lunch Bunch days begin the second week of school. If your child is enrolled in these, please pack a nutritious lunch for your child on these days. (Please refer to our Nutrition Policy.)

For morning children enrolled in the Tuesday and/or Wednesday extended session or Adventure Club, you may pick them up any time before 2:00. For children new to this program, these extended hours can be long. Please be sensitive to your child's needs and pick him/her up earlier if needed, especially during the first few weeks of school.

For afternoon preschoolers enrolled in the Thursday early lunch session, arrival time is 11:10. Please note that the last day for ALL Lunch Bunch groups is the week of May 6<sup>th</sup>; there are no lunch bunches the last week of school.

If you are running late and arrive after 11:45 for early Thursday lunch, please plan to feed your child lunch before their arrival, since the Lunch Bunch children will have finished up eating and will be involved in activities by this time. Thanks!

### **Visiting/Observing**

Although our normal arrival and departure system is outdoors, we want to urge you to park and bring your child inside as often as you want. We want you to see what is going on inside and to be involved in your child's school program. If you would like to observe without being seen by your child, the main upstairs classroom has observation areas with one-way mirrors, where you can watch unnoticed. Downstairs, the newer upstairs classroom, and in the Kindergarten classroom you might

be more easily seen, but welcome nonetheless. Please inform the teachers or office when you wish to observe.

After the children have arrived and during class hours, you may enter the building through the main entrance by the office and kindergarten. Those doors lock automatically when closed, and, on the home visit you will be given a code number that will unlock the doors and allow you entry any time during the school day. This code is for adult use only. When you do enter, please make sure to close the door behind you. Do not allow access to any other unfamiliar people as you are entering. In addition, there is a video monitor and doorbell located at each entrance on the north side of the building, which will alert us to greet you.

If you visit the school at any time during the year and you have other siblings with you, we appreciate your keeping them under your supervision. The teachers are involved with their classes and are unable to keep an eye on visiting children. This is especially true on the playground where the children's safety is so important. There may be a time when you are waiting on the playground for arrival or dismissal time with a sibling; please be aware that when classes come outside to use this space, it is necessary for you to give them priority when using the equipment and activities. If needed, you may have to leave the playground. Please put any toys used away when you are done. (The equipment is not intended for use by older children.) When classes are not in session, the playground is closed.

### **Teacher Pre- and Post- Sessions**

All staff meet before the children arrive for a pre-session and setup. During that time we discuss interest areas, small groups, and activities to be offered that day and talk about the most effective ways to present them. After the children are picked up, the staff meets for post-session to discuss how the children responded to all activities, the gains they are making, and the areas in which we can plan to help each child. We keep written anecdotal records for each child which the teachers update during post-session. And we give our staff feedback so they can constantly improve their teaching techniques. These pre- and post- sessions are extremely important to our program.

### **Late Fees**

There is a late fee for lack of punctuality, similar to that charged by other preschools. In general, a late fee of \$5.00 will be charged for the first 10 minutes that a family is late to pick up their child or carpool. A fee of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed thereafter. This fee will be added to your next month's tuition bill. If you are late, you can pick up your child in the office.

**Please note that late fees will DOUBLE on all Fridays, the last day before vacations, and the entire week before our annual fundraiser.** We have noticed a tendency for parents to run late on Fridays and the last day before vacations, and that's also a time when the teachers and office staff are participating in post-sessions and are looking to get on with their plans. The week before the fundraiser is hectic in the office and we have neither the time nor the space to handle children whose parents are late. We hope that everyone will be punctual and that we won't have to use this arrangement. Thanks for your cooperation and understanding!

### **Parent/Teacher Communication**

The children will call all the adults by their first names, and we invite you to do the same. We believe in building a close, "family oriented" relationship with everyone at The Acorn.



Newsletters from the office and each class (or a link to news on the website) will be emailed to parents. You can always access the website for information.

Parent/Teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year with each family. Fall/Winter conferences will be scheduled starting mid-November through early January. Final conferences will be in May during the week after the children finish school. Additional individual conferences may be scheduled anytime, as needed. Feel free to e-mail or telephone your Head Teacher after school or in the evening to discuss any concerns or questions you may have. You can check with your child's teacher regarding convenient times at which she is available. We strongly believe in maintaining clear lines of communication, and your teacher wants to hear from you. Please note that teachers do not have access to their cell phones at all times during class time. Therefore a text is not the most efficient way to communicate during the day. Please call the office first; if unable to get through, please call Jo or Wendy's cell phones (given to you at your home visit). Thanks.

Please inform us of any events in your child's life that might affect his/her behavior, such as serious illness or a death in the family (including pets), separation of parents, parents traveling, etc. We may be able to help your child at such a time, and an awareness of what is going through his/her mind is important to us. In addition to your child's Head Teacher, you are free to call Rich, Jo or Wendy anytime. Please remember that while this communication is important, pickup time does not allow time for a lengthy conversation. You are welcome to park and speak briefly to your child's teacher on the playground to schedule a convenient time to call or visit.

At times during conferences, recommendations are made to parents that will help further the development of the child and be beneficial for his/her successful school and family experiences. We appreciate open, honest communication with the parents, as we know everyone has the best interest of the child in mind. Follow-through with such recommendations can offer the child a chance to succeed in areas in which there may be difficulties. If a family continually rejects recommendations made and it is reflected in the child's classroom behavior such that their behavior negatively affects the learning environment for the other children, then we reserve the right to terminate that child's enrollment.

### **Tuition Payment**

We request that you pay your child's tuition in full for the semester, through December, if you are able; it helps the schools' cash flow immensely. If this is not possible, you may pay by the month and tuition will be due on or before the first of each month. Please mark your calendars with a reminder for your payment.. Tuition not received by the 10th of the month will incur an additional \$25 late fee. The school also reserves the right to terminate a child's enrollment for nonpayment of tuition. Should that be necessary, the family would still owe all tuition and late fees due, and would be responsible for paying interest at 12% per annum until it is paid off. If a check is returned with insufficient funds, we will charge a \$25 fee. If a second check is returned, an NSF charge of \$30 will be made, and tuition due after that must be paid in cash.

Please mail your check or bring it directly into the office; please do not send it with your child or give it to a teacher. Credit card payments need to be made in the office. Another method of payment

would be to set up a recurring check payment with your own online banking establishment. There are no refunds for missed days, whether due to sickness, your own vacation time, or cancellation of school due to some natural disaster (like flooding, snow, or ice in San Antonio!). Please remember that once paid, enrollment fees, annual fees, and tuition are non-refundable and non-transferable for any reason. If a child drops out, the family is responsible for paying tuition until another child takes his/her place.

### **Dress for Play**

For day-to-day wear, please dress your child in play clothes so he/she can move around freely and comfortably and participate in all motor and outdoor activities without worry. Every child will get dirty on the playground or in the art room from time to time, so please expect it and dress your child so it won't matter to you. Sandals or crocs are not appropriate, as the children are uncomfortable wearing them on the sandy playground and they can be a safety hazard; sports shoes work best. Also, please leave cowboy boots at home, since it's hard to participate in motor activities in them and accidentally stepping on others fingers, etc. is quite hurtful. We also recommend that if your child wears earrings or other jewelry, please refrain from hoops or dangling items that could interfere with their play or pose safety issues while moving about.

### **Outdoor Play**

Our outdoor play time is very important and an integral part of our total program. It is a wonderful opportunity for large motor development and social interaction. We plan to play outside every day in all kinds of weather. The only exception would be a hard rain. Whether it be for the heat, drizzle, or cold, make plans now to dress your child appropriately for all kinds of weather. It is essential that you clearly mark all outer clothing, including sweaters, jackets, etc. with your child's name. Every year our lost and found is bulging with good clothing that was never labeled, which, if unclaimed, we donate to a local charity.

### **Absences /Attendance /Health Policies and Illness**

We want to urge everyone at the outset of school to be aware of keeping your child home from school if he/she is obviously getting sick or is not yet sufficiently recovered from an illness to return. As a child is recovering from an illness, the recommended practice is that he/she be fever or contagion-free for 24 hrs. before returning to school. If a child is listless, feverish, recently vomited or had diarrhea, or is showing signs of illness, sometimes he/she will still say they want to go to school. Even so, they need to stay home. No one likes to miss school, but it is unfair to all the healthy children to be exposed. When you do keep your child at home, please call ahead to inform us, as it will help us to plan for the day. You can call your Head Teacher the night before at home, or call school in the morning. Also, if your child contracts something very contagious, like chicken pox, please remember that in this example the most contagious period is the 48 hours before your child breaks out. Therefore it is very important to notify the school about that timing, as well as calling the parents of friends your child played with so they can be on the lookout for symptoms. Another possible contagious situation which children are occasionally exposed to in public places is head lice.

Contracting head lice is not shameful, nor is it due to uncleanliness. Lice are spread by person to person contact, or by sharing infested clothing, hats, helmets, etc. While it is very inconvenient and a nuisance, it poses no serious health threat. Nevertheless, it is important that we are informed at school. If we are informed of a case in the school, we will immediately remove all hats, helmets, and soft elements in the exposed areas and place each child's outer wear in individual plastic bags on their coat hook. Parents will be notified as necessary. In the past, when a few Acorn children have had head lice from an outside source, it has never spread further at the school. There are several online resources for more information.

While absences due to illness are necessary, we ask that you consider consistency in attendance, especially in Kindergarten, as you plan family trips and vacations. History has shown that students benefit from regular attendance. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

If you know in advance your child will be absent on a given day for an appointment or a family vacation, please send a note with your child as far in advance as you can. Thanks!

The Acorn will not dispense any medication at school. No medication should be sent to school with your child. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. Exceptions can be pre-arranged for emergency situations only; forms and legal requirements for documentation are available in the office.

### **Nutrition Policy**

Snacks, whether provided by The Acorn or brought from home, will be nutritious and wholesome. This applies to snacks, lunches, and foods for special events, such as birthdays, Valentine's Day, Halloween, piñata goodies, field trip snacks, etc. We ask that you refrain from sending cookies, ice cream or frozen yogurt, cakes, cupcakes, sugared or flavored drinks, or any other sweets. Instead, we like for the children to bring their favorite food or snack (other than dessert). Some ideas might be fruits, cheeses, vegetables, sandwiches, pasta, casseroles, chicken legs, tortillas and beans, pizza, etc.; any food your child especially likes that he/she would like to share with friends at school. Beverages need to be whole juices or milk. This is a wonderful opportunity to instill the idea that many foods are special, not just sweets. The children get to try many new foods over the year that they might not otherwise. This is a school-wide policy, so please avoid putting your child's teacher in an awkward position by asking about providing an inappropriate food.

Parents count on us to keep this policy a consistent one, continually offering nutritious foods. We appreciate your cooperation in resisting the urge to send a sugary snack. Please consult your child's teacher in advance, to verify the date, time, and your idea for your child's birthday snack, and we appreciate your cooperation in adhering to this policy. Your teacher may be able to help you with ideas, or let you know if we've had four days straight of pizza or muffins. Variety is always appreciated!

### **Food Allergies/ Medical Requirements**

There are times when in a class or lunch group a child is enrolled who has a particular food allergy or sensitivity. As you are made aware of these, we appreciate your cooperation and understanding as you consider what foods to send. Reasonable accommodations will be made as necessary and healthy hygiene practices will be followed. This year we will once again provide a nut free environment. (Please refer to our Nutrition Policy.)

The Acorn- a School for Young Children is devoted to the safety of our students and staff and has developed this policy to reduce the risk of children and staff having allergy-related events. While The Acorn cannot guarantee that food allergens will never find their way into the school and classrooms, we can—with everyone’s help and attention—greatly minimize the risk of exposure to a food allergen.

Upon enrollment, parents are required to notify the school of their child’s current allergies and medical needs. An Individual Health Care Action Plan or Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan must be completed and signed by the parents. If medication is to be administered by school staff, a medication release form must also be completed and signed. As a child’s medical diagnoses change during the course of their education, parents should update this information in a timely manner. Up-to-date medication clearly labelled must be provided by parents and replaced when expired. A child will not be allowed to attend without life-saving medications.

We have adopted the following recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention\*. Acorn-specific procedures are listed in italics.

### **Classroom**

- Avoid the use of identified allergens in class projects, parties, holidays and celebrations, arts, crafts, science experiments, cooking, snacks, or rewards. Modify class materials as needed.
  - *Teachers and staff will make reasonable efforts to reach out to parents about the appropriateness of snacks and any food-related activity such as cooking or an art material containing food products. Reasonable accommodations will be made so that a child may observe an activity that may be unsafe for them to touch when a substitute activity is not available.*
  - *Before the beginning of each year any parent whose child has a food allergy will be asked to submit in writing a list of known allergens and their severity, and a list of choices for acceptable snacks. A class list of foods will be compiled, if applicable. Parents in those classes affected will be made aware of these lists of food allergens and acceptable snacks.*
- Use non-food incentives for prizes, gifts, and awards.
- Avoid ordering food from restaurants because food allergens may be present, but unrecognized.
  - *Depending on the allergy needs in any particular class.*
- Encourage children to wash hands before and after handling or consuming food.
- Have rapid access to epinephrine auto-injectors in cases of food allergy emergency and train staff to use them.
  - *The Acorn will allow Epipens, which will be stored in the front office student files unless requested in writing to be kept safely near the child at all times, securely out of the reach of students.*
  - *Staff will be provided training in recognizing the symptoms of an allergic reaction and how to respond appropriately. Staff will be provided training in first aid and the use of an Epipen should a child with a known food allergy go into anaphylaxis.*
- Help students with food allergies read labels of foods provided by others so they can avoid ingesting hidden food allergens.
  - *Teachers will read food labels and supervise snack time.*
- Consider methods (such as assigned cubicles) to prevent cross-contact of food allergens from

lunches and snacks stored in the classroom.

- *Tables and equipment will be cleaned and sanitized after coming into contact with foods.*
- *If applicable, separate seating may be made available.*
- Consider designated allergy-friendly seating arrangements.
  - *When known allergens are present, a safe space may be provided.*
- Support parents of children with food allergies who wish to provide safe snack items for their child in the event of unexpected circumstances.
  - *The Acorn requests that parents provide a supply of sugar-free, safe snacks that can be offered in place of an unsafe snack.*
- Include information about children with special needs, including those with known food allergies, in instructions to substitute teachers.
  - *Members of staff will be made aware of students with specific food allergies and information sheets with photos of children with allergies and special needs will be kept in the student's classroom snack cupboards.*

*\*Reducing the Risk of Exposure to Food Allergens*

*Recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)*

*On October 30, 2013, the CDC published national guidelines for food allergy management in schools.*

*The recommended practices can be found on p.41-43 of the CDC Guidelines.*

### **Photographs, Media, Web site**

Throughout the school year the teachers will be taking pictures for class scrapbooks or projects. As parents visit and observe their child at play with their friends, they may be taking photos for their own personal memories. In addition, from time to time throughout the years, we have had opportunities to have local media visit the school to photograph or video the children in action. Generally, these are quick candid shots in which the children remain anonymous. In the past the children have participated in answering questions about their special mom's before Mother's Day, interacting with animals, "voting", playing with grandparents on Grandparents Day, enjoying the rides at Kiddie Park at our fun fest, planning a class donation to the Red Cross or Food Bank, playing with the Spurs Coyote, or participating in the school anniversary celebrations. If we receive advance notice of any such event, we will, of course, inform you beforehand. But sometimes we do get very last minute notice of such opportunities, in which case you could be informed after the fact.

Also, The Acorn has a community web site with both public pages and private parent pages in which calendars, newsletters and school events will be posted. The private site will feature photographs of the children in action as examples of some of the fun activities here at school. This private area is a secure site, which can only be accessed by those to whom we have given class pass codes. This could include current families and teachers, and Acorn alumni. Some photos and a slideshow will be available to the public - we ask that you initial your approval on the permission slip to allow your child's images to be included in this Acorn promotional material. The web site address is [theacornschool.net](http://theacornschool.net).

If you would prefer that your child not be included in photographs, you must give us a written note stating your wishes; otherwise, it will be assumed to be acceptable. Thanks!

Around the third week of school we will publish a student directory in the private section of our website, including names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of all students at The Acorn. We assure you that this list is for parents only; it would never be sold or used for advertising or other purposes and we ask that you honor this as well.

### **Birthday Gift Traditions**

At The Acorn we have a tradition of the children giving a favorite book, manipulative toy, Lakeshore or educational store gift certificate, poster, or other educational item to the school on their birthdays. This has been such a success, and it goes hand in hand with our goal of helping the children think about what they can do for others, rather than what they are going to ask for and “get” for themselves. The children have been really excited about giving their gifts. Of course, this practice is voluntary. It need not be an expensive item. You may ask your child’s teacher or check the wish list on the website. These gifts in honor of your child’s birthday are greatly appreciated and help build our libraries and supply of classroom materials. Thanks!

### **Personal Belongings**

We request that children leave their candy, gum, and favorite toys at home. Certainly, guns, aggressive action figures and toys have no place at school. These and some favorite toys are not appropriate for school and can be very disruptive to our planned activities. Also, it’s very difficult to get these things back to you at the end of the day. However, we love to have them bring things to show their friends like shells, leaves, bugs, etc. These we can usually keep at school. Some classes have show-and-tell times, and your child’s teacher will let you know what types of things can be brought.

Please note that due to the plumbing in the school building, we cannot accept personal wipes for any child to use. Thanks for understanding.

### **Child Safety**

Texas law requires all teachers to report suspected cases of child abuse, molestation and neglect. The state also requires that parents are informed of this law. Also, as required, background checks are run on all staff and they receive annual training regarding these matters. We want everyone to be assured that child safety is of the utmost concern to us all.

Copies of the Texas Minimum Standards and our Licensing Report are available for review in the office.

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services: 337-3399

Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400

Texas Licensing requires that we inform you of our school emergency policies. The Acorn teachers are trained in first aid and CPR, and will handle minor medical injuries. In case of a health emergency concerning a child, we would call 911, call the parents, and transport the child to the emergency facility specified on the emergency card. In case of an evacuation, we would relocate south of the school in the neighboring lot. In case of extreme weather conditions, we would gather in the downstairs hallways away from windows, in restrooms, or in the basement. Security procedures are in place with the staff, and fire/evacuation drills are conducted as required by licensing.

## **Guidance and Discipline**

The Acorn handles all of our guidance and discipline in a positive manner, and, in fact, we are careful to phrase everything positively. If a child needs redirection, we suggest alternate appropriate behaviors; we also set reasonable limits, and are consistent in enforcing those limits. Guidance is individualized and appropriate to the child's level of understanding. A teacher may separate a child from the group to speak privately or to help him/her gain composure. Teachers and parents can consult to encourage consistency in handling certain situations. As teachers, educators, and parents, our goal is to help each child achieve self-control, good decision making, and the ability to make good choices.

## **Parking**

When visiting or attending parent meetings, etc., please park in the paved parking lot, or in the slanted parking off the driveway in front of the school. When parking behind the playground off Avenue B, please avoid keeping your vehicle at the rear space, while blocking an empty space in front of you. Also, unless you are just staying for a short time, please refrain from parking behind the teacher's cars that are marked with an Acorn window placard. They have staggered schedules, with some leaving mid-day, and you may be blocking them in. Please, always avoid parking behind any car and leaving the school grounds for a field trip, picnic, or any reason. This might prevent someone from leaving for hours! For parents whose children attend school in the morning, we need for you to adhere to our dismissal times. Because our morning teachers and staff already take up a number of parking places, we need to have enough available parking places for our afternoon teachers. We have designated a number of spaces behind the playground along Avenue B as afternoon teacher parking from 11:00-4:00. Please avoid using these spots during these times. Also, if parents linger on the playground taking up parking spaces, it creates a problem. Please note that our neighbor's drive at the back of the playground is his private property; there is no Acorn parking allowed in his drive at any time. Thanks!

## **Parent Participation**

The Acorn is a non-profit, tax exempt, educational nursery school offering programs to 156 children from the age of 2 years 9 months old through Kindergarten (age 6). We have one teacher for every five or six children in our classes, which enables us to individualize with the children and ensures a great deal of personal nurturance and enrichment for each child daily.

As a result of our low student/teacher ratio and the high quality of the entire program, The Acorn operates at over a \$75,000 yearly deficit. The school has 501 (c)(3) charitable status from the Internal Revenue Service, and we cover our deficit and raise funds through donations from parents, grandparents and alumni, etc., and through our annual school fundraiser.

As a non-profit school, we count on parent involvement in helping with our fundraisers as well as with other volunteer opportunities that help The Acorn. Please note that all volunteers are required to complete a release and waver form. If you are in a position to make a monetary donation, that will be greatly appreciated.

There are also many ways to donate your time and abilities to help, too. We expect each family to

participate in our big annual fundraiser; there are opportunities to chair committees or to be involved with organization and prep, physical setup, etc. All parents help sell tickets to the event, obtain prizes, and attend the event.

In the classroom, parents can volunteer to be a substitute teacher when the need arises, be a room parent, and help with special classroom events or with day to day activities. If you have any office skills, there are opportunities to help with computer work, filing, phone calls, filling book orders or similar, etc. We need your help and we expect all families to be involved. As you can see there are many ways in which you can volunteer your time and talents to help your child's school. We certainly appreciate everyone's efforts and participation.

### **Subbing Opportunities**

There are occasions when, due to illness or events in their families, that teachers need to miss a day in the classroom. In order to keep our excellent teacher/child ratios, we have a list of potential substitute teachers that we contact as needed. If you would be interested in helping out at times as a sub, please give us a call in the office. You can let us know what mornings or afternoons you might be available for us to call; usually you would be phoned early in the morning of the day we would need assistance, or sometimes the night before. Parents most often use this as a way to volunteer in the classroom and help the school, and this is the assumed way it is handled. But, certainly, if you would like to be paid for the subbing times, please let us know. Thanks! Teachers will provide guidance regarding the day's activities, and you will look to them for dealing with guidance, discipline, and issues with other children.

### **Field Trips**

The field trips we take require parents to drive. We need to ask every family to drive at least once during the year, while it will be necessary for some to drive twice or more. At times we are limited to a certain number of chaperones at events, due to seating, space available, or cost of admission. But don't worry; everyone will get a turn. You will be asked to help out at various times during the year! A notice will be sent home before each outing to inform you of your child's activity. Each child must have his/her own seat belt or appropriate restraint seat (provided by the parent) as required by law for all trips.

When you accompany your child's class on a field trip, we ask that you make other arrangements for siblings, so you will be able to devote all your attention to assisting the teachers. They will be counting on you to help with the entire group; ushering the children, perking their interest in the surroundings and subjects being discussed, serving snack, etc., so in effect you are an assisting teacher that day. Also, some of the trips may not be appropriate for younger children, so it is best to leave them where they will be more content. This is a school-wide policy, and we appreciate your cooperation in this matter. Each class may, at times, schedule a "family" type event which other family members might attend, but for the most part, educational field trips require your full attention to the class rather than your other children. Thanks for your understanding! Also, our no smoking policy will apply to any field trip chaperone. In addition, we ask that you refrain from making or taking cell phone calls while on a field trip, so all of your attention can be dedicated to the children. We also ask that all auto video players remain OFF during any field trip.



For the first few weeks of school, as well as on field trips and some other occasions, the children will wear name tags. If by chance your child wears his/hers home, please send it back the next day.

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**The Acorn Board of Directors** serves to support and maintain the ideals and practices of The Acorn – A School for Young Children, and to insure its financial security and continuance into the future.

**Notice of Non-Discrimination**

**The Acorn - A School for Young Children, Inc., a Texas non-profit corporation, 3501 Broadway, San Antonio, admits students and hires teachers on the basis of merit alone. All are afforded the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students and teachers at the school. The Acorn does not discriminate on the basis of any prohibited characteristic in administering any of its educational policies, admissions and hiring policies, scholarship and loan programs and athletic or other school-administered programs.**

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

Parent (s) Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

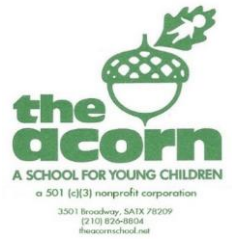
Phone Contact/ Email (best way to get in touch):  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer Opportunities**

**Parent Participation:** As a non-profit school we count on parent involvement to help in many areas to assist in keeping down the operating costs through the year and to raise funds to cover our annual operating deficit. We appreciate your participation; there are many areas in which you can offer your time and talent. Listed below are day to day ways you can assist. A separate form explains our annual fundraiser and ways in which you can help.

**Please check all that apply:**

Check	Activity	Description
	Class Helper	help coordinate special days, events in your child's class
	School Resource	Laminating, activity prep, gardening, sewing, extra "hands", filing, data entry, phone calls, etc.
	Days, times available:	
	Children's Library	Read books, categorize, enter data, label, shelve
	Days, times available:	
	Substitute Teachers	There are occasions when, due to illness or events in their families, that teachers need to miss a day in the classroom. In order to keep our excellent teacher/child ratios, we have a list of potential substitute teachers that we could contact as needed. Parents most often use this as a way to volunteer in the classroom and help the school, and this is the assumed way it is handled. But, certainly, if you would like to be paid for the subbing times, please let us know.
	Days, times available:	
	Handy Helpers	From time to time we need assistance with fixing bikes, plumbing, carpentry, toys, and other items around the school. We'd appreciate your help in this area if this is one of your talents.
	Saturday Spruce-Up	Call me for information regarding a day to help with various projects (playground, landscaping, etc.)
	Mixed Bag Fundraiser	(Sept. – Oct.) Sort forms, verify totals, etc.
	Book Orders	(approximately every 6 weeks) sort and distribute books
	Box Tops	(Oct.; Feb.) organize and count Box Tops, submit forms
	New Parent Coffee	(Oct.) provide snacks and beverages, meet new parents
	Fall Family Event	(TBA, at Kiddie Park) set up, clean up, etc.



## The Acorn Fundraiser and Casino Night Thursday, February 28, 2018, at The Witte

As you know, The Acorn is a non-profit, tax exempt, educational school offering programs to 150 children from the age of 2 years 9 months old through Kindergarten (age 6). As a result of our low student/teacher ratio and the high quality of the entire program, The Acorn operates at more than a \$75,000 annual deficit. The Acorn has 501(c)(3) charitable status from the Internal Revenue Service, and we cover our deficit and raise funds through our big annual school fundraiser, as well as through donations. We expect that every family will participate to the best of their ability to make our event a success!

We are very excited about this year's event at The Witte and we are keeping our fun, successful theme from last year: Casino Night! There will be a silent auction, casino games, prize drawings and more! Food, wine and beer will be provided. Tickets will be available for sale this fall. We are counting on YOU to be a part of its success! We ask that you consider your time, talents, and donations as invaluable ways you can contribute!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please let us know how you would like to be involved. We value and need your help; check all that apply:

<b>CHECK</b>	<b>Our family...</b>
	Will join the organizing committee (Please check the sub-committee that interests you below)
	1. Underwriting
	2. Prizes
	3. Food
	4. Alcohol
	5. Paper (to include invitations/graphics, etc.)
	6. Decorations
	Will underwrite a table at the event (varying levels of sponsorship available)
	Will contact a business regarding underwriting a table at the event. Business Name:
	Will underwrite a class project (\$100 – \$250)
	Will provide an idea and contact for a focus prize for our raffle (Vehicle, TV, Computer, Travel Package, Event Tickets, etc.) Please list:
	Will help contact businesses and gather prizes
	Will provide a direct donation to sponsor any part of the event (facility fee, food/beverages, decorations, etc.) Details:

Involvement in the Fundraiser greatly helps the school, and is a fantastic way to meet other families and make new friends! Thank you for joining us! We will be following up shortly.

The 2018-19 Fundraiser Team

Leslie Bertolino  
John Burnam  
Brook Colgan  
Brandi Deemer  
Rachel Donnelly  
Trianna Johnson

Crystal Monaghan  
Alison Shipley  
Stephanie Velasquez  
Catherine Vexler  
Jeff Vexler  
Becky Williams

The Acorn

Rich Lange  
Jo Mrvichin  
Wendy Starnes