

BRILLIANT STAR MONTESSORI SCHOOL

PARENT HANDBOOK



Global Understanding | Service to Humanity | Exemplary Character | Creative Minds

Last Updated: July 31, 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Success begins at Brilliant Star Montessori

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Brilliant Star	Page 5
Vision of Brilliant Star	Page 5
Vision Statement	Page 6
Mission Statement	Page 6
Board of Trustees	Page 7
Administrative Structure	Page 7
Staffing, including teachers, substitutes and volunteers	Page 8
Statement of Non-Discrimination	Page 8
Admission and Enrollment	Page 8
Admission - New student	Page 8
Application Process	Page 8
Interview and Child Visit	Page 8
Enrollment Decision /Acceptant	Page 9
Enrollment and Re-Enrollment	Page 9
Enrollment	Page 9
Re-enrollment	Page 9
Open Enrollment	Page 9
Basic Elements of the Curriculum	Page 10
The Classroom	Page 10
Respect, Intelligence, and Independence	Page 11
Learning to Collaborate and to Independently Investigate Reality	Page 11
Mastery, Freedom of Movement and Independently Chosen Work	Page 12
The Integrated Curriculum	Page 12
Second Languages	Page 13
Typical Class Size	Page 13
The Three-Year Age Span	Page 14
Meeting the Needs of So Many Different Children	Page 14
The Classroom Materials – From the Concrete to the Abstract	Page 15
Preparing Tomorrow’s Creative Thinkers Today	Page 16

SECTION 2 EVERYDAY LIFE AT BRILLIANT STAR

Hours – Arrival and Dismissal	Page 17
Program Hours	Page 17
Morning Arrival	Page 17
Late Arrival	Page 17
Picking your child up early	Page 17
Documentation of Drop-off/Pick-up, Daily Attendance of Child and Parent/Teacher Communication	Page 17
The First Days of Class	Page 18
Attendance and Reporting Absences	Page 19
Student Records	Page 20
Tropical Storms and Typhoons	Page 21
Cartoons, Superheroes and Fantasy Characters	Page 21

Dress Code	Page 22
What to bring to school	Page 23
All Children	Page 23
Toddler	Page 23
Elementary	Page 23
Lunch	Page 24
Snack	Page 25
Preparing, feeding, and storing human milk	Page 25
Birthday Celebrations	Page 27
Physical Education	Page 28
Freedom and Discipline	Page 29
Chronic Behavior Problems	Page 30
Major Behavior Problems	Page 30
Preventing Expulsions, Suspensions, and other limitations in services	Page 31

SECTION 3 STUDENT HEALTH

Daily Health Checks	Page 34
Annual Developmental Screenings	page 34
Immunizations	Page 35
Staff Immunizations	Page 36
When your child is ill	Page 37
If your child gets sick at school	Page 37
Policy for staff who are ill	Page 37
Emergency Care	Page 39
Handling urgent medical of threatening incidents	Page 39
Medication	Page 40
Policy on over-the-counter medication	Page 40
Policy on Allergies	Page 41
Inclusion of children with special health care needs and disabilities	Page 43
Inclusion/Exclusion/Dismissal of Ill Children	Page 43
Plan for health promotion and prevention	Page 50
Physical activity, play areas, screen time, and outdoor play policy	Page 50

SECTION 4 ACADEMIC LIFE

Parent Conferences	Page 52
Transitioning from one level to the next	Page 53
Observation	Page 53
Referral Process for Special Needs	Page 54
How to find your what your child did at school	Page 55
Parent Education Evenings	Page 56

SECTION 5 PARENTS AND THE SCHOOL

A Place of Community	Page 56
Volunteering the Gift of Time and Talent	Page 57
Communication Between Home and School	Page 58
Open Classroom Policy for parents/guardians	Page 58
Parents as Ambassadors	Page 58
Tuition Policy	Page 59

Tuition Assistance and Financial Aide	Page 59
Parking	Page 60
Fund Raising and the Educational Tax Credit	Page 61

SECTION 6 EMERGENCY/SECURITY/SAFETY

Authorized Persons to Pick Up Child	Page 62
Policy on release of child if authorized individuals do not pick up	Page 63
Visitors on campus	Page 63
Transportation and Field Trips	Page 63
Policy prohibiting firearms	Page 63
Policy prohibiting smoking, tobacco, illegal drugs, and toxic substances	Page 63
Active Supervision of Children	Page 64
Professional Development/Training of Staff	Page 65
Safe Sleep Policies	Page 66
Preventing and identifying Shaken Baby Syndrome/Abusive head trauma	Page 67
The Presence and care of animals on campus	Page 68
Preventing and reporting suspected child abuse.	Page 68
Maintenance of the facility and equipment	Page 69
Use of pesticides and other potentially toxic substances	Page 69
Brilliant Star Security	Page 71
Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan; Emergency Drills Policy	Page 72

Welcome to Brilliant Star

We warmly welcome you and your family to Brilliant Star. The school was founded in the beginning of 2000. It grown from a single Toddler class in a commercial space to an expansive campus encompassing an Infant/Toddler program, two Primary classrooms, and a Lower and Upper Elementary program. This short period of time has been filled with challenges and successes, and there are surely more to come as we work together to continue the legacy of this school.

Brilliant Star updates this handbook annually. Our ongoing review and revision of policies, plans, and procedures are essential to the growth of the school. We value your input.

Please let us know if you recognize a need for revision or if you request any additional information.

We look forward to our growing our partnership in the year ahead!

The Vision of Brilliant Star

Brilliant Star has an ambitious, long-range vision. Our goal is to not only become a truly world-class school, but to become a model for educational excellence, character training, and family partnership. Students at Brilliant Star have the opportunity to participate in an internationally renowned curriculum.

Based on the unique character of the school and the Montessori educational methods, enrollment has steadily grown and the school has expanded into the elementary grades. To ensure the educational leadership needed to realize its vision, the school is dedicated to the pedagogical approach defined by the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and the American Montessori Society (AMS) the two most widely recognized organizations that certify such schools and teachers worldwide.

Brilliant Star's goal is to give its students an education that will prepare them to succeed both in future academic institutions and in life. Brilliant Star emphasizes hands-on discovery-based learning. The program provides an exceptional standard of excellence, where students are challenged to compete against themselves, rather than each other.

At Brilliant Star there is a commitment to a close partnership between home and school, to academic accountability, and to an innovative program that leads students to develop extraordinary levels of personal responsibility, independence, and self-confidence.

Today the sense of transformation vibrates through the campus; evidence of the commitment Brilliant Star has to create something of lasting value for our children and the community.

Our Vision Statement

The activities of any school take place in an environment that is suffused with a particular vision of the world, the family, the child, the parent, the teacher, and the role of education. The ultimate goal of education is not only the advancement of the individual, but more importantly the betterment of humanity. Brilliant Star is animated by the vision that:

Universal peace and unity is the inevitable goal towards which we strive. Montessori Education focuses on the child, the environment, and the teacher.

The Family is the bedrock of human society. The peace and unity of society is dependent upon the peace and unity of the family.

The Child is the promise and guarantee of the future. Children bear the seeds of the character of future society and are in need of guidance and training.

The Parent is the primary educator of the child. Parents exercise indispensable influence through the home environment they consciously create.

The Teacher is a model and a guide. The role of the teacher is to bring forth from the child whatever perfections and capacities are within, assisting the child to reach their highest level of achievement.

Education is the indispensable foundation of all human excellence. Education is crucial to the realization of true human potential and to enabling the individual to render service to the world of humanity.

Our Mission Statement

The mission of Brilliant Star is to provide an environment that will help children develop four key qualities:

- **Global understanding.** We recognize that the world of the 21st century is one of increasing interdependence among peoples and nations of the world. Our children will be comfortable as “world citizens”, with a global perspective and understanding of issues. They will be free from prejudices of race, national origin, ethnicity, language, economic status and religion. They will recognize the equality of the sexes, and will celebrate the diversity of the world’s peoples and cultures. Our children will be promoters of unity.
- **Service to humanity.** We recognize that meaning and happiness come from selfless service to others. Our children will strive to find ways to serve others – their families, their communities, and humanity as a whole.

- Exemplary Character. We recognize that ultimately, the strength of one's character is the essence of one's self. Character is that set of virtues that are developed in an individual. Our children will develop, foremost amongst their virtues, truthfulness, trustworthiness, kindness, courtesy, compassion, confidence, joyfulness and humility. They will be emotionally and spiritually balanced individuals.
- Creative minds. The creative mind is one that can bring knowledge to bear on new situations and challenges. To this end, our children will be well versed in the branches of knowledge, with emphasis on mathematics, literature, science, history and arts. They will learn to independently investigate reality, to seek intelligently, to discover things for themselves, and to depend upon their own reason and judgment. They will practice applying this body of knowledge and this set of skills to the challenges around them, and to use their minds to become agents of meaningful change in their communities.

The Board of Trustees

Brilliant Star is a non-profit school governed by a Board of Trustees. The primary functions of the Board are (1) to establish the school's institutional mission and define the fundamental objectives and core values, (2) to establish policies under which the school will operate, (3) to select a school leader who will translate the school's mission and objectives into day-to-day operation, (4) to oversee the on-going operation of the school within board policy and government regulations, and (5) to look to the future and plan for long-term institutional growth and development.

Current Board: Vacant (President), Richard Sikkell (Treasurer), Seung Gin Lee (Member), William Fife (Member), Lindsay Davis (Teacher Rep)

Administrative Structure

Brilliant Star has established an administrative structure to better meet the needs of its children, families and staff. The Board of Trustees, while establishing the overall direction of the school, works closely with the School Principal, who is involved with the daily operations of the school. The primary role of the Principal is to articulate the vision and mission of the school, to provide academic leadership, take leadership in the admissions and recruitment process, build community among students and families, recruit and guide faculty members and staff, oversee the financial health of the school, serve as the school's primary spokesperson to the larger community, and lead the process of internal self-evaluation and long-term planning.

The Principal works with various individuals and committees to execute his/her responsibilities. The Administrative Office and its staff exist to assist the Principal efficiently and successfully fulfill his/her duties and responsibilities.

Staffing, including teachers, substitute, and volunteers

Brilliant Star's current staffing pattern is documented in our staff policy manual. The teaching staff placed in programs under our child care license meet the teacher to child ratio by age group stated in the commonwealth code. In the case of a teacher absence, Brilliant Star maintains ratio by deploying a staff from another classroom, the main office (floaters), or a substitute teacher. Any regular or long-term substitute teachers are required to undergo the trainings specific to our child care licensed programs. Staff may be deployed to other classrooms based on teacher absence, ratios, and the needs of the school.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Brilliant Star School is committed to the principle of equal opportunity in education and employment. The School does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, religion, disability, age, veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, employment policies, scholarship and loan programs, and other School administered programs and activities.

Admissions and Enrollment

Admission- New students

Appointment for a Tour/Visit

It is highly recommended that all interested applicants schedule an appointment for a campus tour/visit. This provides an opportunity for the family to assess the school, the classrooms, and the Montessori Method for the right fit for the family and the child. This is typically 15 – 30 minutes in duration.

Application Process

All new students participate in the admissions process. An application form is required to be submitted in order, along with the one-time application fee, to be considered for enrollment. Applications for all programs are accepted year-round and are made available on the website: www.brilliantstar.org.

Interview and Child Visit

After receiving an application, the school will contact the prospective parent for a parent interview and child visit. During this time, prospective parents and guardians will meet with the principal and the classroom teacher. The family will be invited to visit the classroom together. This is an opportunity to ask more specific questions about the school, its programs, the staff, and the Montessori philosophy. It also allows the school's staff to meet with the student candidate

and talk with the parents.

Enrollment Decision/Acceptance

In the Spring, after assessing the number of openings available in our programs, the school makes its decision on enrollment for the following school year. Considerations are made mid-year if openings become available. Please see our Admissions policy for priority enrollments in each of our programs.

Enrollment and Re-Enrollment

Enrollment

The following forms and fees are needed by the school to complete enrollment

1. Signed Enrollment Contract
2. Non-refundable deposit (applicable towards tuition)
3. Enrollment fees (annual registration, materials, and insurance fees)
4. School Health Certificate
5. Supplemental documents include: Annual Health Profile, Student Emergency Information, Carpool and Restricted Release, FERPA/Photo Release Form, and Parent Questionnaire
6. Copy of the child's birth certificate

Re-enrollment

The re-enrollment window for currently enrolled students begins in the first week of March each school year (see annual calendar for dates). Reenrollment documents will be sent out in February and are due back at the school by March along with the annual registration deposit.

During the re-enrollment period, re-enrolling families have first priority in securing enrollment for their children. Parents or guardians must return an enrollment contract and applicable deposit to the school by the deadline to secure enrollment for the fall. If the school has not received a student's reenrollment materials by the end of March, his space will be made available to new students who have applied for admission to the school.

Reenrollment at Brilliant Star is normally automatic, but is not guaranteed. Decisions are made by the administration and faculty, based on an annual review of each student's academic progress, social and emotional development, special needs (if applicable), along with the attitudes and values expressed by the child and parents. As always, our goal is to help each child and family find the perfect match between the student, home, and school.

No student may reenroll if there is an outstanding balance remaining on her account.

Open Enrollment

Open enrollment begins in May each school year. During open enrollment the school will consider all spaces for which it does not have an enrollment agreement as "open" and will be filling these openings with new applicants. If extenuating circumstances do not allow a returning family to secure enrollment for the fall during the re-enrollment period, please speak to the school principal.

Basic Elements of the Curriculum

The Classroom

You will not find rows of desks in our classrooms at Brilliant Star. The Brilliant Star learning environment is set up to facilitate student discussion and stimulate collaborative learning. One glance and it is clear that our children feel comfortable and at home.

Students will typically be found spread-out around the classroom, working alone or with a few others. They will tend to become so involved in their work that we cannot help but be tremendously impressed by the peaceful atmosphere.

It may take a moment to spot the teachers within the classrooms. They will be found working with one or more children at a time, advising, presenting a new lesson, or quietly observing the class at work.

Specific characteristics associated with the child's interests and abilities can be seen at each plane of development. A school carefully designed to meet the needs and interests of the child will work more effectively because it is consistent with basic principles of psychology. Rather than fight the laws of nature, we "follow the child" and allow our children to show us how to facilitate the development of their human potential. Our goal is to help each child develop their own unique gifts and capacities to serve humanity.

This focus on the "whole child" has led Brilliant Star to develop a very different sort of school from the conventional adult-centered classroom.

The classroom is not the domain of the adults in charge, but rather a carefully prepared environment designed to facilitate the development of the children's independence and sense of personal empowerment.

This is a true community of children. They move freely within the room and between classrooms selecting work that captures their interest, rather than passively participating in lessons and projects selected by the teacher.

In a very real sense, even the very youngest students at Brilliant Star take care of their own child-sized environment. When they are hungry, they prepare their own snack and drink. When something spills, they help each other carefully clean things up. Parents are often amazed to see small children in Brilliant Star's classrooms cut raw fruits and vegetables, sweep and dust, carry pitchers of water, and pour liquids with barely a drop spilled.

The children normally go about their work so calmly and purposely that it is clear to even the casual observer that this is *their* environment. The classrooms are commonly referred to as "prepared environments." This name reflects the care and attention that is given to creating a learning environment that will reinforce the children's independence and intellectual development.

This carries over into the Elementary program, where the children care for their own "learning laboratory," the classroom.

Respect, Intelligence, and Independence

We know that even young children are full and complete individuals in their own right. They deserve to be treated with the full and sincere respect that we would extend to their parents. Respect breeds respect and creates an atmosphere within which learning is tremendously facilitated.

Intelligence is not fixed at birth, nor is the human potential anywhere near as limited as it sometimes seems in conventional education.

Success in school is directly tied to the degree to which children believe that they are capable and independent human beings. If they knew the words, even very young children would say, "Help me learn to do it for myself."

By allowing children to develop a meaningful degree of independence and self-discipline, Brilliant Star sets a pattern for a lifetime of good work habits and a sense of responsibility. Students take pride in doing things for themselves carefully and well.

Learning to Collaborate and to Independently Investigate Reality

Our program is designed to help each of our students discover and develop his unique talents and capacities.

We treat each as a unique individual learner. We know that no two students will learn at the same pace, nor will they necessarily learn best from the same teaching methods, and we are flexible and creative in addressing each student as a unique individual.

At Brilliant Star, students learn to collaborate with one another in the process of education rather than compete against each other. Our students discover their own innate abilities and develop a strong sense of independence, self-confidence, and self-discipline.

In an atmosphere in which children are given the freedom to work through the curriculum as quickly as they wish and compete only against themselves, they learn not to be afraid of making mistakes. They quickly find that few things in life come easily, and they can try again without fear of embarrassment.

One way of thinking about the difference between our approach and one that is more conventional is to consider that while learning the right answers may get our children through school, learning how to become life-long independent learners will take them anywhere! Our children are learning to think, observe, and reflect; not memorize and quickly forget.

Rather than present students with loads of right answers, their teachers ask the right questions and lead the children to discover the answers for themselves. Learning becomes its own reward, and each success fuels the desire to discover even more.

Elementary students at Brilliant Star are encouraged to do their own research, analyze what they have found, and come to their own conclusions.

The teachers encourage our children to think for themselves and become actively engaged in the learning process.

Mastery, Freedom of Movement and Independently Chosen Work

One of the fundamental tenants of our curriculum is that given the opportunity, each child has the potential for mastery of nearly all subjects to which he is exposed. Conventional education greatly underestimates the potential of the child. We recognize that one of the basic human needs is the drive for self-perfection. Children will choose work that fulfills particular needs, and set out to achieve perfection. At Brilliant Star, the students are free to move about, working alone or with others at will. They may select any activity that they have been presented and they may work with it as long as they wish, so long as they do not disturb anyone or damage anything, and so long as they respectfully return it to its place. They may return to activities as often as they wish, and it is through repeating the activities that they achieve mastery. Part of the teacher's role is to spark the child's interest in areas of the curriculum towards which they may not naturally be inclined, and to guide the child towards mastery in all areas.

The Integrated Curriculum

Classrooms at Brilliant Star are organized into several curriculum areas, which include language arts (reading, literature, grammar, creative writing, spelling, and handwriting), mathematics and geometry, everyday living skills, sensory awareness exercises and puzzles, geography, history, science, art, music, and movement. Most rooms will include a classroom library. Each area is made up of one or more shelf units, cabinets, and display tables with a wide variety of materials on open display ready for use as the children select them.

Brilliant Star's curriculum is organized into a spiral of integrated studies, rather than a conventional model in which the curriculum is compartmentalized into separate subjects,

with given topics considered only once at a specific grade level. In the early years, lessons are introduced simply and concretely and are reintroduced several times over succeeding years at increasing degrees of abstraction and complexity.

The course of study uses an integrated thematic approach that ties the separate disciplines of the curriculum together into studies of the physical universe, the world of nature, and the human experience.

Literature, the arts, history, social issues, science and the study of technology all complement one another. This integrated approach is one of Brilliant Star's great strengths.

Although this integrated approach takes place at all levels, it is more easily seen at the elementary level. The integrated approach is one of its fundamental features. As an example, when students study Africa in world history, they will also read African folk tales in world literature, create African masks and make African block print tee-shirts in art, learn Swahili songs in music, and make hieroglyphic calendars in math, as well as study African animals in zoology. And all of this will take place seamlessly.

The same is true in our science curriculum, where principles of physics, chemistry, the earth sciences, botany, and zoology are woven together. At the Primary and Elementary levels, we place far greater emphasis on the sciences in general than is common in most conventional curriculums.

Second Languages

Second languages are taught to children at an early age in the same way they learn their first language – through immersion. One of the functions of the classroom Assistant is to interact with the children using a second language. Mandarin is Brilliant Star's second language. Mandarin is the most widely used language in the world, spoken by more than one-fourth of the planet's peoples. It is recognized as a language of increasing importance in the coming decades.

(While we use the phrase "second language", we also recognize that many of the children at Brilliant Star already speak two languages.)

Typical Class Size

At the Toddler level, the class size is typically twelve to fourteen children. At the Primary and Elementary levels, the class size is twenty to twenty-five children representing a three-year age span. All classes are typically taught by an AMI/AMS certified teacher and an assistant.

Primary and Elementary parents often wonder if it would not be better to organize classes into smaller groups, but there is actually a great deal of research, thought, and successful experience behind this particular model. The key is to remember that in such child-centered classrooms, the teacher is neither the focus of attention nor the sole source of instruction. The children are learning on their own, by independent discovery and from

each other, as well as through lessons presented by the teacher, and through the specially designed materials.

This approach allows the children to explore and learn independently as much as possible. The stimulation of older children and the encouragement of their peers fuel this process. All so often the best teacher of a four-year-old is an older child rather than an adult. Children learn from one another. We create classes of twenty-five to thirty-five to ensure that each child will have enough classmates of the same sex and age group, as well as the stimulation of the older children.

A Three-Year Age Span

At the Primary and Elementary levels, Brilliant Star's classes are organized to encompass a three-year age span, which allows younger student to experience the daily stimulation of older role models, who in turn blossom in the responsibilities of leadership. Students not only learn "with" each other, but "from" each other.

Some parents worry that having younger children in the same class as older ones will leave one group or the other short changed. They fear that the younger children will absorb the teachers' time and attention, or that the importance of covering the "kindergarten" curriculum for the five-year-olds will prevent teachers from giving the three and four-year-olds the emotional support and stimulation that they need. Both concerns are understandable, and easily addressed.

Working in one class for two or three years allows students to develop a strong sense of community with their classmates and teachers. The age range also allows accelerated learners the stimulation of intellectual peers, without requiring that they skip a grade and feel emotionally out of place.

Each class is an essentially stable community, with only the older third moving on to the next level each year. At each level within Brilliant Star, the curriculum and methods are logical and consistent extensions of what has come before.

Meeting the Needs of So Many Different Children

Brilliant Star teachers play a very different role from those played by conventionally trained educators. While the stern disciplinarians of the past may be an endangered species, many teachers today remain focused on maintaining order and on covering a pre-defined curriculum that is not necessarily tailored to the needs of the individual child. Most see their role as dispensing facts and skills to complacent students.

The role of the teachers at Brilliant Star is that of facilitators and guides. The teacher is usually not the center of attention and will not normally spend much time working with the whole class at once. Her role centers on reviewing the progress and needs of each individual child on a daily basis, and preparing and organizing appropriate learning experiences to meet the needs and interests of each child in the class.

The teachers usually present a lesson to one or more children at a time in a quick, efficient presentation. The objective is to intrigue the children so that they will come back on their own to work with the materials. Lessons center around clear and simple information that is necessary for the children to be able to do the work on their own.

The teachers closely monitor their students' progress, keeping the level of challenge high. Because they come to know the children so well, the teachers at Brilliant Star can use special materials for individual needs to enrich the curriculum and provide alternate avenues for accomplishment and success.

The Classroom Materials – From the Concrete to the Abstract

The basis of our approach is the simple observation that children learn most effectively through direct experience and the process of investigation and discovery. In her studies of children's learning, Dr. Maria Montessori noted that most children do not learn by memorizing what they hear from their teachers or read in a text, but rather from concrete experience and direct interaction with the environment. Children need to manipulate and explore everything that catches their interest.

This led Montessori to emphasize the overriding importance of concrete learning apparatus and to the development of the materials for mathematics, sensory development, language, science, history and geography that fill the classrooms.

The learning materials are not the method itself, but rather tools that we use to stimulate the child into logical thought and discovery. They are provocative and simple, each carefully designed to appeal to children at a given level of development.

Each material isolates and teaches one thing or is used to present one skill at a time, as the child is ready. Montessori carefully analyzed the skills and concepts involved in each subject and noted the sequence in which children most easily master them.

To facilitate the prepared order of the environment, the teacher arranges the materials on the shelf following their sequence in the curriculum flowchart. The materials are displayed on low open shelves that are easily accessible to even the youngest children. They are arranged to provide maximum appeal without clutter. Each has a specific place on the shelves, arranged from the upper-left-hand corner in sequence to the lower right. Materials are always arranged in sequence, from the simplest to the most complex, and from the most concrete to those that are the most abstract.

At the Elementary level, the classroom is comparable to a working laboratory, in which the child, like a scientist in her lab, collects all she needs to carry out her work. There is a constant interplay at this level between the concrete and the abstract.

Preparing Tomorrow's Creative Thinkers Today

In a world of rapid change and new discoveries, we can only guess the skills our children will need to succeed in the 21st century. Now more than ever, the essential lesson is learning how to learn.

The most important years in our children's education are not high school and college, but, instead, their first twelve years of life. This is when their sense of global understanding, their character and self-image, their basic skills and knowledge, and their appreciation for the diverse cultures and arts of the world are formed.

Brilliant Star offers our children a world-class education, along with an education of the heart, which nurtures truthfulness, trustworthiness, kindness, courtesy, compassion, self-confidence, joyfulness and humility.

It offers them the most challenging academic program to which they can aspire, in a course of study that includes creative writing, unified mathematics, geometry, algebra, history, geography, economics, philosophy and ethics, botany and zoology, the physical sciences, foreign language study, art, music, dance and physical education.

We can see our children as they truly come to love learning and begin to discover their true potential as young men and women. Brilliant Star's goal is to nurture our children's sense of unity with all the world's peoples, their spirit of service to others, the strength of their characters and the creativity of minds.

Granted, this lies beyond the scope of conventional education, but then Brilliant Star has set out to become a rather distinguished school.

As families, we come to Brilliant Star to give our children an outstanding preparation for life.

Section 2: Everyday Life at Brilliant Star

Hours – Arrival and Dismissal

Program Hours:

Morning Toddler Program:	8:00 – 11:00 or 1:00
Toddler Full Day Program	8:00 – 3:00
Primary Half-Day Program:	8:00 – 11:15 or 1:00
Primary Full Day Program:	8:00 – 3:00
Elementary Full Day Program:	8:00 – 3:00

Morning Arrival: All students are due in class by the above arrival times. The school assigns staff to greet children as they arrive and to assist younger children in getting to class. Please do not drop off your child more than 10 minutes early.

Late Arrival: When arriving 15 minutes or more late, children must check into the school office. This is important for two reasons. First, it is very distracting to the class to have children enter the classroom after class has begun. Secondly, checking into the office helps the child realize that they are late, and helps to develop courtesy and responsibility.

Picking your child up early: Students will be expected to stay until class is dismissed. Naturally, there will be occasions when you will need to take your child out of school early for a doctor's appointment or similar obligation. To ensure that your child will be ready, please send a note to the teachers letting them know the time that you will be picking her up and the reason you will be picking her up early. Before picking your child up from class, please stop in the office to sign them out.

Documentation of Drop-Off, Pick-Up, Daily Attendance and Parent/Teacher Communication

Teachers and the office staff when applicable (late arrivals/after care program) keep documentation of children's drop-off and pick-up time, including initials from the adult dropping off or the child if the adult does not enter the campus, in which case the adult is named and identified by the receiving teacher. Montessori strives for independence from our children, and we support children's desire to enter campus without their adults if they are ready for it.

Daily attendance is taken daily and recorded in a shared platform (Transparent Classroom) by 830am. An accurate, whole-school attendance report can be generated by 830am. Attendance is kept up-to-date, and individual reports are available for each child.

Any spoken communication between the parent/authorized individual and the teacher is recorded. We highly encourage written notes, emails, or text/e-messages for passing on

any pertinent information about the child.

The First Days of Class

Initially, it can be difficult for parents and children to separate at the beginning of the school year, and even after holidays. If this is your child's first year at Brilliant Star, we encourage you to visit the campus frequently before school to allow your child to become familiar with the new setting so that transitioning into Brilliant Star will be smooth and joyous. Come have a picnic one weekend. Walk the grounds. Be reassuring as you talk with your child about her new school. There will be an Open House for families before school starts so that they can become familiar with the routines. There will be day for new students to visit the classroom and meet their new teachers before school starts.

As the developmental needs and characteristics of Toddler, Primary and Elementary children differ greatly, so do their environments. Accordingly, the procedures for the first days of school differ between these environments.

For Toddlers, parents are encouraged to come into the classroom and stay until their child is feeling comfortable. Parents transition themselves out of the classroom over a period of time that varies in length from child to child. Parents will be given guidelines on how to make this a smoother transition.

For Primary students we have found that a short and positive goodbye is easiest for the child. The prolonged or lingering goodbye often makes the separation more difficult. It is very important to reassure him about where you will be during the day, and by what time you will pick him up. The teachers are wonderful in helping children through these situations.

For Elementary students, during the first week they may be walked to the classroom door by their parents if they prefer. After the first week of school, all Elementary students should be dropped off at the front gate and make their way to the classroom without their parents.

Attendance & Reporting Absences

All Brilliant Star students, even our youngest, are expected to attend school on a daily basis, arriving at the designated arrival times, before the start of class.

Students are expected to be in class by the start time and to be present in class for the full session. Late arrival is disruptive and inconsiderate to the rest of the class, and nothing can be more disruptive to a child's education than irregular attendance. Consistency and routine are important to every child's development, but they are especially important for toddlers, primary, and elementary students.

We depend on your family's full support in this area. If we find that your child is arriving late more than three times in a month, we will set up a meeting to discuss a solution.

Please call the school in the morning on any days your child is sick or will be missing school. We appreciate calls made before 8:30 am to notify the teacher.

Although our program is individualized, it still depends upon consistency and continuous progress. Every time a child misses school for whatever reason there is a period of readjustment as she tries to get back into the routine of her work. The longer the absence, or when a child consistently misses a day or two of school here and there, the more detrimental it becomes to his educational development. It is understandable that every once in a while, we all love to take a little vacation from school. While we are fairly understanding and supportive, it is still important that you keep your child's absences from school to a minimum.

Whenever your child needs to be excused early from school, please send in a note to the teachers indicating the reason for the early dismissal and the time when you will want them to be excused from class. For early pick up, please sign them out in the office.

When the adult responsible for a child at pick-up is observed to be intoxicated, the child will not

be released until another verified adult is present to safely drive the child home. Arrangements will be made to ensure the child's safety.

Student Records

Student file/records are confidential. Parents and/or guardians have a right to access their child's file. Written parental permission is required for release of any information.

Tropical Storms and Typhoons

In keeping with standards in the CNMI, school will close when we enter tropical storm Condition 2 or typhoon Condition 2. This is in keeping with the standards of the CNMI government. Parents will need to come and pick up their children early if we enter Condition 2 prior to the end of the school day. The early pick-up will be announced via email and social media post.

Parents will be informed as to when school is resuming by the following methods:

1. A message will be placed on the answering machine at school stating the date of the announcement and whether school will be in session that day.
2. Emails and posting on social media.
3. Parents who cannot be contacted by telephone due to power or phone service being down, or for other reasons, will be encouraged to check the answering machine each day for announcements.

Some Definitions

Condition 1 – Arrival expected within 12 hours

Condition 2 – Arrival expected within 24 hours

Condition 3 – Arrival expected within 48 hours

Condition 4 – Arrival expected within 72 hours

Tropical Storm: Maximum sustained winds ≥ 40 mph

Typhoon: Maximum sustained winds ≥ 75 mph

Super typhoon: Maximum sustained winds ≥ 150 mph

Cartoons, Superheroes & Fantasy Characters

Children at a young age are naturally inclined towards discovering reality. In fact, all things are reality for the young child, and they have difficulty distinguishing between what we adults would call "reality" versus "fantasy".

Many educators are now beginning to see that the "fantasy" that we provide to children through cartoons, superheroes and other fantasy characters, are an adult imposition on the child's mind. That is, the child would not typically create such things on their own. If you watch your child, when they participate in "pretend" play, you will find that they spontaneously recreate reality. The subject of their play is the events in their day, their parents' day, and subjects from the world around them. Rarely will they spontaneously create fantasy characters.

Imagination is an important quality of the mind to nurture. We define imagination as the ability to create mental images. Truth and reality are the basis from which clear images

can be made. Imagination is the power of the mind to venture beyond what is clear and concrete. Fantasy and imagination are two separate things. Imagination is when the mind is used to create from the basis of reality.

Scientific progress is possible because our imagination has conceived something based in the intellect but not yet in reality. Our teachers make every effort for the children to have an attachment to reality so that imagination can take flight. We often see the use of imagination in children under the age of six, yet their natural work and their primary task at this age is discovering reality.

Reality is full of wonder -- it's the first time the child is seeing it. And, he tends to want more and more. The child does not need untruth and fantasy. We help the child by not hindering his perception of reality.

The most prevalent forms of fantasy that our children are exposed to are cartoons and superheroes. You may have noticed that many of these characters rely heavily on aggression and violence to solve problems. If your child is watching cartoons, you may wish to watch one with her, just to get an idea of how many acts of violence she is seeing in these cartoons.

Brilliant Star, especially from birth to six years of age, emphasizes gaining an understanding of reality. Furthermore, the underpinnings of all of our efforts to use education as a tool for establishing peace. Montessori education discourages introducing adult created fantasy themes into the child's world.

These are some of the reasons that schools such as Brilliant Star ask that children not be sent to school with any items, such as clothing, shoes, backpacks, or lunchboxes with cartoons, superheroes, fantasy characters or violent themes on them.

Dress Code

Brilliant Star has adopted a set of standard school uniforms. Uniforms have been adopted for several reasons. Uniforms help ensure that each child feels comfortable with what they are wearing in relation to their classmates. This becomes even more important as the economic diversity of the school community increases. Uniforms ensure that appropriate attire is worn to school. They also simplify preparing for school each day, and also eliminate many of the distractions associated with choosing clothing, which become particularly more acute as children grow older. Uniforms help children identify themselves with the school community.

The Brilliant Star uniform consists of:

- Shirts embroidered with the school logo
- Shoes, socks, and bottoms of your choice (as long as they do not have cartoons, superheroes or fantasy characters on them).

The shirts are ordered by the school and will be made available at cost. We are asking all families to purchase at least four or five shirts per child so that a clean outfit can be worn each day. One uniform is included in the registration fees each school year.

Even young children should dress in clothing that they can put on and fasten for themselves: pullover shirts, elastic waistbands, Velcro sneakers, etc.

Children should wear clothing that is neat, comfortable and clean.

Please do not allow your child to come in wearing:

- Clothing with holes or tears
- Oversized shirts, pants or shorts
- Clothing that leaves shoulders, midriffs (belly buttons) and backs bare
- Clothing imprinted with cartoons, superheroes and fantasy characters
- Shoes imprinted with cartoons, superheroes and fantasy characters
- Hats inside the school buildings

What to bring to School

Your child should bring the following items on the first day of school:

- **All children:**
 - An extra school uniform
 - Indoor shoes with soft soles (this is for the children's safety, as a glass or bowl is occasionally broken during work)
 - Sunscreen and a hat for outdoor activities
- **Toddlers:**
 - Several extra diapers and wipes
 - One photo of the child, which will be used to identify their cubby
 - One photo of the child with his family, which will be placed in the photo album for the children to look at any time
- **Elementary:**
 - Backpack or satchel or waterproof bag for carrying materials home
 - A pencil case
 - Two pencils and an eraser
 - Crayons (16 or 24 pack)
 - Colored pencils

You may wish to clearly mark all items with your child's name.

Please do not send your child to school with markers, stickers, candy or toys.

Please do not send your toddlers and primary children to school with backpacks. All materials are provided for them in the classroom, and the only thing they may need to

carry is a change of clothing and lunch. The toddler and primary classrooms do not have extra space for backpacks.

Lunch

In the Primary classroom, lunch is a peaceful time during which the children often listen to various musical compositions. At the Elementary level, lunch is a time for continued social gathering.

Full-day students can order school lunch for \$0.75. School lunch is provided by a caterer selected by PSS. Orders for lunch can be made in advance or daily before 8:30 a.m.

Students can also bring home lunch. Please do not send your child with lunch-boxes with cartoons, superheroes or fantasy characters.

Cups and cutlery are provided. Please include a reusable freezer block to keep perishables fresh.

Brilliant Star places great emphasis on the importance of good nutrition as the first step to a lifelong wellness education program. Lunch is an important part of not only your child's school day, but of her health education, and we count on you to work with your child to teach her about health and nutrition.

We all want to pack lunches that our children will eat. The challenge is to help them discover that wholesome, low-fat sugar-free foods can taste even better than junk food and don't have the negative effects on our bodies.

Please do not send your child in with sugary desserts or drinks. At Brilliant Star, the children tend to quickly develop the habit of drinking water. If you do want to send in a prepared drink, read the labels and look for 100% pure fruit juices.

All uneaten foods that can be contained will be sent home. You'll want to monitor your child's lunch box to see what they like and dislike, and to determine the correct amount of food to pack. We appreciate your care in preparing a good lunch.

Unfortunately, in the Primary Classroom, it is not possible for the school to heat up children's lunches. If your child requires a hot lunch, please send the food with a "hot pack" or in a thermos. However, be aware, that food that is left warm for several hours can go bad. In the Elementary classroom, a microwave oven will be available to warm up lunches.

Snack

As part of the practical life skills of the toddler and primary classrooms, the children will prepare a snack each day. We order fresh fruits and vegetables from a local vendor and the children will prepare the food.

Special Dietary Restrictions: Some students may follow a special diet for health, religious or medical reasons. Please be sure to notify the teachers if your child should avoid certain foods. This will be taken into account in planning snacks or on days when the class prepares its own lunch. Any allergies for lunch substitutions can be submitted directly to Child Nutrition Services through the Public School System in the form of a letter from a medical professional stating the allergy and foods that should be avoided.

Preparing, feeding, and storing human milk

Brilliant star policy for expressed human milk is that it should be transported and stored in clean and sanitary bottles with nipples that fit tightly or in equivalent clean and sanitary sealed containers to prevent spilling during transport to home or to the facility. Only cleaned and sanitized bottles, or their equivalent, and nipples should be used in feeding. The bottle or container should be properly labeled with the child's full name and the date and time the milk was expressed. The filled, labeled bottles or containers of human milk should immediately be stored in the refrigerator on arrival.

Frozen human milk may be transported and stored in single-use plastic bags and placed in a freezer with a separate door or a stand-alone freezer, and not in a compartment within a refrigerator. To prevent intermittent rewarming due to opening the freezer door regularly, frozen human milk should be stored in the back of the freezer and caregivers/teachers should carefully monitor, with daily log sheets, temperature of freezers used to store human milk using an appropriate working thermometer.

Expressed milk brought by a parent/guardian should only be used for that child. Likewise, infant formula should not be used for a breastfed child without the parent/guardian's written permission. Labels for containers of human milk should be resistant to loss of the name and date/time when washing and handling. This is especially important when a frozen bottle is thawed in running tap water. There may be several bottles for different children being thawed and warmed at the same time in the same place.

The caregiver/teacher should check the child's full name and the date on the bottle so that the oldest milk is used first. Human milk should be thawed in the refrigerator if frozen. If there is insufficient time to thaw the milk in the refrigerator before serving, it may be thawed in a container of warm water, gently swirling the bottle periodically to evenly distribute the temperature in the milk and mix the fat, which may have separated. Frozen milk should never be thawed in a microwave oven because uneven hot spots in the milk may cause burns in the child and excessive heat may destroy beneficial components of the milk.¹⁻³

Human milk containers with significant amount of contents remaining after a feeding (>1 oz) may be returned to the parent/guardian at the end of the day as long as the child has not fed directly from the bottle. Returning unused human milk to the parent/guardian

informs the parent/guardian of the quantity taken while in the early care and education program.

Although human milk does not need to be warmed, some children prefer their milk warmed to body temperature, around 98.6°F (37°C). When warming human milk, it is important to keep the container sealed while warming to prevent contamination. Human milk can be warmed

- In a waterless warmer
- By placing the container of human milk into a separate container of warm water
- By placing the container of human milk under running warm (not hot) tap water for a few minutes

Human milk should never be warmed directly on the stove or in the microwave. After warming the milk, caregivers/teachers should test the temperature before feeding by putting a few drops on their wrist. It should feel warm, not hot.²

Avoid bottles made of plastics containing bisphenol A (BPA) or phthalates, sometimes labeled with recycling code 3, 6, or 7.⁴ Use glass bottles with a silicone sleeve or silicone bottle jacket to prevent breakage, or use those made with safer plastics, such as polypropylene or polyethylene (labeled BPA-free) or plastics with a recycling code of 1, 2, 4, or 5.

Expressed human milk that presents a threat to a child, such as human milk that is in an unsanitary bottle, is curdled, smells rotten, and/or has not been stored following the storage guidelines of the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (see Human Milk Storage Guidelines table), should be returned to the parent/guardian.² Written guidance for staff and parents/guardians should be available to determine when milk provided by parents/guardians will not be served. Human milk cannot be served if it does not meet the requirements for sanitary and safe milk.¹

Although human milk is a body fluid, it is not necessary to wear gloves when feeding or handling human milk.⁵ The risk of exposure to infectious organisms during feeding or from milk that the child regurgitates is not significant.

Some infants around 6 months to 1 year of age may be developmentally ready to feed themselves and may want to drink from a cup. The transition from bottle to cup can come at a time when a child's fine motor skills allow use of a cup. The caregiver/teacher should use a clean, small cup without cracks or chips and should help the child to lift and tilt the cup to avoid spillage and leftover fluid. The caregiver/teacher and family should work together on cup feeding of human milk to ensure the child is receiving adequate nourishment and to avoid having a large amount of human milk remaining at the end of the feeding.⁶ Two to 3 ounces of human milk can be placed in a clean cup and additional milk can be offered as needed. Small amounts of human milk (≤ 1 oz) can be discarded.

There are many different factors that can affect how long human milk can be stored in various locations, such as storage temperature, temperature fluctuations, and cleanliness while expressing and handling human milk. These factors make it difficult to recommend exact times for storing human milk in various locations, but the Human Milk Storage Guidelines table can be helpful.

Human Milk Storage Guidelines
Storage Locations and Temperatures

Human Milk Storage Guidelines			
	Countertop 77°F (25°C) or colder (room temperature)	Refrigerator 40°F (4°C)	Freezer 0°F (-18°C) or colder
Freshly Expressed or Pumped Human Milk	Up to 4 hours	Up to 4 days	Within 6 months is best. Up to 12 months is acceptable.
Thawed, Previously Frozen Human Milk	1–2 hours	Up to 1 day (24 hours)	Never refreeze human milk after it has been thawed.
Leftover Human Milk From a Feeding (baby did not finish the bottle)	Use within 2 hours after the baby is finished feeding.		
Sources Eglash A, Simon L; Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine. ABM clinical protocol #8: human milk storage information for home use for full-term infants, revised 2017. <i>Breastfeed Med.</i> 2017;12(7):390–395. https://abm.memberclicks.net/assets/DOCUMENTS/PROTOCOLS/8-human-milk-storage-protocol-english.pdf . Accessed October 24, 2019 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Proper storage and preparation of breast milk. https://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/recommendations/handling_breastmilk.htm . Reviewed August 6, 2019. Accessed October 24, 2019			

By following this standard, the Brilliant Star Infant room staff is able, when necessary, to prepare human milk and feed a child safely, thereby reducing the risk of inaccuracy or feeding the child unsanitary or incorrect human milk. In addition, following safe preparation and storage techniques helps nursing mothers and caregivers/teachers of breastfed children maintain the high quality of expressed human milk and the health of the child.

Birthday Celebrations

A child's birthday is a time of celebration and we welcome the opportunity to celebrate this occasion with your child in the classroom. The celebration in the class revolves around the child's life and special events that have occurred. Parents are encouraged to create a timeline of the child's life using one picture for each year of the child's life and anecdotes from family members. The child is welcome to bring in a simple nutritious special snack such as fruit, vegetables or dessert to share with the class. This occasion is a celebration and is not meant to be a birthday party, therefore we ask that no presents,

gift bags, etc., be distributed at this time.

All birthday celebrations must be pre-arranged with the classroom teacher.

If the entire class is invited to your child's birthday party, invitations may be given out at the school. If only a few children are invited, please distribute the invitations yourself outside of Brilliant Star. Please remember children can be very sensitive and do not always understand why they have not received an invitation, so please be discrete.

Physical Education

Physical activity not only improves health, reduces stress and improves concentration, it also promotes correct physical growth and development. Exercise has a positive influence on academic achievement, emotional stability and interaction with others. Through providing positive experiences we aim to instill a lifelong interest in physical activity.

All students are encouraged to participate to the best of their ability. The teacher will take note of any medical condition of individual children in their class (such as asthma, diabetes or epilepsy) so they can participate safely and as fully as possible.

What to bring:

- Students must have properly fitting running shoes. Shoes must be worn at all times.
- All students shall have their own water bottle.
- Sun hats and sunscreen.

General Points

- Jewelry (necklaces, watches, etc.) must be removed prior to PE.
- Children must bring a note from a physician if they are unable to participate due to illness or injury.
- Children not participating will remain with their class: helping in the lesson or doing PE related tasks.

Freedom and Discipline

Brilliant Star School uses positive discipline, which is implemented in a developmentally or age-appropriate fashion to meet the needs of the individual child. Our focus is on how to help children resolved problems and empower them to have a successful experience in the classroom and the school community. The goal of our discipline policy is to provide an environment that promotes respect and safety for each person as well as the space we share.

As a school that emphasizes both character development and intellectual development, Brilliant Star expects students to demonstrate kindness, courtesy, and respect toward the school and fellow students, parents, teachers, and staff.

The goals are to establish a safe, warm and caring environment within which students learn positive and appropriate ways to handle situations; to develop a strong sense of self-discipline, responsibility and courtesy; and to develop an atmosphere conducive to peaceful studies.

When anyone at Brilliant Star finds it difficult to follow the school's expectations about interpersonal conduct, we will quickly bring the student, family, and staff together to work toward a solution.

We follow an approach based on empowerment, mutual respect, and trust. Neither corporal punishment, nor physical or emotional intimidation, is allowed at Brilliant Star. If anyone consciously or flagrantly violates the social contract regarding safety, kindness, and courtesy, our response is to identify the appropriate and natural consequences of their actions. For example, if something is purposely broken, it must be replaced or repaired, preferably not by the parents alone, but by the students whose actions led to the damage.

At the Primary and Elementary levels, and with some older toddlers, children are aware that hitting, pushing and other similar physical acts are not acceptable expressions of emotions. Children often display such behavior out of frustration, nevertheless, the behavior is not acceptable. Brilliant Star has a "Zero Tolerance" policy towards such behaviors.

If your child displays such behavior, they will be sent home for the day. We find that this is the clearest way for children to understand that such behavior is not acceptable in social settings. When such acts occur, we help the child identify and come to terms with their own emotions that led them to display such behavior, we encourage them to take reparative action towards the other child, and we help them to understand that having to leave the school for the day is a natural consequence of the behavior they displayed. It is usually a very positive interaction for the child that is sent home. They come to value the clear limits.

As a parent, the question that you'll face is "What do I do once I pick up my child?". Your child will look to you and your actions for guidance and for cues. It is best to avoid two extremes. First, avoid severely rebuking or reprimanding your child for her behavior. If you get a sense your child wants to talk about the incident, it is helpful to ask her about it, and how she feels about it, and what she thinks about it. You may wish to help him identify his own emotions leading up to the behavior, and ask him to suggest other ways he might deal with his emotions in the future. Finally, it helps to acknowledge the child's current feelings with a statement like "You must be sad about having to leave your friends at school," and then close with some encouragement about the future, "You may feel upset at school again. You've had a chance to think about other ways you can respond to how you feel in the future."

The second reaction to avoid is making light of the behavior, or worse, "rewarding" the behavior by taking your child somewhere special. If possible, the child should be taken home and their activities limited for the rest of the school day. The day should not become like a regular "Saturday" at home. Being at home, away from school should act as a consequence for the behavior at school. If the child is coming home and having great fun the rest of the school day with his parent or caretaker, the child's behavior is reinforced.

Chronic behavior problems

If behavior is not resolved and becomes chronic, jeopardizing the safety and well-being of children in the classroom or on the playground, or causing regular disruption to the classroom, teachers will document the issue, discuss it with the Principal, and meet with the parents to make a plan of action and possibly recommend assistance from local community health and social service agencies.

Major behavior problems

Brilliant Star considers the following to be major behavior problems:

- Interference with the rights of others, including physical abuse such as hitting, punching or kicking (and biting in elementary age children)
- Verbal abuse such as teasing, taunts, threats or intimidation
- Bullying whether by physical aggression, social alienation, or verbal aggression and intimidation
- Intentional damage to school or personal property
- Use of obscene, profane, suggestive language verbally or in writing
- Repeated disruptive or uncooperative behavior

Major behavior problems will be documented by the teacher on an "Incident Report", a copy given to the parent and a copy to the Principal. The principal, along with the teacher,

parents, and student will work cooperatively to address the behavior and resolve the issue. If the issue is not resolved after a few attempts, the School may suspend or expel the student.

Preventing expulsions, suspensions, and other limitations of services

Brilliant Star will not expel, suspend, or otherwise limit the amount of services (including denying outdoor time, withholding food, or using food as a reward/punishment) provided to a child or family on the basis of challenging behaviors or a health/safety condition or situation unless the condition or situation meets one of the two exceptions listed in this standard.

Expulsion refers to terminating the enrollment of a child or family in the regular group setting because of a challenging behavior or a health condition. Suspension and other limitations in services include all other reductions in the amount of time a child may be in attendance of the regular group setting, either by requiring the child to cease attendance for a particular period of time or reducing the number of days or amount of time that a child may attend. Requiring a child to attend the program in a special place away from the other children in the regular group setting is included in this definition.

Child care programs should have a comprehensive discipline policy that includes an explicit description of alternatives to expulsion for children exhibiting extreme levels of challenging behaviors, and should include the program's protocol for preventing challenging behaviors. These policies should be in writing and clearly articulated and communicated to parents/guardians, staff and others. These policies should also explicitly state how the program plans to use any available internal mental health and other support staff during behavioral crises to eliminate to the degree possible any need for external supports (e.g., local police departments) during crises.

Brilliant Star Staff have access to in-service training on both a proactive and as-needed basis on how to reduce the likelihood of problem behaviors escalating to the level of risk for expulsion and how to more effectively manage behaviors throughout the entire class/group. Staff also have access to in-service training, resources, and child care health consultation to manage children's health conditions in collaboration with parents/guardians and the child's primary care provider. Brilliant Star can request access to behavioral or mental health consultation to help establish and maintain environments that will support children's mental well-being and social-emotional health, and has access to such a consultant when more targeted child-specific interventions are needed.

When children exhibit or engage in challenging behaviors that cannot be resolved easily, as above, staff should:

- a. Assess the health of the child and the adequacy of the curriculum in meeting the developmental and educational needs of the child;

- b. Immediately engage the parents/guardians/family in a spirit of collaboration regarding how the child's behaviors may be best handled, including appropriate solutions that have worked at home or in other settings;
- c. Access an early childhood mental health consultant to assist in developing an effective plan to address the child's challenging behaviors and to assist the child in developing age-appropriate, pro-social skills;
- d. Facilitate, with the family's assistance, a referral for an evaluation for either Part C (early intervention) or Part B (special education), as well as any other appropriate community-based services (e.g., child mental health clinic);
- e. Facilitate with the family communication with the child's primary care provider (e.g., pediatrician, family medicine provider, etc.), so that the primary care provider can assess for any related health concerns and help facilitate appropriate referrals.

The only possible reasons for considering expelling, suspending or otherwise limiting services to a child on the basis of challenging behaviors are:

- a. Continued placement in the class and/or program clearly jeopardizes the physical safety of the child and/or his/her classmates as assessed by a qualified early childhood mental health consultant AND all possible interventions and supports recommended by a qualified early childhood mental health consultant aimed at providing a physically safe environment have been exhausted; or
- b. The family is unwilling to participate in mental health consultation that has been provided through the child care program or independently obtain and participate in child mental health assistance available in the community; or
- c. Continued placement in this class and/or program clearly fails to meet the mental health and/or social-emotional needs of the child as agreed by both the staff and the family AND a different program that is better able to meet these needs has been identified and can immediately provide services to the child.

In either of the above three cases, a qualified early childhood mental health consultant, qualified special education staff, and/or qualified community-based mental health care provider should be consulted, referrals for special education services and other community-based services should be facilitated, and a detailed transition plan from this program to a more appropriate setting should be developed with the family and followed. This transition could include a different private or public-funded child care or early education program in the community that is better equipped to address the behavioral concerns (e.g., therapeutic preschool programs, Head Start or Early Head Start, prekindergarten programs in the public schools that have access to additional support staff, etc.), or public-funded special education services for infants and toddlers (i.e., Part C early intervention) or preschoolers (i.e., Part B preschool special education).

To the degree that safety can be maintained, the child should be transitioned directly to the receiving program. The program should assist parents/guardians in securing the more appropriate placement, perhaps using the services of a local child care resource and referral agency. With parent/guardian permission, the child's primary care provider should be consulted and a referral for a comprehensive assessment by qualified mental health provider and the appropriate special education system should be initiated. If abuse or neglect is suspected, then appropriate child protection services should be informed. Finally, no child should ever be expelled or suspended from care without first conducting an assessment of the safety of alternative arrangements (e.g., Who will care for the child? Will the child be adequately and safely supervised at all times?)

Section 3: Staff and Student Health

Daily Health Checks

Every day, a trained Brilliant Star staff member conducts a health check of each child. This health check is to be conducted as soon as possible after the child enters the child care facility and whenever a change in the child's behavior or appearance is noted while that child is in care. The health check addresses:

- a. Reported or observed illness or injury affecting the child or family members since the last date of attendance;
- b. Reported or observed changes in behavior of the child (such as lethargy or irritability) or in the appearance (e.g., sad) of the child from the previous day at home or the previous day's attendance at child care;
- c. Skin rashes, impetigo, itching or scratching of the skin, itching or scratching of the scalp, or the presence of one or more live crawling lice;
- d. A temperature check if the child appears ill (a daily screening temperature check is not recommended);
- e. Other signs or symptoms of illness and injury (such as drainage from eyes, vomiting, diarrhea, cuts/lacerations, pain, or feeling ill).

The caregiver/teacher will gain information necessary to complete the daily health check by direct observation of the child, by querying the parent/guardian, and, where applicable, by conversation with the child.

The daily health check is performed in a relaxed and comfortable manner that respects the family's culture as well as the child's body and feelings. Brilliant Star partners with a child care health consultant to train the caregiver/teacher(s) in conducting a health check.

The obtaining of information from the parent/guardian should take place at the time of transfer of care from the parent/guardian to the staff at school. If this exchange of information happens outside the facility (e.g., when the child is carpooled by another adult), the facility should use an alternative means to accurately convey important information. Handwritten notes, electronic communications, health checklists, and/or daily logs are examples of how parents/guardians and staff can exchange information when face-to-face is not possible.

Annual Developmental Screenings

Brilliant Star provides daily indoor and outdoor opportunities for promoting and monitoring children's development. Teachers monitor the children's development, share observations with parents/guardians, and provide resource information as needed for screenings, evaluations, and early intervention and treatment. Teachers work in collaboration to monitor a child's development with

parents/guardians and in conjunction with the child's primary care provider and health, education, mental health, and early intervention consultants. Teachers utilize the services of health and safety, education, mental health, and early intervention consultants to strengthen their observation skills, collaborate with families, and be knowledgeable of community resources.

Brilliant Star has a formalized system of developmental screening, the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. This tool can be used with all children that near the beginning of a child's placement in the program (within 40 days), at least yearly thereafter, and as developmental concerns become apparent to staff and/or parents/guardians. The use of authentic assessment and curricular-based assessments are an ongoing part of the services provided to all children (5-9). The facility's formalized system should include a process for determining when a health or developmental screening or evaluation for a child is necessary. *This process includes parental/guardian consent and participation.*

Parents/guardians are explicitly invited to:

- a. Discuss reasons for a health or developmental assessment;
- b. Participate in discussions of the results of their child's evaluations and the relationship of their child's needs to the caregivers'/teachers' ability to serve that child appropriately;
- c. Give alternative perspectives;
- d. Share their expectations and goals for their child and have these expectations and goals integrated with any plan for their child;
- e. Explore community resources and supports that might assist in meeting any identified needs that child care centers and family child care homes can provide;
- f. Give written permission to share health information with primary health care professionals (medical home), child care health consultants and other professionals as appropriate;

Brilliant Star documents parents'/guardians' presence at these meetings and invitations to attend.

If the parents/guardians do not attend the screening, the caregiver/teacher should inform the parents/guardians of the results, and offer an opportunity for discussion. Efforts should be made to provide notification of meetings in the primary language of the parents/guardians. Formal evaluations of a child's health or development should also be shared with the child's medical home with parent/guardian consent.

Seventy percent of children with developmental disabilities and mental health problems are not identified until school entry. Daily interaction with children and families in early care and education settings offers an important opportunity for promoting children's development as well as monitoring developmental milestones and early signs of delay. Teachers play an essential role in the early identification and treatment of children with developmental concerns and disabilities because of their knowledge in child development principles and milestones and relationship with families. Coordination of observation findings and services with children's primary care providers in collaboration with families will enhance children's outcomes.

Immunizations

Brilliant Star requires a school health card issued from a local clinic or the local hospital to be submitted for each child before starting school. A temporary card may be issued until the child has received the entire series of a vaccine. A health card signifies that a child is up to date on all state required vaccines upon entering school.

Documentation of Exemptions and Exclusion of Children Who Lack Immunizations

For children who have been exempted from required, up-to-date immunizations, these exemptions should be documented in the child's health record as a cross reference, (acceptable documentation includes a statement from the child's primary provider, a legal exemption with notarization, waiver, or other state-specific required documentation signed by the parent/guardian).

Within two weeks prior to enrollment the parent/guardian should provide documentation to Brilliant Star School regarding progress in obtaining immunizations. The parent/guardian should receive written notice of exclusion if noncompliance or lack of progress is evident. If more than one immunization is needed in a series, time should be allowed for the immunizations to be obtained at the appropriate intervals. Exemptions from the requirement related to compliance with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act for children experiencing homelessness are documented and include a plan for obtaining available documents within a reasonable period of time.

National surveys document that child care has a positive influence on protection from vaccine-preventable illness (1). Immunizations should be required for all children in child care and early education settings. Facilities must consider the consequences if they accept responsibility for exposing a child who cannot be fully immunized (because of immaturity) to an unimmunized child who may bring disease to the facility. Although up to two weeks after the child starts to participate in child care may be allowed for the acquisition of immunizations for which the child is eligible, parents/guardians should maintain their child's immunization status according to the nationally recommended schedule to avoid potential exposure of other children in the facility to vaccine-preventable disease.

An updated immunization schedule is published annually near the beginning of the calendar year in the AAP's Pediatrics journal and in the CDC's MMWR and should be consulted for current information. In addition to print versions of the recommended childhood immunization schedule, the "Recommended Immunization Schedules for Persons Aged 0 through 18 Years – United States" is posted on the Websites of the CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/index.html> and the AAP at <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/immunization/Pages/Immunization-Schedule.aspx>.

When a child who has a medical exemption from immunization is included in child care, reasonable accommodation of that child requires planning to exclude such a child in the event of an outbreak. Caregivers/teachers should check the Website <http://www.immunize.org/laws/> for specific state-mandated immunization requirements and exemptions.

Staff Immunizations

To protect children and staff from vaccine-preventable diseases, Brilliant Star Staff are encouraged to be up to date on all recommended immunizations, including annual immunizations (i.e., influenza). We highly encourage staff members to work with their primary health care providers to ensure that they receive all program-required vaccines and other recommended vaccines based on their health status. Exclusion may be required for the duration of possible exposure or until they complete appropriate immunizations. Brilliant Star maintains documentation of staff immunization records. Any staff members who are not appropriately immunized for medical, religious, or philosophical reasons are required to provide written documentation of the reason.

A list of vaccines is listed in the staff handbook

Routine immunization is the best means of preventing vaccine-preventable diseases in children and adults. Vaccines, which are safe and effective in preventing these diseases, need to be used in adults

to minimize disease and to eliminate potential sources of transmission. Because vaccine preventable diseases can be transmitted to children, staff members who do not receive recommended immunizations put at risk themselves, other staff, and children in their care. Immunization with Tdap that protects against pertussis (whooping cough) is especially important because adults often spread pertussis to vulnerable infants and young children. Staff members who receive an annual influenza (flu) vaccine help protect infants who are too young to receive the vaccine. Staff previously vaccinated for, or infected with, some infectious diseases (e.g., COVID-19, influenza, pertussis) can become reinfected and spread the illness to staff and children and may require additional vaccines.

When Your Child is Ill

Brilliant Star places extreme importance on the health and safety of children, and it is the responsibility of all members of the school community – parents and teachers alike – to keep the children healthy. A child should not be sent to school if they show signs of illness or fever. Out of consideration for the other students a child should not be sent to school if they have a heavy or persistent cough, eye infection, or severe nasal excretions. Students with symptoms of vomiting, diarrhea, or undiagnosed skin rash should remain at home also. The student will be sent home if any of the symptoms appear while he or she is at school. Students with infectious diseases, such as chicken pox or strep throat, must stay out of school until the contagious stage has passed. For the sake of the other children's health, it is vital that you let the office know your child's doctor's diagnosis as soon as possible. Whenever your child is ill and won't be coming to school, please call the office between 8:00 and 9:00 a.m. to let us know that she will be absent so we don't worry.

If Your Child Gets Sick at School

If your child ever feels ill, we will take him/her to the office. If s/he seems to be fairly sick, or if after a brief stay s/he feels too ill to return to class, we will contact you to arrange for him/her to be picked up right away. We understand how difficult it can be for working parents to break free during the day, and yet all of our children get ill from time to time. You will want to make arrangements with a friend or relative in advance.

Policy for staff who are ill

Please note that if a staff member has no contact with the children, or with anything with which the child has come into contact, this standard does not apply to that staff member.

On a daily basis, the Brilliant Star Principal and head teachers should observe staff members, substitutes, and volunteers for obvious signs of ill health. When ill, staff members, substitutes and volunteers may be directed to go home. Staff members, substitutes, and volunteers should be responsible for reporting immediately to their supervisor any injuries or illnesses they experience at the facility or elsewhere, especially those that might affect their health or the health and safety of the children. It is the responsibility of the administration, not the staff member who is ill or injured, to arrange for a substitute caregiver/teacher.

If a member of the teaching staff is experiencing flu-like symptoms, they should go home as soon as possible. If the teacher has to wait until someone can cover her, she should wear a face mask. If the staff is very sick, she will consult with the parents of the children she has encountered to warn them of any impending illness, such as the flu. Brilliant Star encourages sick employees to stay home.

A list of conditions for staff members in which Brilliant Star will deny admission can be found in the staff handbook.

In response to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Guidance for Operating Child Care Programs during COVID-19](#). Refer to COVID-19 modifications of CFOC [Standard 1.7.0.2: Daily Staff Health Check](#).

Staff who are experiencing any of the symptoms listed below should stay home and get tested:

- COVID-19 symptoms
 - Fever (100.4° F/38° C or higher) or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscles and body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Refer to the complete list [Symptoms of COVID-19 | CDC](#)

If staff develop symptoms upon arrival or become sick during the day, they should be asked to wear a well fitted mask while in the building, sent home, and encouraged to get tested.

If the staff member is confirmed to have COVID-19:

- Staff with a positive COVID-19 test should stay home for five days and wear a mask for five days when they return to their program.
- Staff should report positive COVID-19 test to their program.
- Follow the [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes | CDC](#)

Immunizations:

The Brilliant Star Staff who work directly with children are required to show proof that immunizations are up-to-date, including the measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), the tetanus-diphtheria (Td) or the tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis (Tdap). The school encourages teaching staff to consider the flu vaccine and other optional vaccines, such as the chicken pox vaccine, to protect against a serious illness.

* Please see the staff policy manual for more information on exclusion of staff who are ill.

Emergency Care

Our faculty and staff are trained in first aid and CPR. In the event of any situation that requires immediate medical attention, we will want your child to see a doctor right away. Please remember to keep your emergency information form up-to-date and inform the office immediately if there are any changes in your address or phone number during the academic year. We must be able to reach you at any time during the school day. If your child needs immediate medical attention, and you cannot be reached, your enrollment agreement authorizes us to seek medical care in your name. We will take your child to the emergency room at CHCC. Naturally, we will continue our efforts to contact you.

Written plan for handling urgent medical or threatening incidents

Brilliant Star's Comprehensive Emergency preparedness and response plan has been developed to address any incidents that threaten the health or safety of children, staff, or volunteers. The plan includes policies and procedures for training staff to manage, document, and report these incidents.

Brilliant Star's plan covers the following types of incidents:

- Lost or missing child
- Suspected sexual, physical or emotional abuse or neglect of a child
- Staff members not reporting their suspicion, although they are mandated reporters
- Illness or injury needing urgent or emergency medical care or dental care
- Mental health emergencies
- Health and safety emergencies involving parents/guardians and visitors
- Death of a child or staff member-including death from a serious illness or injury that happened on site, even if the person died outside of regular program hours
- An unauthorized, threatening, or violent person who tries to enter-or who does enter-the program
- Violence in the community

Our written plan includes a policy for debriefing staff after an incident has occurred.

Our written plan for **illness or injuries** that need urgent or emergency care clearly states:

- The closest urgent care is
 - Hospital emergency department: CHCC
 - Medical or dental clinic that is open during the program's operating hours and is acceptable to families: SDA Clinic or the child's dental office
- The supplies and equipment to have on site.
 - First aid kit, infant airway device
 - Car and car seat to accompany a child to a health care facility
- Standard safety precautions if exposed to body fluids
- The written understanding that staff must stay with the child until the family arrives and takes responsibility for them

- Emergency information for medical personnel including:
 - A signed emergency medical care authorization form
 - A signed informed consent form that allows the program to share medical information with medical staff
 - Additional information for children with special health care needs or disabilities
- A plan for backup staff members to step in to help maintain child-to-staff ratios
- A plan to alert all staff in the school about a medical urgency
- Communication procedures for promptly notifying parent/guardian, or family emergency contact
- Procedures to regularly update and verify emergency contact and health information
- The use of an incident/injury report and our response to the emergency
- Using and restocking first aid kits, which includes checking their content, condition, and expiration dates every month.
- Our policy for regular reviews of staff's ability to perform first aid

Our written plan for **threatening incidents** includes:

- Our plan to control access to buildings and outdoor play areas
- Our policy on reporting a lost child or child abuse
- Our plan to alert others in the building that a threatening person is on site
- Our plan to alert police/emergency services³
- Our plan to alert a parent, guardian, or family emergency contact if an unauthorized or threatening person tries to make contact with or remove a child, staff member, or volunteer
- Documentation (e.g., all possible descriptions of a person; a car's color or license plate number)
- Our procedures for completing an incident/injury report and our response to the emergency

Staff Training on Drills

Our Policies and procedures for staff training on emergency drills includes

- Our frequency, timing, and documentation of drills
- Our system for notifying families, staff, and children about planned drills
- Preparing children to participate in monthly drills by letting them know:
 - When the drill will happen
 - What to wear
 - What they will practice
- When we exclude children from drills
 - They should not practice some drills until they are developmentally ready.
 - They should only practice drills that will help, not harm, them.
- Our policy for debriefing staff and children after a drill

Medication

Except under extraordinary situations, we do not to administer medication at school. Please do not send in any medication with your child, including aspirin or other over-the-counter drugs, except under a doctor's instructions as explained below. Antibiotics and other medications should be scheduled so that doses are due during hours when student is at home. When children are so ill as to require frequent medication, they probably shouldn't be in school for the day. When, in the opinion of your child's physician, it is necessary that

medication be administered during school hours, a representative of the school will give it to your child in accordance with the following procedures:

- Any medication brought to school must be left with the staff in the school office, where it will be secured.
 - Our staff members are prohibited from providing or administering any medication, including aspirin, to any students except as authorized by you as parent or guardian and the child's physician, in accordance with the following procedures:
1. Prescription Medications: All medications sent from home must be accompanied by the "Authorization to Administer Medication" and "Physician's Statement" forms before the first day medication is administered at the school. Any medication sent without the appropriate completed authorization form will not be administered and will be sent home.
 2. If a medication is to be administered on an on-going basis, the Authorization to Administer Medication should indicate the duration of treatment.
 3. In cases involving long-term medication for chronic conditions, a new authorization form must be filed with the school each year in August. Any medication changes during the school year must be accompanied by a new medication form.
 4. We can accept only the appropriate dose for one day at a time. Medication will not be kept at school overnight, nor will containers of more than one day's dosage be accepted. The original bottle containing the medication must be clearly labeled with the student's name, medication contained, and the time(s) and amounts(s) of dosage. This policy applies to prescription and over-the-counter medications. A new authorization form must be completed for each episode of illness and each new medication. When having the prescription filled, you may request two bottles.
 5. As parent (guardian), you are responsible for administering the first day's dosage of any new medication at home.
 6. As parent (guardian), you are responsible for notifying the school in person or by telephone on the first morning a new medication is being brought in with the completed authorization form and physician's statement.
 7. Whenever possible, medication schedules should be arranged to cause minimal interruption in the student's school day.
 8. A copy of the form authorizing us to dispense medication may be obtained from the school office.
 9. We will strictly adhere to this policy.

Over-the-Counter Medication: Absolutely no medications, including aspirin, Tylenol, cough remedies, or other over-the-counter medications will be given or allowed to be taken at school.

Allergies

The following policy sets out how Brilliant Star School will support children with allergies, to ensure they are safe and are not disadvantaged in any way while taking part in school

life.

Role and responsibilities

Parent Responsibilities

- On entry to the school, it is the parent's responsibility to inform the school of any allergies. This information should include all previous serious allergic reactions, history of anaphylaxis and details of all prescribed medication.
- Parents are to supply a copy of their child's Allergy Action Plan to school. If they do not currently have an Allergy Action Plan this should be developed as soon as possible in collaboration with a healthcare professional, e.g., GP/allergy specialist.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring any required medication is supplied, in date and replaced as necessary.
- Parents are requested to keep the school up to date with any changes in allergy management. The Allergy Action Plan will be kept updated accordingly.

Staff Responsibilities

- Staff caring for children with severe allergies requiring an epi pen will be trained annually.
- Staff must be aware of the children in their care (regular or cover classes) who have known allergies as an allergic reaction could occur at any time and not just at mealtimes. Any food-related activities must be supervised with due caution.
- Staff leading school trips will ensure they carry all relevant emergency supplies. Trip leaders will check that all children with medical conditions, including allergies, carry their medication. Children unable to produce their required medication will not be able to attend the excursion.
- • It is the parent's responsibility to ensure all medication is in date however the School will check medication kept at school on a termly basis and send a reminder to parents if medication is approaching expiry.
- The school office keeps a register of Children with allergies and the emergency treatment given.

Child Responsibilities

- Children are encouraged to have a good awareness of their symptoms and to let an adult know as soon as they suspect they are having an allergic reaction.

school unless authorization is submitted in accordance with the above policies.

Inclusion of children with special health care needs and disabilities

Inclusion and participation of children with special health care needs requires proactive planning. Brilliant Star recognizes the importance of planning for the resources, support, and education necessary to increase the understanding and knowledge of staff, but also of parents/guardians, and the children without disabilities within the facility. Planning to include children with disabilities and with special health care needs requires time, resources, support and education. Every effort will be made to plan fully to include children with disabilities and children with special health care needs to maximize success. In planning for the inclusion of children with disabilities and children with special health care needs, safety considerations are also considered.

Available resources include, but are not limited to: brochures, books, guest speakers, advice from parents/guardians of children with special health care needs, expert consultation from child care health consultants, and utilization of child care health consultants. Methods may vary according to need and availability and, specific to educating children without disabilities in the facility, using age-appropriate resources is particularly important. Communication between Brilliant Star, parents/guardians, and primary care providers (with written parental/guardian permission) helps facilitate a smooth inclusion process. The facility should provide opportunities to discuss the similarities as well as the differences among all the children enrolled. Professionals or knowledgeable parents/guardians who facilitate such discussions should assure that teachers and typically developing children in the facility receive presentations and participate in discussions about the special equipment that the children with special needs may require, and that they understand other differences, such as a prescribed diet or limitations of activity. Children without disabilities or special health care needs should be given the opportunity to explore and learn about these differences. Teachers should take special care to demonstrate cultural competency, confidentiality, respect for privacy, and be generally sensitive in all communications with parents/guardians and when discussing the child and the family, particularly in discussion of an inherited condition.

Inclusion/Exclusion/Dismissal of ill children

Children in early care and education programs can often become ill. Most illnesses are mild and do not require dismissal or temporary exclusion from programs. But some infectious diseases do require temporary exclusion to control the spread of illness in the program.

Brilliant Star Staff works annually with a child care health consultant, local public health authority, or other licensed health expert to:

- Update policies and procedures for dismissal, temporary exclusion, and when to return to the program

- Tell staff and families they are responsible for promptly reporting illness when their child has symptoms
- Watch for and manage illnesses in the program
- Understand when to report infectious illnesses to local public health authorities

Brilliant Star manages illnesses by:

- Working with a child care health consultant to develop procedures for handling illnesses, including care plans for ill children and an inclusion and exclusion policy
- Regularly reviewing the illness policy with staff and families; making it clear that the staff (not the families) will make the final decision about whether ill children may attend. The staff will decide based on the program's illness guidelines, and their ability to care for the ill child while not taking away from the care of other children.
- Encouraging families to have a backup plan for child care when their child cannot attend the program.
- Doing daily health checks when children arrive and periodically through the day.
- Discussing the child's behavior with the family to decide if the child can take part in the program, and if excluded, when the child is well enough to return.

When children are ill, Brilliant Star staff should:

- Decide which children with mild illnesses can stay. For children whose symptoms do not need exclusion, verbal or written communication with the parent or guardian at the end of the day is fine.
 - Tell parent or guardian when a child has new signs of illness. Contact the parent or guardian immediately for emergencies or urgent issues.
 - Tell parents or guardians of children immediately if their child has symptoms that need temporary exclusion, so that they pick up their child as soon as possible.
 - Only ask for a healthcare provider's note to return to the program if their advice is needed to decide:
 - If the child is a possible health risk to others
 - Or if the program needs more information about special care the child needs

Conditions That Do Not Require Exclusion	
Conditions	Notes
Common cold, runny nose, and cough	No exclusion regardless of color or consistency of nasal discharge. For allergies that have similar symptoms to a common cold (e.g., runny nose, sneezing, cough), programs can encourage parents or guardians to get documentation from a healthcare provider to avoid unnecessary exclusions. During outbreaks such as COVID-19, follow recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or the local health department.
Cytomegalovirus infection (CMV)	No exclusion required.
Diarrhea	No exclusion if stool is contained in the diaper, there are no toileting accidents, and there are no more than 2 stools per day above the normal for that child.

Conditions That Do Not Require Exclusion	
Eye drainage	No exclusion for watery, yellow or white discharge without fever, eye pain, or significant eyelid redness and swelling.
Fever	Temperature above 100.4° F (38° C) (axillary, temporal, or oral) is a fever. Children over 4 months old without signs of illness do not need to be excluded. Only take a child's temperature if the child seems ill. (During outbreaks such as COVID-19, follow CDC or local health department recommendations.)
Fifth's Disease (Parvovirus B19 or slapped cheek disease)	No exclusion for children who have normal immune systems and who don't have an underlying blood disorder like sickle cell disease.
Hand, foot, and mouth (Coxsackie virus)	No exclusion unless the child has a fever with symptoms, mouth sores, and constant drooling, or if recommended by public health authorities to control an outbreak. ³
Hepatitis B virus, chronic	No exclusion required.
HIV infection	No exclusion required.
Impetigo	Cover skin lesions until the end of the day if there is no fever or changes in behavior. If medical treatment starts before returning the next day, no exclusion is needed.
Lice or nits	Treatment may start at the end of the day. If treatment starts before returning the next day, no exclusion needed. "No-nit" policies are not effective in controlling spread of lice and are not recommended. ²
Methicillin-resistant (MRSA) and methicillin-sensitive (MSSA) colonization	Colonization is the presence of bacteria on the body without illness. Active lesions or illness may require exclusion.
Molluscum contagiosum	No exclusion or covering of lesions is needed.
Pinkeye	No exclusion needed if pink or red on the white of the eye with or without drainage, without fever or behavioral change. ²
Rash without fever or behavior changes	No exclusion necessary. Exception: Call EMS (911) for children who have a new rash with rapidly spreading bruising or small blood spots under the skin.
Ringworm	Cover skin lesions until the end of the day. If medical treatment starts before returning the next day, no exclusion is needed.
Roseola	No exclusion needed unless there is a fever and behavior changes.
Scabies	Treatment may be delayed until the end of the day. As long as treatment starts before returning the next day, no exclusion is needed.
Thrush	No exclusion needed. (The signs of thrush are white spots or patches in the mouth, cheeks, or gums.)

Specific Conditions Requiring Temporary Exclusion ¹⁻²	
Conditions	Notes
Abdominal pain	Exclude with persistent or intermittent pain with fever, dehydration, or other signs or symptoms.
Chickenpox	Exclude until all lesions have dried or crusted (usually 6 days after the start of the rash) and no new lesions have appeared for 24 hours.
COVID-19	Exclude according to current CDC guidelines.
Diarrhea	<p>Exclusion is needed for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diapered children whose stool is not contained in the diaper • Toilet-trained children when diarrhea causes “accidents” or when increased number of bowel movements are a risk for accidents and soiling of toileting areas • Children who have more than 2 stools per day above normal for that child while the child is in the program • Children whose stool contains blood or mucus <p>Children may return when the stool is contained in the diaper, or when toilet-trained children no longer have accidents or when they have no more than 2 stools above what is usual for the child. For some infectious diarrheal illnesses, exclusion is needed until additional guidelines have been met and programs communicate with healthcare providers and health departments. Children who have germs in their stool but no symptoms do not need to be excluded, except when infected with Shiga toxin-producing <i>Escherichia coli</i> (STEC), <i>Shigella</i>, or <i>Salmonella</i> serotype Typhi.</p>
Fever	Exclude with behavior change or other symptoms. A temperature of 100.4° F (38° C) or above (from any site) in infants and children with behavior change. For infants younger than 2 months, a temperature of 100.4° F from any site) or above with or without a behavior change or other symptoms (e.g., sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea) needs exclusion and immediate medical attention. (See <u>Standard 3.6.1.3.</u>)
Head lice	Exclusion is not needed before the end of the program day, but let the parent or guardian know that day. Exclude only if the child has not had a medically approved treatment by the time they return.
Hepatitis A	Exclude for 1 week after onset of illness or as directed by the health department.
Impetigo	Exclusion is not needed before the end of the program day if impetigo lesions are covered, but let the parent or guardian know that day. Exclude only if the child has not been treated by the time they return.
Measles	Exclude until 4 days after onset of rash.
Mouth sores	Exclude children who have sores with drooling that a child is unable to control. Or exclude children who are unable to participate due to symptoms related to the mouth sores.
Mumps	Exclude until 5 days after onset of parotid (salivary) gland swelling.
Pertussis (whooping cough)	Exclude until treated with an appropriate antibiotic for 5 days, or 21 days from start of cough if untreated.
Rash with fever or	Exclude until a healthcare provider decides the illness is not a

Specific Conditions Requiring Temporary Exclusion¹⁻²	
behavior change	harmful contagious disease.
Ringworm	Exclusion is not needed before the end of the program day, but let the parent or guardian know that day. Exclude only if the child has not been treated by the time they return.
Rubella	Exclude until 7 days after onset of rash.
Scabies	Exclusion is not needed before the end of the program day, but let the parent or guardian know that day. Exclude only if the child has not been treated by the time they return.
Skin sores	Exclude if the child has sores on an exposed body surface that are leaking fluid and cannot be covered with a waterproof dressing.
Streptococcal pharyngitis (Strep throat, skin infections)	Exclude until treated with an appropriate antibiotic for 12 hours.
Tuberculosis (active)	Exclude until the healthcare provider or local health department decides the child is no longer infectious.
Vomiting	Exclude if the child vomits two or more times within 24 hours, unless vomiting is due to a noncontagious/noninfectious cause and the child can stay hydrated and take part in activities. If a child with a recent head injury vomits, get emergency medical care.

Conditions That Require Temporary Exclusion

Key Guidelines for Exclusion of Children Who Are Ill²
<p>When a child becomes ill but does not need immediate medical help, programs should decide if the child should be sent home (temporarily excluded from the program). Most illnesses do not need exclusion.</p> <p>Three main reasons to keep children at home:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The child does not feel well enough to comfortably take part in usual activities (i.e., overtired, fussy, will not stop crying). 2. A child needs more care than teachers and staff can give while still caring for the other children. 3. The illness has a risk of spreading harmful disease to others as noted in Specific Conditions Needing Temporary Exclusion, below.

When children need temporary exclusion, Brilliant Star staff will:

- Ask parents or guardians to pick the child up as soon as possible following the program's illness exclusion policies.
- Let the child stay in the usual care setting/classroom or the main office (if symptoms allow) while waiting for pickup.
- Move the child to a familiar and comfortable place, supervised by someone who knows the child well and who will continue to watch the child for new or worsening symptoms. If the child is coughing or sneezing, separate the child from other children and staff by at least 3 feet to help decrease exposure to others who were not in close contact with the child before.

- Make decisions on a case-by-case basis about giving care that is comfortable for the child while waiting for pickup. Consider the child's age, surroundings, potential risk to others, and type and severity of symptoms. Staff should still appropriately tend to the child's physical and emotional needs while waiting for pickup.
- If the child-to-staff ratio cannot be met while caring for the ill child, extra staff may be needed to care for the other children until the child is picked up. Putting the ill child in the care of an unfamiliar caregiver or in a different space may make it difficult to care for the child and can expose other people to infectious illnesses.
- Wash their hands, and continue to practice good hand hygiene if they (and other children) had contact with the ill child. Wash and sanitize toys, equipment, and surfaces used by the ill child after the child leaves.
- Discuss illness signs and symptoms with the parent or guardian who is picking up the child. Review illness guidelines for return to child care. If needed, give the family written information that may be shared with a healthcare provider. The information should include when symptoms started, observations about the child, if a temperature was taken (e.g., temperature of 101.5° F at 10:30 am), any actions taken, and the time actions were taken (e.g., ½ tsp children's acetaminophen given orally at 11:00 am).
- Ask the parent or guardian to share written information from the child's healthcare provider with staff. If more information is needed, ask for the parent's or guardian's written permission to contact the child's doctor. Sharing health information with staff needs written consent from the parent or guardian.
- Follow the medical advice (if the child saw a healthcare provider) for return to child care. When needed, let staff and families know about a possible exposure to an infectious disease.
- Contact the local health department if a child or staff member might have a reportable or harmful infectious disease. If healthcare providers have different opinions about the care of a child with a reportable infectious disease, the health department has the legal authority to make a final decision.
- Document any care for an ill child in the child's file with date, time, symptoms, and actions taken (and by whom); sign and date the document.

If the child seems well to the family and no longer meets criteria for exclusion, there is no need to ask for more information from the healthcare provider when the child returns to care. Children who have been sent home due to illness do not always need to see a healthcare provider.

Reportable/Notifiable Conditions

The CDC has a list of infectious diseases that must be reported to public health authorities in the United States at the national level (see <https://ndc.services.cdc.gov/search-results-year/>). Other conditions may need to be reported to local, state, tribal, or territorial public health authorities. Although laboratories and healthcare providers are expected to report these notifiable diseases, their reporting may not alert health authorities that the child attends an early care and education program or is enrolled in school and may have exposed others. Delayed notification may delay quick responses to prevent illness among those exposed to the child in the group setting. If in doubt about whether to report, contact the local, state, tribal, or territorial health department.

Staff should contact the local health department:

- When a child or staff member who is in contact with others has a reportable disease
- If staff, children, or families in the program have a reportable illness

- For help managing a suspected outbreak. An outbreak is 2 or more unrelated children (i.e., not siblings) with the same diagnosis or symptoms in the same group within 1 week. Clusters of mild respiratory illness, ear infections, and certain skin conditions are common and usually do not need to be reported.

Program staff should work with their child care health consultants to develop policies and procedures for alerting staff and families about their responsibility to report illnesses to the program, and for the program to report diseases to the local health authorities.

COVID-19 modification as of July 28, 2023:

Children who are experiencing any of the symptoms listed below should stay home and get tested:

COVID-19 symptoms most likely seen in children:

- Fever (100.4° F/38° C or higher) or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscles and body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Refer to the complete list [Symptoms of COVID-19 | CDC](#)

Children who arrive in the program with symptoms or develop symptoms while in care should wear a well-fitting mask while in the building, be sent home and get tested.

If a child in care is confirmed to have COVID-19:

- Follow the [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility Guidelines](#)
- Ensure families understand their child cannot return to in-person care until they have met [CDC's guidance](#),
- Maintain the sick child's confidentiality, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Additional Resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- [Operational Guidance for K-12 Schools and Early Care and Education Programs to Support Safe In-Person Learning](#)
- [Masks](#)

Although young children often become ill, excluding children from early care and education programs can be stressful for families, and many exclusion decisions made by staff are not correct. Most infections in young children are mild and are spread by children who do not have symptoms. Excluding children with mild illnesses is unlikely to reduce the spread of most infections in early care and education settings. The most important reason for exclusion is if the child can't take part in activities and the staff can't care for the child. But exclusion is needed for some infectious diseases to control contamination and spread, and these diseases need criteria for a child's return.

Plan for health promotion and prevention

Brilliant Star implements a health promotion and prevention program that addressing the physical, oral, mental, nutritional, and social and emotional health, physical activity, and safety aspects of each formally structured activity documented within our curriculum. This includes daily opportunities to learn health habits that prevent infection and significant injuries and health habits that support healthful eating, nutrition education, physical activity, and routine sleep practices. Awareness of healthy and safe behaviors, including good nutrition, physical activity, and sleep habits, are an integral part of our overall program.

Physical activity, play areas, screen time, and outdoor play policy

Brilliant Star promotes all children's active play every day. Children should have ample opportunity to do moderate to vigorous activities, such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping, to the extent of their abilities.

All children, birth to 12 years of age, should participate daily in:

- a. Two to 3 occasions of active play outdoors, weather permitting
- b. Two or more structured or teacher/adult-led activities or games that promote movement over the course of the day—indoor or outdoor
- c. Continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills

The total time allotted for outdoor play and moderate to vigorous indoor or outdoor physical activity can be adjusted for the age group and weather conditions.

Outdoor play

- a. Infants (birth–12 months of age) should be taken outside 2 to 3 times per day, as tolerated. There is no recommended duration of infants’ outdoor play.
- b. Toddlers (12 – 35 months) and preschoolers (3–6 years) should be allowed 60 to 90 total minutes of outdoor play.

These outdoor times can be curtailed somewhat during adverse weather conditions in which children may still play safely outdoors for shorter periods, but the time of indoor activity should increase so the total amount of exercise remains the same.

Total time allotted for moderate to vigorous activities:

- a. Toddlers should be allowed 60 to 90 minutes per 8-hour day for moderate to vigorous physical activity, including running.
- b. Preschoolers should be allowed 90 to 120 minutes per 8-hour day for moderate to vigorous physical activity, including running.

Infants should have supervised tummy time every day when they are awake. Beginning on the first day at the early care and education program, caregivers/teachers should interact with an awake infant on his/her tummy for short periods (3–5 minutes), increasing the amount of time as the infant shows he/she enjoys the activity.

There are many ways to promote tummy time with infants:

- a. Place yourself or a toy just out of the infant’s reach during playtime to get him/her to reach for you or the toy.
- b. Place toys in a circle around the infant. Reaching to different points in the circle will allow him/her to develop the appropriate muscles to roll over, scoot on his/her belly, and crawl.
- c. Lie on your back and place the infant on your chest. The infant will lift his/her head and use his/her arms to try to see your face.

Structured activities have been shown to produce higher levels of physical activity in young children, therefore it is recommended that our teachers incorporate 2 or more short, structured activities or games daily that promote physical activity.

Opportunities to actively enjoy physical activity should be incorporated into part-time programs by prorating these recommendations accordingly (eg, 20 minutes of outdoor play for every 3 hours in the facility).

Active play should never be withheld from children who misbehave (eg, child is kept indoors to help another teacher while the rest of the children go outside). However, children with out-of-control behavior may need 5 minutes or fewer to calm themselves or settle down before resuming cooperative play or activities.

Infants should not be seated for more than 15 minutes at a time, except during meals or naps. Infant equipment, such as swings, stationary activity centers, infant seats (eg, bouncers), and molded seats, should only be used for short periods, if used at all. A least-restrictive environment should be encouraged at all times.

Children should have adequate space for indoor and outdoor play.

Screen time/digital media should not be used with children ages 2 and younger in early care and education settings. For children ages 2 to 5 years, total exposure (in early care and education and at home combined) to digital media should be limited to 1 hour per day of high-quality programming, and viewed with an adult who can help them apply what they are learning to the world around them.

Children ages 5 and older may need to use digital media in early care and education to complete homework. However, caregivers/teachers should ensure that entertainment media time does not displace healthy activities such as exercise, refreshing sleep, and family time, including meals.

For children of all ages, digital media and devices should not be used during meal or snack time, or during nap/rest times and in bed. Devices should be turned off at least one hour before bedtime. When offered, digital media should be free of advertising and brand placement, violence, and sounds that tempt children to overuse the product.

Programs should prioritize physical activity and increased personal social interactions and engagement during the program day. It is important for young children to have active social interactions with adults and children. Media use can distract children (and adults), limit conversations and play, and reduce healthy physical activity, increasing the risk for overweight and obesity. Media should be turned off when not in use since background media can be distracting, and reduce social engagement and learning. Overuse of media can also be associated with problems with behavior, limit-setting, and emotional and behavioral self-regulation; therefore, caregivers/teachers should avoid using media to calm a child down.

The first two years of life are critical periods of growth and development for children’s brains and bodies, and rapid brain development continues through the early childhood years. To best develop their cognitive, language, motor, and social-emotional skills, infants and toddlers need hands-on exploration and social interaction with trusted caregivers. Digital media viewing do not promote such skills development as well as “real life”.

Excessive media use has been associated with lags in achievement of knowledge and skills, as well as negative impacts on sleep, weight, and social/emotional health

Section 4: Academic Life

Parent Conferences

Two parent conferences will be scheduled during the year. Additional conferences will be scheduled upon request. Conferences are scheduled following the optional classroom observation. In-person conferences are preferred, but arrangements can be made for teleconferences or virtual conferences.

Evaluation of Student Progress

Brilliant Star’s curriculum is carefully structured and sequenced and the teachers maintain careful records of each student’s progress. Because we do not compare students against an arbitrary standard or the performance of their classmates, we do not use letter grades. Instead, parents receive a detailed report of their child’s progress in each area of the curriculum, indicating which areas have been mastered and which are in progress. Progress reports are provided in December and May each school year.

Transitioning from one level to the next

The timing of the child's transition from the Toddler environment to the Primary program, and from the Primary program to the Elementary program, is determined by the level of development of the child. When the child shows sufficient mastery of the activities within the environment and is socially and physically ready to move on towards a more mature environment, the transition process begins. This process may take place at any time of the year, and is not based simply upon the child's age. The teachers meet together, and the teacher of the new classroom visits the child in their current classroom to observe their level of readiness. Typically, the teachers would meet with the parents to discuss the move, and the process begins by the child visiting the new classroom on a daily basis, until they eventually make the full transition into the more mature classroom. The teacher acts as a guide in this process and encourages independent exploration. The child's development leads the whole process.

(Toddlers must be toilet trained before entering the Primary classroom.)

Observation

Parents are invited and even urged to observe the children at work. Formal observations are scheduled twice a year, just prior to parent conferences. However, you are welcome to arrange for observations at any other time. Contact the office or your child's teacher to let them know when you would like to visit. In order to limit the number of adults in the classroom at the same time, and maintain the classroom as a "children's environment", we need to schedule observations so that they do not overlap or so that there are not too many observations scheduled within a short period of time. For these reasons all observations must be scheduled in advance. You will want to see the class at its normal routine and not responding to the novelty of your presence; therefore, when you visit, please sit in the designated observation chair in the classroom. A great deal can be learned by patient and quiet observation of your child and his or her classmates at work.

You will be given guidelines just before your observation period, to guide your experience in the classroom.

During the first sensitive weeks of the school year, students (especially the younger children) are familiarizing themselves with a new routine and new environment. For this reason, observations do not take place during the first several weeks of school.

The first-year Primary children also are particularly sensitive to having their parents in the classroom. Often when their parents enter the classroom for an observation, the child would rather sit on their parent's lap, than work in the classroom. For this reason, parents of first year Primary children may not be able to attend an observation in their own child's classroom until closer to the end of the year, although they are welcome to schedule an observation in the other Primary classroom at any time.

Our Toddler classroom has an observation window where a parent can watch by scheduling a time with the office staff. Even if your child is not in the Toddler class, you will enjoy watching the students at work and will gain a better understanding of the program.

All visitors for observations need to sign in at the office upon arrival.

Referral Process for Special Needs

Brilliant Star recognizes and values the academic potential of students of diverse learning abilities. Although our program is not designed specifically to students with learning disabilities and attention difficulties, some such students experience success at BSS when supported by an open and cooperative teacher-student-parent-professional relationship, and a carefully structured learning/service plan. In the event that a child is exhibiting learning challenges or behavior patterns that interfere with a normal learning pattern, the teacher will document the patterns observed and begin the referral process. Brilliant Star also uses the ASQ for children 54 months and below to determine if there are any recommendations for further assessment and referral.

How to find out what your child did at school

Have you experienced frustration when asking, “What did you do at school today?” Did you get the common answer, “Nothing.” Or possibly your child tells you every day that they did the same thing such as cylinder blocks or spooning beans. Don’t be alarmed. We can assure you that your child is very busy at school doing a variety of learning activities designed to support their development.

Young children often have difficulty talking about what they do at school. They have done so many things that they often cannot sort out the specifics. Sometimes they don’t remember the name of the materials that they used, such as the trinomial cube, the metal insets, or the addition strip board.

In addition to the difficulty children may have talking about their school experience, you may have noted that not many papers come home. They can be doing complex math, word building, writing on chalk boards, geography, and science lessons, all with manipulative materials that will have no paper work to show you their progress.

So how can you find out what your child is doing in school?

1. Ask your child questions that are more specific. “Did you do a counting lesson today? Did you work with colors or the binomial cube? Did you listen to Chopin or Bach?”
2. Stop in after school and talk to your child’s teacher, or set up an appointment for a formal conference if you prefer.
3. Set up a time to observe your child in class.
4. Read a Montessori book.
5. Come to school meetings and workshops.
6. Play school with your child at home. Sometimes children will show you through their play what they are learning.
7. Be patient. In time it will be obvious that your child is growing and learning everyday.

Parent Education Evenings

It is widely recognized that the success of any educational program is highly dependent upon the role and support of the child's parents. Brilliant Star holds periodic Parent Education Evenings that are aimed at helping you gain a deep appreciation of the activities in the classroom, and to discuss various issues facing parents. If there are particular topics that you would like to see covered, please let the Principal know. Because of your importance in the education of your child, attendance at these evenings is highly recommended.

Section 5: Parents & the School

A Place of Community

In our rapidly changing world it has become increasingly difficult to establish the community bonds that unite people. Our friends, and more importantly, our children's friends, move out of one village to another, or even off island, as our families or careers dictate. Those of us who cherish a close-knit community have to create our own by joining together with people with whom we share similar interests, concerns, and values.

At Brilliant Star students know that they belong, that they are respected, and that they are cared for not only by their parents, but by the larger community of fellow students, teachers, and other parents in the school, many of whom have known them almost all their lives.

Brilliant Star brings together families who have chosen to identify with a common commitment to the shared concerns, values, and expectations they have for their children. We come from different backgrounds, but our sense of community exists in spite of, or perhaps because of it.

Brilliant Star teaches us to understand and appreciate cultural differences and shared human values: universal peace and unity.

In any community of diverse people and views, it is inevitable that occasionally there will be differences, sometimes even clashes, disagreements and hurt feelings.

If you have concerns about a particular issue or individual, you are urged to bring the concern directly to the individual involved, or to ask the Principal for help in solving the problem. And if you have concerns about particular school policies or activities, please share these with us rather than airing them with other families. Let's work together to constructively address any concerns.

Volunteering the Gift of Time and Talent

Parents play a crucial role at Brilliant Star. This is a community of parents and educators. Few schools are so open and responsive to suggestions and concerns. Brilliant Star strongly encourages families to feel at home and to participate in the broader life of the school through social and educational activities offered by the school. Although some parents may spend considerable amounts of time as volunteers at Brilliant Star, there is no expectation for a set time commitment.

There are some things that even money can't buy, and one of the most valuable contributions that families make to Brilliant Star is the gift of their time and expertise. Parents, grandparents, and friends of the school who give of their time and talent share with their families' special memories of experiences and friendships that endure well beyond their children's graduation.

A few ways in which you can help out at Brilliant Star:

- Lend your time and support to the fundraising efforts.
- Help with special events such as School Picnics, Parent Education Evenings, the International Day Celebrations, the Year End Ceremony, and school service projects.
- Share your special skills with the school – carpentry, computer skills, plumbing, publishing, gardening, photography, sewing, woodworking, lawn care, anything at all!

Brilliant Star depends on our combined talents. Talk with the Principal or your child's teacher if you are able to help.

Communication between home and school

It is very important for teachers and parents to establish and maintain close communication. Please feel free to ask questions or discuss anything related to your child's progress. We ask, however, that you understand that the teacher's responsibility during school is to the students.

Morning arrival in particular is a very sensitive period when the teachers are greeting each student and setting a calm, pleasant tone for the day. Interruptions need to be kept to a minimum. If you must speak with the teacher in the morning, please make arrangements to meet before school begins. Otherwise, you can correspond via a note and the teachers will get back to you by phone or will send a note to set up a conference as needed. Emails and text messages are options too, but it may take time for the teacher to catch up with messages. Leaving a note or calling the office to relay a message is another way to communicate any urgent information to teachers.

Regular meetings between parents and teachers are encouraged, appreciated, and necessary for your child's happy and healthy development.

Newsletters are sent out several times a year with school and program updates.

Open classroom policy for parents/guardians

Brilliant Star Montessori maintains an open classroom policy for parents/guardians to access their child at any time they are in our care. Brilliant follows a visitor check in policy whereas all visitors must check in at the office before proceeding to a classroom unless coming for a pre-scheduled observation or conference.

Parents as Ambassadors

You, as parents, have played a crucial role in the success of Brilliant Star. It has been word of mouth, more than anything else, which has resulted in the rapid growth of the

School. Please continue to share your enthusiasm with the community.

The enrollment process has been put in place to help interested parents learn about the school and to see if the School is a good match for their family. More than anything else, we look for families who seek to understand and support the vision and the curriculum of the School.

Tuition Policy

Brilliant Star is a non-profit organization dependent on tuition as its principle source of income. As a non-profit organization, there are no “owners”, and any extra funds go back into the school to support its programs. Student accounts must be kept up-to-date. The school will be forced to withhold any and all services to students whose accounts have fallen behind unless written arrangements have been made for deferred payment. Your cooperation is essential and very much appreciated.

Enrollment Agreement

The school year is considered to be continuous from August to June. Parents enroll their children for that period of time. The August to June tuition is divided into equal payments according to a plan (annual, semi-annual, or monthly) agreed upon and committed to through the school’s enrollment agreement. Allowances or refunds will not be made for phasing-in, illness, or vacations. A thirty-day notice of early withdrawal from the year’s program is required and a refund or owed amount of tuition is determined.

Tuition Assistance & Financial Aide

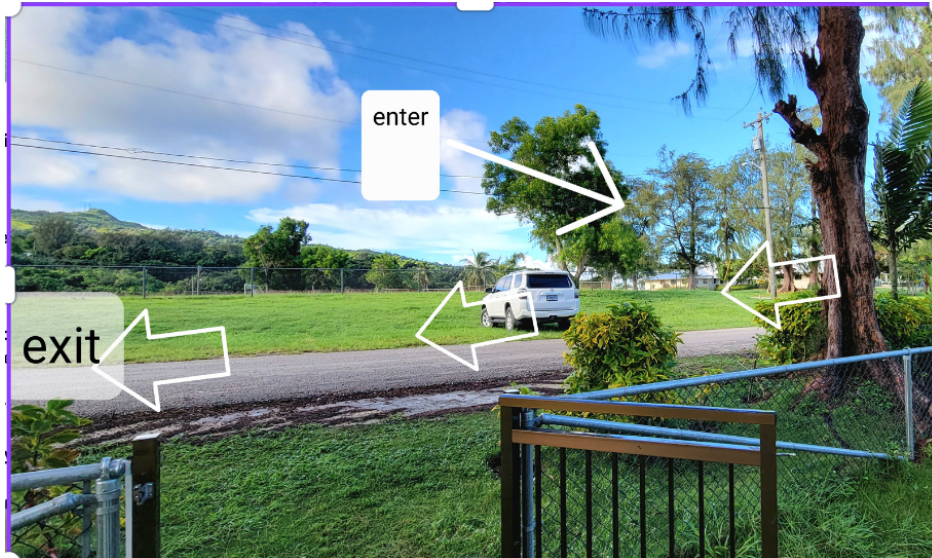
We are happy to have put into place a process for making financial assistance available to families who have difficulty meeting the tuition expenses. We recognize that the cost of an education of the quality provided by Brilliant Star is expensive. We also recognize that the ability to make this education available to families who could not normally afford the price can have a tremendous impact on the future of the child and generations to come. We seek to make the School available to interested families, regardless of their ability to pay. The program is primarily funded by fundraising efforts. You may also make a contribution towards this program. Please encourage those who would not normally consider a private education to look to Brilliant Star.

Brilliant Star Montessori School will make award decisions based upon the financial information received (need), individual circumstances, and the availability of funds. Family tuition accounts must be up-to-date to be awarded a scholarship. An annual application is required. Priority for awarding is as follows:

1. Families who currently have scholarships
2. Re-enrolling students
3. New students

Parking

Cars entering and leaving the school for regular arrival and dismissal should proceed around the drive in a clockwise direction. Be prepared for cars to stop, park, or pull out to exit.



Fund Raising & the Educational Tax Credit

Brilliant Star is a non-profit organization. Fundraising has been at the heart of the growth of Brilliant Star.

We are very fortunate to have in place, Public Law 10-73, known as the Educational Tax Credit Law. This progressive law, which has been in effect in the CNMI since 1997, is an easy, low-cost way to make a tremendous impact on your child's education and on the future of the school.

Families can take advantage of the Educational Tax Credit, both through their business taxes, and through their individual taxes. The law allows for businesses and individuals to make a contribution to a qualified educational institution, and to receive a tax *credit* for the contribution. A tax credit means that any amount you contribute to the school counts as if you had paid that amount towards your taxes. It is a tax *credit*, which is much better than a tax *deductible* contribution.

The Educational Tax Credit contributions are made in place of Wage and Salary Tax, or in place of Earnings Tax, for individuals. For businesses, the contribution is made in place of Business Gross Revenue Tax (BGRT) quarterly. The maximum allowable contribution is \$5,000 per year per taxpayer.

This is an amazing opportunity to make a significant contribution to the school, at relatively little cost. We encourage families to take advantage of this wonderful program. If you have questions about the program, please ask us. We can direct you to other parents who use the Educational Tax Credit as a means of supporting their children's education.

The current operations and the future growth of Brilliant Star depend upon your generous contributions. The school can serve our children only through our financial assistance.

Every time you make a contribution to Brilliant Star, you are making an investment in our children's future and in the future of humanity.

Section 6: Emergencies/Security/Safety

Authorized persons to pick up child

During our enrollment process, parents are asked to provide proof of legal guardianship. Legal guardian(s) of the child are established and documents along with clarification and documentation of any custody issues and court orders. A noncustodial parent is not allowed to pick up a child without permission from the custodial parent.

During enrollment, names, addresses, and telephone numbers of persons authorized to take a child out of school are documented on the carpool release form.

A photo ID is required for any persons other than the legal guardian(s) to be shared with the school staff and kept in the child's file. This is to identify the individuals for whom parents/guardians have given prior written authorization to pick up their child.

If there is a circumstance in which the parent/guardian or other authorized person is not able to pick up the child, another individual may pick up the child if they are authorized to do so by the parent/guardian in authenticated communication. This communication can be:

- (1) A witnessed phone call in which the caller provides prespecified identifying information (ie, passwords). The phone conversation should be confirmed by a return call to the parents/guardians.
- (2) Written permission (paper, email, or text message) that includes the name, contact information (phone number and address), photo, and current date.

The individual authorized to pick up the child must show valid identification (photo ID) during pick up.

If a parent/guardian arrives intoxicated or otherwise incapable of bringing the child home safely, the school reserves the right to deny access to anyone who poses a potential risk to the child. The school will contact another legal guardian or the emergency contact listed for the child.

Should an unauthorized individual attempt to pick up a child without the school receiving prior communication from the parent/guardian, the parent/guardian will be contacted immediately. If the parent/guardian does not provide authenticated communication about the individual, the child will not be permitted to leave.

If an unauthorized individual refuses to leave and their behavior is concerning, or if the child is abducted by force, the police will be called immediately with a detailed description of the individual and any other obtainable information, such as a license plate number.

Plan if a child is not picked up by authorized person

If a child is not picked up by an authorized adult, and we are unable to contact any of those individuals, the school will call any emergency contacts listed on the child's emergency sheet to work on getting the child to close family or friends. The school will release the child to an emergency contact if the authorized individuals fail to pick up the child and the school is unable to contact them.

Visitors on Campus

All visitors of Brilliant Star Montessori must report to the office. Brilliant Star has an electronic sign-in/sign-out system to track who enters and exits the facility. The system includes the name, contact number, relationship to facility (e.g., parent/guardian, vendor, guest, etc.) and recorded time in and out. This system helps to maintain a secure environment for children and staff. It also provides a means to contact visitors if needed or to ensure all individuals in the building are evacuated in case of an emergency. The information is emailed directly to the principal each time a visitor signs in/out.

Transportation and field trips

Brilliant Star requires parent/guardian consent for any field trips. For transportation of children in field trips, parents/guardians must provide a child's safety seat and agree to the arrangement through the consent form. If a parent/guardian does not consent for their child to attend the field trip, arrangements will be made for the child to participate in another program for the time the class is away.

Policy Prohibiting Fire-Arms

Brilliant Star prohibits any firearms, ammunition, ammunition supplies, or weapons of any kind on campus. Parents/guardians will be notified in the case that any firearms and other weapons are brought on the premises.

Policy Prohibiting Smoking, Tobacco, Alcohol, Illegal Drugs, and Toxic Substances

The use and possession of tobacco and electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) products, alcohol, illegal drugs, legal drugs (e.g. medicinal/recreational marijuana, prescribed narcotics, etc.) that have side effects that diminish the ability to properly supervise and care for children or safely drive program vehicles, and other potentially toxic substances are prohibited at all times. All of these substances are prohibited inside the facility, on facility grounds, and in any vehicles that transport children at all times. Smoking and vaping is prohibited at all times and in all areas (indoor and outdoor) of the program. This includes any vehicles that are used to transport children.

The use and possession of all substances referred to above are prohibited during all times when caregivers/teachers/parent volunteers are responsible for the supervision of children, including times when children are transported, when playing in outdoor play areas not attached to the facility, and during field trips and staff breaks.

Active Supervision of Children

At Brilliant Star, active and positive supervision of infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-aged children by sight and hearing at all times, including when children are resting or sleeping, eating, being diapered, or using the bathroom (as age appropriate) and when children are outdoors is required at all times.

Active supervision requires focused attention and intentional observation of children at all times. Teachers position themselves so that they can observe all of the children: watching, counting, and listening at all times. During transitions, teachers account for all children with name-to-face recognition by visually identifying each child. They also use their knowledge of each child's development and abilities to anticipate what they will do, then get involved and redirect them when necessary. This constant vigilance helps children learn safely.

The following are guidelines for maintaining active supervision during the school day:

1. Set Up the Environment

Teachers set up the environment so that they can supervise children and be accessible at all times. When activities are grouped together and furniture is at waist height or shorter, adults are always able to see and hear children. Small spaces are kept clutter-free and big spaces are set up so that children have clear play spaces that teachers can observe.

2. Position Staff

Teachers carefully plan where they will position themselves in the environment to prevent children from harm. They place themselves so that they can see and hear all of the children in their care. They make sure there are always clear paths to where children are playing, sleeping, and eating so they can react quickly when necessary. Teachers stay close to children who may need additional support. Their location helps them provide support, if necessary.

3. Scan and Count

Teachers are always able to account for the children in their care. They continuously scan the entire environment to know where everyone is and what they are doing. They count the children frequently. This is especially important during transitions when children are moving from one location to another.

4. Listen

Specific sounds or the absence of them may signify reason for concern. Teachers who are listening closely to children immediately identify signs of potential danger.

5. Anticipate Children's Behavior

Teachers use what they know about each child's individual interests and skills to predict what he/she will do. They create challenges that children are ready for and support them in succeeding. But, they also recognize when children might wander, get upset, or take a dangerous risk. Information from our daily health check (e.g., illness, allergies, lack of sleep or food, etc.) informs adults' observations and helps them anticipate children's behavior. Teachers who know what to expect are better able to protect children from harm.

6. Engage and Redirect

Teachers use what they know about each child's individual needs and development to offer support. They wait until children are unable to problem-solve on their own to get involved. They may offer different levels of assistance or redirection depending on each individual child's needs.

Professional Development/Training of Staff

All Brilliant Star Directors and teachers are required to successfully complete at least thirty clock-hours per year of continuing education/professional development in the first year of employment, sixteen clock-hours of which should be in child development or Montessori programming and fourteen of which should be in child health, safety, and staff health. In the second and each of the following years of employment at Brilliant Star, all directors and teachers should successfully complete at least twenty-four clock-hours of continuing education based on individual competency needs and any special needs of the children in their care, sixteen hours of which should be in child development or Montessori programming and eight hours of which should be in child health, safety, and staff health.

Brilliant Star conducts a needs assessment to identify areas of focus, trainer qualifications, adult learning strategies, and creates an annual professional development plan for staff based on the needs assessment. The effectiveness of training should be evident by the change in performance as measured by accreditation standards or other quality assurance systems.

Safe Sleep Policies

All staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and others approved to enter rooms where infants are cared for receive a copy of the Safe Sleep Policy and additional educational information and training on the importance of consistent use of safe sleep policies and practices before they are allowed to care for infants (i.e., first day as an employee/volunteer/substitute). Documentation that training has occurred and that these individuals have received and reviewed the written policy before they care for children are kept on file and updated annually.

All staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and others who care for infants in the child care setting should follow these required safe sleep practices as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP):

- a. Infants up to twelve months of age should be placed for sleep in a supine position (wholly on their back) for every nap or sleep time unless an infant's primary health care provider has completed a signed waiver indicating that the child requires an alternate sleep position;
- b. Infants should be placed for sleep in safe sleep environments; which include a firm mat covered by a tight-fitting.
- c. Infants should not nap or sleep in a car safety seat, bean bag chair, bouncy seat, infant seat, swing, jumping chair, play pen or play yard, highchair, chair, futon, sofa/couch, or any other type of furniture/equipment that is not an approved waterproof mat with fitted sheet.
- d. If an infant arrives at the facility asleep in a car safety seat, the parent/guardian or caregiver/teacher should immediately remove the sleeping infant from this seat and place them in the supine position in a safe sleep environment (i.e., the infant's assigned crib);
- e. If an infant falls asleep in any place that is not a safe sleep environment, staff should immediately move the infant and place them in the supine position in their crib;
- f. Soft or loose bedding should be kept away from sleeping infants and out of safe sleep environments. These include, but are not limited to: bumper pads, pillows, quilts, comforters, sleep positioning devices, sheepskins, blankets, flat sheets, cloth diapers, bibs, etc. Also, blankets/items should not be hung on the sides of cribs. Loose or ill-fitting sheets have caused infants to be strangled or suffocated.
- g. Swaddling infants is not necessary or recommended, but rather one-piece sleepers should be used.
- h. Toys, including mobiles and other types of play equipment should be kept away from sleeping infants and out of safe sleep environments.
- i. When teachers place infants on their mat for sleep, they should check to ensure that the temperature in the room is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult, check the infants to ensure that they are comfortably clothed (not overheated or sweaty), and that bibs, necklaces, and garments with ties or hoods are removed. (Safe clothing sacks or other clothing designed for safe sleep can be used in lieu of blankets.)
- j. Infants should be directly observed by sight and sound at all times, including when they are going to sleep, are sleeping, or are in the process of waking up.
- k. Bedding should be changed between children, and if mats are used, they should be cleaned between uses.

The lighting in the room must allow the caregiver/teacher to see each infant's face, to view the color of the infant's skin, and to check on the infant's breathing.

A teacher trained in safe sleep practices and approved to care for infants should be present in each room at all times where there is an infant. This teacher should remain alert and should actively supervise sleeping infants in an ongoing manner. Also, the caregiver/teacher should check to ensure that the infant's head remains uncovered and re-adjust clothing as needed.

Any exposure of a child's rest equipment to second-hand or third-hand smoke is avoided.

Brilliant Star does not allow pacifiers for infants.

All staff, parents/guardians, volunteers and others who care for children 5 and under in the child care setting should follow these required safe sleep practices:

1. An individual mat with a fitted sheet and sleeping set is kept for each child who spends more than 4 hours a day at Brilliant Star.
2. Mats are made of washable materials, and are covered with washable sheets.
3. All bedding that touches a child's skin are cleaned weekly or before use by another child. *Children take home sleeping sets on Friday to be washed and bring them back to school Monday.*
4. Each child is assigned his/her own fitted sheet and mat.
5. Children are spaced as far apart as possible in a head-foot alternating position.
6. The sleeping surface of one child's rest equipment is not placed in contact with the sleeping surface of another child's rest equipment.
7. Any exposure to second-hand or third-hand smoke is avoided.

<p>Prevention of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma</p>

All Brilliant Star teachers who are in direct contact with children, including substitute teachers and volunteers, must receive training on preventing shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma; recognizing potential signs and symptoms of shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma; creating strategies for coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child; and understanding the development and vulnerabilities of the brain in infancy and early childhood.

Victims of shaken baby syndrome/abusive head trauma may exhibit one or more of the following symptoms

1. Irritability
2. Trouble staying awake
3. Trouble breathing
4. Vomiting
5. Unable to be woken up

Presence and care of animals on the premises

Brilliant Star strives to maintain a safe campus at all times. When animals are present, a staff will work to escort the animal outside of the campus fence. If assistance is needed, the school will call local agencies that help with stray animals, such as the Saipan Mayors office.

Classroom pets are accepted as part of the curriculum at Brilliant Star. The exception is any pet that may put students in harm or that may cause allergies to flair, such as a dog or a cat. Acceptable classroom pets are: birds, fish, turtles, and other small animals that can be contained in a cage.

Preventing and reporting suspected child abuse

Brilliant Star teachers receive initial and ongoing training to assist them in preventing child abuse and neglect and in recognizing signs of child abuse and neglect. When necessary, we partner with primary health care providers, child care health consultants, and/or child protection advocates to provide training and to be available for consultation.

Brilliant Star maintains the following policy regarding the reporting of child abuse and neglect: Teachers are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect. Brilliant Star will report any instance in which there is reasonable cause to believe that child abuse and/or neglect has occurred to child protective services, the department of social services, or police as required by state and local laws within 24 hours. Every staff member is oriented to what and how to report. Phone numbers and reporting system, as required by state or local agencies, are clearly posted in a location accessible to teachers

This serves as a notice to our parents/guardians of the Brilliant Star's child abuse and neglect reporting requirement and procedures.

Sanitation policies and procedures

Brilliant Star upholds the following policies for sanitation:

- a. Maintaining equipment used for hand hygiene, toilet use, and toilet learning/training in a sanitary condition
- b. Maintaining diaper changing areas and equipment in a sanitary condition
- c. Maintaining toys in a sanitary condition
- d. Managing animals in a safe and sanitary manner
- e. Practicing proper handwashing and diapering procedures (including the display of proper handwashing instruction signs conspicuously)
- f. Practicing proper personal hygiene of teachers and children
- g. Practicing environmental sanitation policies and procedures, such as sanitary disposal of soiled diapers
- h. Maintaining sanitation for food preparation and food service.

Any toxic substances such cleaning supplies must remain stored away from children in the labeled, child-proof container they came in. Any medication must be locked in a cupboard or cabinet. Any medication that is authorized to be given to a child must remain locked in the office until administered.

Maintenance of the Facility and Equipment

Brilliant Star maintains all information and records pertaining to the manufacture, installation, and regular inspection of facility equipment. No second-hand equipment should be used in areas occupied by children, unless all pertinent data, including checking for recalls and the manufacturer's instructions, can be obtained from the previous owner or from the manufacturer. All equipment should meet ASTM International (ASTM) standards.

Outdoor Play Equipment Requirements:

Outdoor Play equipment and materials at Brilliant Star meet the recommendations of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the ASTM International (ASTM) for public playground equipment. Equipment and materials intended for gross-motor (active) play should conform to the recommendations in the CPSC Public Playground Safety Handbook and the provisions in the ASTM “Standard F1487-07ae1: Consumer Safety Performance Specifications for Playground Equipment for Public Use.”

All play equipment should be constructed, installed, and made available to the intended users in such a manner that meets CPSC guidelines and ASTM standards, as warranted by the manufacturers’ recommendations. A Certified Playground Safety Inspector (CPSI) who has been certified by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) should conduct an inspection of playground plans for new installations. Previously installed playgrounds should be inspected at least once each year, by a CPSI or local regulatory agency, and whenever changes are made to the equipment or intended users.

Inspectors should specifically test wooden play equipment structures for chromated copper arsenate (CCA). The wood in many playground sets can contain potentially hazardous levels of arsenic due to the use of CCA as a wood preservative.

Play equipment and materials should be deemed appropriate to the developmental needs, individual interests, abilities, and ages of the children, by a person with at least a master’s degree in early childhood education or psychology, or identified as age-appropriate by a manufacturer’s label on the product package. Enough play equipment and materials should be available to avoid excessive competition and long waits.

The facility should offer a wide variety of age-appropriate portable play equipment (e.g., balls, jump ropes, hoops, ribbons, scarves, push/pull toys, riding toys, rocking and twisting toys, sand and water play toys) in sufficient quantities that multiple children can play at the same time.

Children should always be supervised when playing on playground equipment.

Compliance should be measured by structured observation.

A general guideline for establishing play equipment heights is one foot per year of age of the intended users. In some states, height limitations for playground equipment are:

- a. Thirty-two inches for infants and toddlers (six months to twenty-three months) (7);
- b. Forty-eight inches for preschoolers (thirty months to five years of age);
- c. Six and one-half feet for school-age children (six through twelve years of age).

The use of pesticides and other harmful
potentially toxic substances

Brilliant Star takes a proactive approach to eliminating pests/rodents and the potential for pesticide poisoning within our classrooms. Our staff maintains a cleanly environment that limits the potential for pests to live. One of the most effective ways that we help prevent pesticide poisonings is by our adoption of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices to reduce children’s exposure to pesticides. IPM is a safer method of pest management that makes use of a variety of control techniques and focuses on eliminating the causes of pest

infestations instead of merely treating the symptoms. Since children spend so much of their day at home and in school, IPM provides an opportunity to create a safer learning environment—to reduce children’s exposure to pesticides as well as eliminate pests. If pesticides are necessary, we use spot treatment that is administered outside of school hours.

IPM involves the following six steps:

- **Keep Pests Out** — If pests can’t get inside, then you won’t need to use any pesticides to kill them.
- **Starve and Dry Pests Out** — Every creature needs food and water to survive. Eliminate your pests’ access to these things and they won’t hang around for long.
- **Eliminate Safe Havens for Pests** — Roaches can live in any nook and cranny. Anywhere you see a small crack leading to a spot that people can’t access, make sure to seal it up.
- **Monitor for Pests** — Monitoring is key to successful IPM. It lets us know when there is a problem so we can address it early.
- **Creating and Maintaining an IPM Plan and Keeping Proper Records** — Our IPM plan is a document that indicates how we plan to monitor for pests and what you will do if pests suddenly arrive. Having this tool will help us avoid the urge to use dangerous pesticides.
- **Treat Existing Pest Problems** —To get rid of existing pests, use traps, vacuums, gels and baits. If pesticides are necessary, use spot treatments rather than area-wide applications.

Brilliant Star prohibits the use of any toxic substances inside the classroom while the children are present. We use non-toxic, environmentally friendly solutions for sanitation within the classroom.

Campus Security

Brilliant Star’s policy on for all classrooms is that no door should have have a lock or fastening device that prevents free egress from the interior. Free egress means that building occupants, without the use of a tool, key or special knowledge are able to operate the door, under all lighting conditions, using not more than one releasing operation. In all child care facilities, all door hardware in areas that school-age children use should be within the reach of the children. The exception is in the case of a campus lock-down, in which all doors will be locked from the inside of the classroom, all available blinds drawn, and the children will be hidden from immediate view from the outside.

Brilliant Star incorporates the use of outdoor cameras as a safeguard for the children and campus. The camera footage can be viewed upon request from a staff member or guardian in the case of an accident that occurs outside, a lost child, or an incident that requires investigation. The cameras face all major entrance/exit points on campus and all main classroom exits/entrances.

Brilliant Star has a perimeter fence line that surrounds the entire school property. All gates are to remain closed during school hours. Any non-walk-in gates remain locked unless in use.

Comprehensive Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan

Brilliant Star maintains a quarterly updated Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan that includes reunification of families and recovery and alternative shelter arrangements. A copy of our most up-to-date plan is available in the main office, on our website, and is shared with parents during orientation each year or upon enrollment. Evacuation procedures are posted in all classrooms. All emergency and evacuation procedures are posted conspicuously in the main office.

Brilliant Star performs and has documentation of monthly emergency and evacuation drills.

