



The Acorn is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation

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Follow us on Facebook
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Please note that teachers do not have access to their cell phones during class, therefore, a text is not the most efficient way to communicate during class time.

Please call the office first!

210-826-8804

If you are unable to get through, please call or text:

Wendy 210-854-1967 or

Carrie 210-309-9784

Please save these numbers in your phone.

Tall Oaks from Little Acorns Grow!

2023-2024 Policy Information

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

In this policy handbook, please find information on the following:

- Calendar (p2)
- Home Visits/Children's Records (p3)
- Arrival and Dismissal-Carpools, Lunch bunches (p3-5)
- Children's Appropriate Dress for Play (p5)
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Smoking is prohibited everywhere on The Acorn property, including in vehicles and on field trips.

2023-2024 The Acorn School Event Calendar

July 2023							July						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	1	Tuition & Fees Payment Due BY today!					
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8						
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	10-21	July Summer Camp					
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	Playground Student Forms due!					
23	24	25	26	27	28	29							
30	31												
August 2023							August						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa							
6	7	8	9	10	11	12							
13	14	15	16	17	18	19							
20	21	22	23	24	25	26							
27	28	29	30	31			21-28	Teacher Orientation/ Training					
							28	Parent Info Meeting by Zoom at 2pm					
							28, 29	Class Orientation (Schedule to follow)					
September 2023							September						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa							
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	4	Labor Day					
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	5	First Day of School					
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	13	Wednesday Lunch Bunch begins					
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	14	Early Thursday Lunch Bunch begins					
October 2023							October						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	6-8	Kindergarten Campout Lost Maples					
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	9	School Holiday- Indigenous People's Day					
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	16-20	Dads' Days Celebrations					
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	30, 31	Halloween Pajama Day/ Kinder Wild Rumpus					
29	30	31											
November 2023							November						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa							
			1	2	3	4	2	Kindergarten Parent Meeting					
5	6	7	8	9	10	11							
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	13-17	Feasts Week (Schedule to follow)					
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	18-28	Thanksgiving Break!					
26	27	28	29	30									
December 2023							December						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa							
3	4	5	6	7	8	9							
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	13	Kinder Nativity Play Parent Performance @ 1:15					
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	16-Jan 2	Christmas Break through Jan 2					
24	25	26	27	28	29	30							
31													

January 2024							January						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	Student Holiday-New Year's Day					
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	2	Student Holiday-Teacher Work Day					
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	3	Classes Resume					
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	4	Prospective Kinder Parents Meeting 6:30pm					
28	29	30	31				6	Tour- In house enrollment begins Jan. 8th					
							15	School Holiday-MLK, Jr Day/ Alumni Enroll Week					
							22	Open Enrollment for New Families					
February 2024							February						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa							
4	5	6	7	8	9	10							
11	12	13	14	15	16	17							
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	19	President's Day- School Holiday					
25	26	27	28	29			29-Mar 1	Grandparents Days (Schedule to Follow)					
March 2024							March						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa							
3	4	5	6	7	8	9							
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	9-17	Spring Break!					
17	18	19	20	21	22	23		Incubation Starts					
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	School Holiday- Good Friday					
31													
April 2024							April						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	6	Fiesta Fundraiser					
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	8	Eclipse Day!! Protect your eyes!					
14	15	16	17	18	19	20							
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	26	School Holiday-Battle of Flowers					
28	29	30					29, 30	Water & Mud Days					
May 2024							May						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa							
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	8, 9	Last Lunch Bunch Days					
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	6-10	Mothers' Day Celebration Week					
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	Kindergarten Graduation					
26	27	28	29	30	31		17	Last Day of School					
							20	Teacher Workday/Staff Gathering					
June 2024							June						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa							
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	***	Reminder that Fall Payments are due by July 1!					
9	10	11	12	13	14	15							
16	17	18	19	20	21	22							
23	24	25	26	27	28	29							
30													

Home Visits/Children's Records

Each child will receive a home visit from his/her Head Teacher to help make the transition to school a successful one. The home visit gives the opportunity for your child to get to know his/her teacher in the comfort and security of their own home. Your child's teacher will call in late July/early August to schedule this visit.

This policy book has important information for parents. You were sent an email informing you to download the Playground app and a request to complete several forms along with uploading your child's health form and immunization records to the app or emailing to the school, which you should complete as soon as possible. If there is any remaining information needed for your child's file, the teacher will obtain it on the home visit, as well.

Online student records form and other downloads include the following information:

- **Emergency Information:** The Texas Licensing Board requires an alternate person (**not mom or dad**) be listed as a contact in case of emergency. You must complete the section "Persons Other Than Parents to Be Notified In Case of Emergency When Parents Cannot Be Reached". We **must have an address and zip code** for this person. Please make sure to bring any food allergies, such as to milk products, peanuts, wheat, etc., or any other chronic or contagious conditions to the attention of your child's teacher. (Signature required)
- **Parent Questionnaire**
- **Volunteer Release & Waiver of Liability** (Signature required)
- **Acknowledgement and Release of Liability** (Signature required)
- **Permission Slip/Operational Policy Receipt/Waiver and Release** (Signature required)
- **Health and Immunization Form:** completed by a physician, including an attached immunization record, with DTP, poli, MMR, Hib, Hep A, Hep B, and varicella. Please note that children four years of age and older need an annual vision and hearing screening. All new students will need a Health Form completed before school starts. Those students who attended The Acorn last school year should have a current health form in their records; an updated form will need to be completed and turned in after their birthday. –This can be uploaded to the Playground App under documents. (Doctor's signature required)
- **Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan** (for allergies), as needed. (Parent's and Doctor's Signature required)

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

Arrival/Dismissal

Morning Preschool Arrival/Departure Schedules

The morning preschool classes are scheduled from 8:40 to 11:30. There will be a teacher outside to greet the children and take them out of the cars from 8:40-9:00. Pickup time begins at 11:25. A late fee will be charged starting at 11:40. (See Late Pick Up Fees.)

Afternoon Preschool Arrival/Departure Schedule

The afternoon preschool classes are scheduled from 12:40 - 3:30. There will be a teacher outside to greet the children and take them out of the cars from 12:40 – 1:00. Pickup time begins at 3:25. A late fee will be charged starting at 3:40. (See Late Pick Up Fees.)

Kindergarten Arrival/Departure Schedule

Kindergarten classes are scheduled from 8:40 to 12:00, Monday, Thursday, and Friday and 8:40-2:00 on Tuesday and Wednesday. The first week of school dismissal will be at noon every day. The regular schedule will begin the second week. Kindergarten teachers will greet their class from 8:40 to 9:00 on the south side of the building each morning to start the year. The pickup is on the big playground. Rainy days drop off and pick up will be at the Main Porch. Thursday will be added as a longer day in the second semester the last week of January, with dismissal at 2:00. Please pack a nutritious lunch for your child on these days. A late fee will be charged for those picking up children after the long days (See Late Pick Up Fees.)

Arrival/Dismissal Procedures

Due to the large number of children arriving and departing at the same time, we will be using a drop-off and pick-up system. Parents will need to exit their vehicle to unbuckle their child. The school driveway is one way, so please enter from Avenue B and exit onto Broadway. Please remember to pull forward as far as possible just past the gate or to the car in front of you. This will help keep vehicles off Avenue B and minimize waiting times for all involved. Please do not use your cell phone, or iPad type devices during this time. This is for safety reasons and allows you to greet your child and have brief communication with the teacher. If you need to speak at length to your child's teacher, a time to call can be arranged. Thank you very much.

There should be no lap sitting or standing in the vehicle while moving (this includes hanging out of the window).

At pick-up time, you will need to exit your vehicle to receive your child and buckle them in or park and check them out.

If you arrive late for pick-up, your child will be brought to the office where you may pick him/her up. A late fee of \$15 for the first 10 minutes will be added to your account starting at 11:40 for the morning preschool, 12:10 for Kindergarten, and 3:40 for the afternoon preschool. We have been lenient in the past but cannot afford to miss post session, or cleaning and disinfecting time. There will be an increase after 10 minutes (See Late Fees.) In case of rain, classes will be dismissed from the covered porch by the main entrance.

A child will be released only to his/her parents, family, or those whose names are on the emergency form, unless other prior notification has been made. IDs will be checked. A parent should write an email or call us personally in a pinch. We will not accept calls from secretaries, employees, etc., only a parent or guardian. We appreciate your cooperation and patience as we try to make pickup time go as smoothly as possible. You can help us by making sure your child's car name tag is clearly visible in the front window and rolling down your window so the teachers can see you clearly.

Dismissal times for the preschool and Kindergarten classes are staggered to help with traffic flow. If your family or carpool is picking up children in both preschool and Kindergarten, please be prepared to pick up your preschool child at 11:30, then park and wait for the Kindergarten student to be dismissed from class at 12pm. You are welcome to supervise your own child or carpool briefly on the playground but know that the teachers will be going back inside to complete their inside duties.

Carpools

Past experience has taught us that it is best to avoid carpooling the first weeks or so of school, or perhaps longer, to ease the transition of starting school. If you are interested in forming a carpool, we have a map in the meeting room on which residences are marked. You can find those who may live in your area who you could contact to see if arrangements might be made. Car seats are required. Because of our teacher's duties for forty-five minutes before, and for an hour after school, it is our policy that teachers cannot bring any other

children to school or keep them after school prior to going home (see Teacher Pre & Post Sessions). Thank you very much for your understanding.



Wednesday Extended Day/Early Thursday/Kindergarten Lunch Bunch will begin meeting the second week of school if your child is enrolled in these, please pack a nutritious lunch for your child on these days (Please refer to our Nutrition Policy). For morning children enrolled in the Wednesday extended session, you may pick them up from 1:50-2 from the playground. For children new to this program, these extended hours can be long. Please be sensitive to your child's needs and pick him/her up earlier if needed, especially during the first few weeks of school.

For afternoon preschoolers enrolled in the Thursday early lunch session, drop off is 11:10 on the South Side of the building by the kindergarten. If you are running late and arrive after 11:45 for early Thursday lunch bunch, please plan to feed your child lunch before their arrival, since the Lunch Bunch children will have finished eating and will be involved in activities at this time. **Please note there are no lunch bunches the first and last weeks of school.**

Dress for Play

For day-to-day wear, please dress your child in play clothes so he/she can move around freely and comfortably and participate in all motor and outdoor activities without worry. Every child will get dirty on the playground or in the art room from time to time, so please expect it and dress your child so it won't matter to you. Please choose clothing that encourage their self-help skills as much as possible, such as Velcro shoes, pullover shirts, and elastic waist pants. We also recommend that if your child wears earrings or other jewelry, please refrain from hoops or dangling items that could interfere with their play or pose safety issues while moving about.

Personal Belongings

Each child will have a bag of extra clothing at school in case of accidents. The preschool class children do not need to bring a bag or backpack back and forth to school. We request that children leave candy, gum, and favorite toys at home. Certainly, aggressive toys, guns, or action figures have no place at school. However, we love to have them bring things to show their friends like shells, leaves, bugs, etc. These we can usually keep on display at school. Some classes have show and tell times, and your child's teacher will let you know what types of things can be brought.

Outdoor Play

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

Absences /Attendance/Health Policies and Illness

We want to urge everyone at the outset of school to be aware of keeping your child home from school if he/she is obviously getting sick or is not yet sufficiently recovered from an illness to return. As a child is recovering from an illness, the rule is that he/she be fever and symptom free for 24 hours before returning to school. If a child is listless, feverish, recently vomited or had diarrhea, or is showing signs of illness, sometimes he/she will still say they want to go to school, but it is unfair to all the healthy children to be exposed. When you do keep your child at home, please call ahead to inform us, as it will help us to plan for the day. Also, if your child contracts something very contagious, like chicken pox or Covid-19, please remember that the most contagious period is usually the 48 hours before your child breaks out or shows symptoms. Therefore, it is very

important to notify the school about that timing as well as calling the parents of friends your child played with outside of school so they can be on the lookout for symptoms. If someone in your household is quarantining, your child should not attend school until cleared to do so. We may adjust our health policies during the year, as we feel necessary, based on the recommendations of local health authorities.

While absences due to illness are necessary, consistent attendance is encouraged. If you know in advance your child will be absent on a given day for an appointment or a family vacation, please call or email the office and head teacher as far in advance as you can.

The Acorn will not dispense any medication at school. No medication should be sent to school with your child. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter. Exceptions can be pre-arranged for emergency situations only (such as epi-pens and inhalers-please see allergy section); forms and legal requirements for documentation are available in the office. Thanks!

Guidance and Discipline

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

Birthday Gift Traditions

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

Nutrition Policy

Snacks, whether provided by The Acorn or brought from home, will be nutritious and wholesome. This applies to snacks, lunches, and foods for special events such as birthdays, Valentine's Day, Halloween, piñata goodies, field trip snacks, etc. We ask that you refrain from sending cookies, ice cream or frozen yogurt, cakes, cupcakes, sugared or flavored drinks, or any other sweets. Instead, we like for the children to bring their favorite food or snack, other than dessert. Some ideas might be fruits, cheeses, vegetables, sandwiches, pasta, casseroles, chicken legs, tortillas and beans, pizza, etc.; any food your child especially likes that he/she would like to share with friends at school. Beverages need to be water, 100% juice, or milk. This is a wonderful opportunity to instill the idea that many foods are special, not just sweets. The children get to try many new foods over the year that they might not otherwise. This is a school-wide policy, so please avoid putting your child's teacher in an awkward position by asking about inappropriate food.

Parents count on us to keep this policy a consistent one, continually offering nutritious foods. We appreciate your cooperation in resisting the urge to send a sugary snack. Please consult your child's teacher in advance, to verify the date, time, and your idea for your child's birthday snack, and we appreciate your cooperation in adhering to this policy. This also allows time for substitutions or replacements to be made for children with allergies or other special needs. Your teacher may be able to help you with ideas, or let you know if we've had

four days straight of pizza or muffins. Variety is always appreciated! All snacks will be prepared and served individually.

Food Allergies/ Medical Requirements

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

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

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

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

Classroom

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

- Help students with food allergies read labels of foods provided by others so they can avoid ingesting hidden food allergens.
 - *Teachers will read food labels and supervise snack time.*
- Consider methods (such as assigned cubicles) to prevent cross-contact of food allergens from lunches and snacks stored in the classroom.
 - *Tables and equipment will be cleaned and sanitized after coming into contact with foods.*
 - *If applicable, separate seating may be made available.*
- Consider designated allergy-friendly seating arrangements.
 - *When known allergens are present, a safe space may be provided.*
- Support parents of children with food allergies who wish to provide safe snack items for their child in the event of unexpected circumstances.
 - *The Acorn requests that parents provide a supply of sugar-free, safe snacks that can be offered in place of an unsafe snack.*
- Include information about children with special needs, including those with known food allergies, in instructions to substitute teachers.
 - *Members of staff will be made aware of students with specific food allergies and information sheets with photos of children with allergies and special needs will be kept in the student's classroom snack cupboards.*

** Reducing the Risk of Exposure to Food Allergens
 Recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
 On October 30, 2013, the CDC published national guidelines for food allergy
 management in schools. The recommended practices can be found on p.41-43 of the
 CDC Guidelines.*

Visiting/Observing

Although our normal arrival and departure system is outdoors, we want you to see what is going on inside and be involved in your child's school program. There will be opportunities to volunteer. We can also plan to have you observe without being seen by your child. Please inform the teachers and office when you wish to visit.

After the children have arrived and during class hours, you may enter the building through the main entrance by the office and sign in at the front desk. When you do enter, please make sure to close the door firmly behind you. Do not allow access to any other unfamiliar people as you are entering. There is a video monitor and doorbell located at the entrance-please use the bell anytime.

We are eager to welcome parents and alumni back into the classrooms to read, share special skills and hobbies, and help with activities. These must be scheduled ahead of time. If you do visit any time during the year and you have siblings with you, we appreciate your keeping them under your supervision. The teachers are involved with their classes and are unable to keep an eye on visiting children. This is especially true on the playground where the children's safety is so important. There may be a time when you are waiting on the playground for arrival or dismissal time with a sibling; please be aware that when classes come outside to use this space, it is necessary for you to give them priority when using the equipment and activities. If needed, you may have to leave the playground. Please put any toys away when you are done. And note that the equipment is not intended for use by older children. When classes are not in session, the playground is closed.

Teacher Pre- and Post- Sessions

All teaching teams meet before the children arrive for a pre-session and setup. During that time, we discuss interest areas, small groups, and activities to be offered that day and talk about the most effective ways to present them. After the children are picked up, the staff meets for post-session to discuss how the children

responded to all activities, the gains they are making, and the areas in which we can plan to help each child. We keep written anecdotal records for each child which the teachers update during post-session. And we give our staff feedback so they can constantly improve their teaching techniques. These pre- and post- sessions are extremely important to our program. We will also need more time for hygienic cleaning routines immediately after the children leave; that is why it is important for you to pick up your child punctually.

Parent/Teacher Communication

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

Weekly updates will be available from Playground to parents. Class newsletters are posted every week. The messaging feature can also be utilized for communication.

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

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

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

Tuition Payment

We request that you pay your child’s tuition in full for the year, or by semester, if you are able; it helps the school’s cash flow immensely. **We offer a 2% discount on tuition paid in full for the semester and a 3% discount on tuition paid in full for the academic year.** If this is not possible, you may pay by the month and make arrangements with the office to sign a monthly payment plan. Please mark your calendars with a reminder for your payment. Tuition not received by the 10th of the month will incur an additional \$25 late fee. **The school also reserves the right to terminate a child’s enrollment for nonpayment of tuition.** Should that be necessary,

the family would still owe all tuition and late fees due and would be responsible for paying interest at 12% per annum until it is paid off. If a check is returned with insufficient funds, we will charge a \$30 fee. If a second check is returned, an nsf charge of \$40 will be made, and tuition due must be paid in cash or by credit card.

Please mail your check or drop it off in the office; please do not send it with your child or give it to a teacher. Credit or debit card payments may be made on the website or in the office and are subject to a 3% card transaction fee. Another method of payment would be to set up a recurring check payment with your own online banking establishment. There are no refunds for missed days, whether due to sickness, your own vacation time, or cancellation of school due to some natural disaster (like state or government required closings, illness, flooding, snow, or ice in San Antonio!). Please remember that once paid, enrollment fees, annual fees, and tuition are non-refundable and non-transferable for any reason. If a child drops out, the family is responsible for paying tuition until another child takes his/her place.

Late Pick Up Fees

There is a late fee for lack of punctuality, similar to that charged by other preschools. In general, a late fee of \$15.00 will be charged for the first 10 minutes that a family is late to pick up their child. A fee of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed thereafter. You will receive an immediate invoice for this fee, and it will be added to your next month's tuition bill. If you are late, you can pick up your child from the office.

We hope that everyone will be punctual and that we won't have to use this arrangement. Thanks for your cooperation and understanding!

Photographs, Media, Web site

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

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

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

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

Child Safety

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

Copies of the Texas Minimum Standards and our Licensing Report are available for review in the office. Texas Department of Family and Protective Services: 210-337-3399
Child Abuse Hotline: 1-800-252-5400

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

Parking

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

Parent Participation

The Acorn is a non-profit, tax exempt, educational nursery school offering programs to 150 children from the age of 2 years 9 months old through Kindergarten (age 6). We have one teacher for every five or six children in our classes, which enables us to individualize with the children and ensures a great deal of personal nurturance and enrichment for each child daily.

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

As a non-profit school, we count on parent involvement and support in helping with fundraising efforts as well as other volunteer opportunities that help The Acorn. If you are in a position to make a monetary donation that will be greatly appreciated. We will have opportunities for volunteering and all volunteers are required to complete a release and waiver form.

There are many ways to donate your time and abilities to help, too. We expect each family to participate in any fundraisers we may have. In the classroom, parents can volunteer to be a substitute teacher when the need arises, be a room parent, or help with special classroom or school events. We love having parents share their occupations, hobbies, and special traditions. Please let us know how you would like to help!

Field trips

Field trips allow us to take our learning off campus. There are opportunities in our surroundings for walking field trips or even a drop off and pick up off site, but some of our field trips may require parents to drive. A notice will be sent before each outing to inform you of your child's activity. There will be opportunities to drive and/or chaperone. If you have ideas for meaningful visits, please don't hesitate to share!

Notice of Non-Discrimination

The Acorn - A School for Young Children, Inc., a Texas non-profit corporation, 3501 Broadway, San Antonio, admits students and hires teachers of any race, color, sexual orientation, national and ethnic origin. All are afforded the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students and teachers at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions and hiring policies, and programs.

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