



Parent Handbook

2023-2024

The Berry Patch Parent Handbook 2023-2024 School Year

Main Office Phone Number: 952-836-1577

Berry Patch East

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Edina 55410
BPE Phone: 952-221-9073

Berry Patch West

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BPW Phone: 952-232-9443

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Hours of Operation

Morning Program Mon-Fri, 9:00 am-12:00 pm

Full Day Pre-K Program Mon-Thurs, 9:00am-3:00 pm

**Lunch Bunch Mon-Fri, 12:00-1:00 pm

Huckleberries, Blueberries, & Strawberries

**Afternoon Enrichment Mon-Thurs, 1:00-3:00 pm

Blueberries & Strawberries

**Pre-Registration Only

2023-2024 School Calendar

AUGUST

- T 29 BP West Classroom Visits
W 30 BP East Classroom Visits

SEPTEMBER

- W 6 & Th 7 **First Days of School for Strawberries & Blueberries**
Lunch Bunch & PM Playmates begin (Blueberries & Strawberries)
- M 11 & T 12 **First Days of School for Huckleberries & Raspberries**
**Raspberries 9-11 am schedule*
- M 11 OR T 12 **BPE Parent In-Person Informational Meeting 9:15-10 am**
BPW Parent In-Person Informational Meeting 11:15 am-12 pm
- M 11 **Parent Informational Meeting Live Webinar Option 7:30-8:15 pm**
- M 18 Staff Meeting - No Lunch Bunch
- W 27 **Strawberry Field Trip to Gale Woods Farm**

OCTOBER

- M 2 *Lunch Bunch begins for Huckleberries*
- T 3 & W 4 **Parents & Pastries at BP West, 9-10am**
- T 3 & W 4 *Fall Partnership Begins: Kid Create Art Class*
- T 10 & W 11 **Parents & Pastries at BP East, 9-10am**
- M 9 Staff Meeting - No Lunch Bunch/PM Playmates
- W 18 No School - Staff Development Day
- Th 19 & F 20 No School - MEA Weekend (State School Holiday)
- M 23 & T 24 **Raspberries begin full morning, 9am - 12 pm**

NOVEMBER

- M 13 Staff Meeting - No Lunch Bunch/PMs
- M 20 & T 21 No School - **Fall Parent Teacher Conferences**
- W 22 - F 24 No School - Thanksgiving Break

DECEMBER

- M 4 & T 5 **BPE Christmas Llamas, 9-10 am** *caregivers welcome!*
- W 6 & Th 7 **BPW Christmas Llamas, 9-10 am** *caregivers welcome!*
- M 11 Staff Meeting - No Lunch Bunch/PMs
- T 12 **BPW Christmas Concert, 6 pm**
- Th 14 **BPE Christmas Concert, 6 pm**
- W 20 Last Day of School before Break
- Th 21 - F Jan. 5 No School - Christmas Break

JANUARY

| | |
|------------|--|
| Th 4 & F 5 | No School - Staff Prep Days |
| M 8 | School resumes/Staff Meeting - No Lunch Bunch/PMs |
| M 8 | Current Family Registration Begins for 2024-2025 School Year |
| M 15 | No School - Martin Luther King Jr. Day |
| M 15 | Previous Family Registration Begins for 2024-2025 School Year |
| M 22 | New Family Registration Begins for 2024-2025 School Year |

FEBRUARY

| | |
|------|------------------------------------|
| M 12 | Staff Meeting - No Lunch Bunch/PMs |
| M 19 | No School - Presidents' Day |
| T 20 | No School - Staff Development Day |

MARCH

| | |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| M 11 | Staff Meeting - No Lunch Bunch/PMs |
| M 18-Fri 22 | No School - Spring Vacation |
| M 25 | School Resumes |

APRIL

| | |
|--------------|---|
| M 8 | Staff Meeting - No Lunch Bunch/PMs |
| Th 18 & F 19 | No School - Spring Parent Teacher Conferences |
| M 22 & F 26 | Staff Appreciation Week |

MAY

| | |
|-------|--|
| W 8 | Richardson Nature Center Field Trip |
| M 13 | Staff Celebration - No Lunch Bunch |
| T 14 | BPW Spring Concert |
| Th 16 | BPE Spring Concert |
| W 22 | Last Day of Lunch Bunch/PMs |
| Th 23 | Strawberry Graduation Day (final day for SBs) |
| F 24 | Last Day of School |

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ABOUT THE BERRY PATCH



Our Philosophy and Goals

The primary goal of The Berry Patch is to provide a loving educational environment where each child will be nurtured and stimulated to reach his or her full potential in a values-rich environment. Your child's day will be a combination of free choice as well as teacher-directed activities. He/she will experience group play and individual learning in a warm, caring environment. Children will learn new skills in language development, scientific ideas, creative art, fine and gross motor development, music and rhythm, health and nutrition, listening and readiness while growing socially and emotionally. Your child will spend lots of time outside!

Our philosophy is simple and ambitious. We continually strive to serve our children and families with the highest degree of excellence, creativity, love and joy. We believe the preschool years are the most important time in a child's academic and social development and we share your desire to provide the best possible start for your child. We are dedicated to helping children discover their love of learning while developing the values and social skills required to excel throughout life. To ensure this, our entire program is oriented around the following five core values: LOVE, JOY, RESPECT, CREATIVITY and FUN. We strive to begin each child on the journey of becoming a life-long learner.

The Berry Patch looks to enrich the whole child — mind, body & spirit. The Berry Patch has developed Children Serving Others (CSO), which allows children to learn the importance of reaching out to others in our community and around the world through regular service learning opportunities. Our objective with CSO is to help each child learn to become other-focused rather than self-focused.

It is our desire that each child enrolled at The Berry Patch learns about the heart of God. Values like loving others, serving others and respecting one another are important to us. The Berry Patch is not formally affiliated with any particular branch of the Christian faith and our curriculum does not include specific religious content. We are pleased to welcome children of all faiths to our school.

Curriculum

Our Curriculum is a theme based, holistic approach to learning that follows the Minnesota Early Learning Standards developed by the Minnesota Department of Education. We also reference other nationally accredited curriculums such as Creative Curriculum and Ages and Stages.

We focus on all domains of learning and adapt to each child's developmental level:

Social and Emotional Development: the foundation for all learning

Approaches to Learning: your child's unique approach to learning

Language, Literacy and Communication: gaining proficiency in the spoken and written word

Introduction to Mathematics: logical thinking and understanding patterns, shapes, and numbers

Scientific Thinking: exploring, discovery, and experimenting

Social Systems: self-identity and care for our communities

Creative Arts: exploring and self-expression through creativity

Physical Development: gross and fine motor skill development; self-help skills; wellness through nutrition and physical health

Program Offerings

Raspberries

Our **18-23 month olds** are eager to learn and explore new environments. During this year, your child will grow in the ability to separate, show confidence in the classroom and make new friends.

Huckleberries

Our **two year olds**, children between 24 and 35 months of age, are experiencing an important stage of development; they are beginning to become more independent and inquisitive. During the Huckleberry year, your child will grow in his/her listening, sharing and independence skills.

Blueberries

Our **three year old** students are bursting with excitement and curiosity. This year is a big year for your child as he/she expands his/her knowledge of the alphabet and numbers, communicates his/her thoughts and feelings through writing projects and Show and Tell, as well as developing new friendships.

Strawberries

Our **Pre-K** students are showing more independence and their intelligence is expanding as they learn to communicate successfully and to work well independently and within groups. The Strawberries' portfolios become more comprehensive, as our Pre-K teachers assist the children in developing the skills needed to transition seamlessly into Kindergarten.

Music Class

Our Music Specialist, Kim Lund, will lead our classrooms with the "Music Together" Play Along for Classrooms Curriculum. While your child engages in rich music experiences at school, your whole family will be able to participate with fantastic at-home resources that will be provided by The Berry Patch. Your family will also enjoy our Christmas and Spring Music Concerts!

Spanish Class

Our Huckleberry-Strawberry students will participate in a monthly Spanish class taught by our Spanish Specialist, Zara Guevera. Children will develop a foundation of basic Spanish phrases through music and movement. You will receive a monthly Spanish newsletter letting you know what your child is learning and activities you can do at home. We will also offer Afternoon Spanish Classes for Strawberries, beginning in October.

Library Time

Fundamental to the love of learning is rich exposure to books and reading throughout the early years. We are committed to this in all of our classrooms on a daily basis. Children visit their school library weekly with their classroom teacher to explore and check out their own book!

Parent Education

National speaker and author, Becky Danielson, M.Ed., is on our staff and available to consult with our Berry Patch families for any and all parenting needs. This is included in your tuition! Schedule a meeting with Becky by contacting her directly. You will also receive a monthly Parent and Family Education newsletter with loads of resources pertinent to young families today.

Camp Sizzleberry

Our Summer Sessions is designed to engage children in a variety of stimulating, creative activities with a lot of the morning spent outside. Camp Sizzleberry is offered at both locations to potty-trained children aged three to five.

Child Assessments

Our goal is to create a school that nurtures each child's unique and special gifts and talents. Children's development (intellectual, physical, social, and emotional) is assessed both formally and informally throughout the school year. Assessments take place within the classroom with developmentally-appropriate approaches, where teachers can evaluate children in the natural environment. Ongoing assessment of each child's development allows our staff to work together to individualize learning and adapt teaching strategies as well as to reflect on overall improvements that can be made to our program. All staff receive ongoing training in best practices for observing and documenting your child's development and sharing their assessments with you both formally and informally.

- *Formal Assessments* are shared through individual conferences in the fall and spring. At this time, your child's teacher will share your child's progress in person and through a written assessment of his/her intellectual, physical, and social/ emotional development. Conferences are an opportunity for you to discuss with your child's teacher how she is meeting your child's individual needs.
- *Informal Assessments* are made daily through conversations with the children and observations throughout the day. Teachers and Leadership Staff use observation notebooks to document children's play and learning in order to provide a comprehensive assessment of your child's progress and growth areas.
- Please see the Director if you have questions or concerns about our assessment process and how it can meet the needs of your child.
- If a teacher suspects that a child may have a developmental delay or another special need, this information is communicated to parents in a confidential and supportive manner. Teachers will provide documented accounts for the concern and share next steps for evaluation. Teachers work closely with the Leadership Team during this time to encourage and assist staff and families in obtaining any needed support services.
- Individual student records and student files are kept secure and confidential. They will be made available immediately to Berry Patch staff members working with an individual student, the student's parents or legal guardians, and regulatory authorities.

Referrals: As a childcare provider, we continually monitor the development of all children in our care through ongoing observation and recording. We want the best outcomes for all children. Childcare providers are considered a

primary referral source for early intervention under federal IDEA special education law. **We are required to refer a child in our program who has been identified as having developmental concerns or a risk factor that warrants a referral as soon as possible**, but in no case more than seven days after the identification. While this is a mandate, we want to communicate openly with parents and caregivers about their child and any concerns we have before the referral is made. We can assist the parent with the referral or partner with them in the referral process.

Behavior Guidance

Each child will be provided with a positive model of acceptable behavior. Our behavior policies are designed to meet the developmental level of children attending The Berry Patch.

All classroom teachers introduce and talk about **School Wide Guidelines** which guide classroom communities and the individuals in them toward positive behaviors. These Guidelines are consistent through all ages and spaces at The Berry Patch. Families are given information about the SWG at the beginning of the school year and are encouraged to reinforce these guidelines at home. Being a school where we all operate under the banner of “We are Kind. We are Safe. We solve problems” lays a foundation for positive personal choices and social interactions.

Some examples of unacceptable behavior include: hitting, biting, and using unkind words.

If children are exhibiting ongoing challenging behavior the staff will:

- Work with the Leadership team to work toward meeting the child's needs in positive ways.
- Observe and record the behavior of the child and staff response to the behavior
- Notify parents in the event of continuous unacceptable behavior, and work with parents to take action to improve the child's behavior.

Full Behavior Guidance Policy available upon request.

HELPFUL INFORMATION



Arrival and Pick Up

Parents will check their child in for the day using their Parent Account on Brightwheel. The Berry Patch asks parents to bring children into the school and drop off at his/her class each morning. The purpose of this drop-off and pick-up is to encourage teacher-parent interaction. The Director and/or Site Directors are also available during this time to greet and connect further if necessary.

Tuition and Student Accounts

The Berry Patch is pleased to offer a multi-child discount for families with more than one child enrolled. You will receive a 10% discount off the tuition of each additional child enrolled.

TUITION PAYMENT is to be made by the 10th of each month, October through May. (*September tuition is paid in advance*). Payment is made via the Brightwheel App. **A \$20 charge will be added to tuition for invoices not paid by the 20th of each month.**

Fees for Lunch Bunch and afternoon programming will be added to your monthly statements. Activity fees for the year will be reflected in a one-time activity fee on a September invoice.

If your account becomes overdue, we will work with you to ensure payments are made. If your account is three months overdue and we have not made arrangements, your child will not be able to attend the program.

Daily expenses remain constant throughout the school year. There will be no reduction in tuition for holidays, illness, vacation or other absences.

A non-refundable registration fee is required annually to enroll your child at The Berry Patch. These fees go towards classroom improvements for the school year. Parents are encouraged to complete an Automatic Withdrawal form upon enrollment.

Should you need to withdraw from The Berry Patch during the school year, a 30 day written notice is required.

Health and Immunization Records

The State Department of Human Services requires each student to have a health summary completed, including all immunizations up-to-date and on file, prior to the child's first day of school. **Please inform us of any updates regarding your child's emergency contact information, health records and immunizations as changes occur.** The health records are kept in a confidential file that can only be accessed by Berry Patch staff, child's parents or legal guardians and legal authorities upon request.

- Updates to children's health and immunization records will be requested from parents in January.
- The Berry Patch requires that all new families registering for our program as of September 1, 2017 must be fully immunized.

Illness and Staying Home

If your child is not feeling well, please keep him/her home to rest. **Your child will be exempt from The Berry Patch if he/she has the following conditions or has experienced them within the past 24 hours:**

- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Fever (100 degrees or higher, taken under the arm)
- Sore Throat
- Excessive cold symptoms
- Contagious Diseases (i.e., pink eye, chicken pox, etc.)
- Lice

Please report any contagious disease your child has developed to the school. The Berry Patch will notify all families whose children have been exposed in a confidential manner. It is our desire to maintain a happy, healthy and safe environment while your child is at school.

Illness and Notifications

If a child becomes ill while at school, the child's teacher will notify the parents via Brightwheel and phone. In the event that a parent cannot be reached, the emergency number(s) on the Emergency Form will be called. The child will be removed from the class and will remain with an adult until picked up. The parents of children who may have been exposed to illness will be notified with information on the illness from the Health Department.

In general, a child will be sent home if he/she presents symptoms that need to be evaluated by a doctor, cannot participate, or needs more care than we can provide. Child must be picked up within the hour of being called.

Emergencies

In the case of a fire emergency, children will be evacuated and gathered in parking areas. If weather is a concern, Berry Patch East students will be escorted to St. Peter's Church, 5421 France Ave S, and Berry Patch West students to the Edina Fire Station at 6250 Tracy Avenue.

We will report serious injury, fire, death, animal bite or reportable diseases to the Department of Human Services. The Edina Police Department will be notified in the event of an animal bite.

In the event of a family emergency while your child is in our care, you are asked to call your school location's emergency and attendance line. The Berry Patch East number is 952-221-9073 and Berry West number is 952-232-9443.

Our full Berry Patch Emergency Preparedness Plan is reviewed annually by the Department of Human Resources and is available upon request.

Health Emergency

In the event of a health care emergency, The Berry Patch will do the following:

At the onset of notification that a child tests positive for a serious communicable disease, such as E. Coli, The Berry Patch will report this to the State Health Department and follow their recommendations.

Accident Procedures

In the event of an accident requiring emergency (urgent) attention, the child will be transported to the health care facility designated on the child's Emergency Form. If not specified, Fairview Southdale will be used. In the case of an injury not requiring emergency medical care, the Director or Assistant Director will contact the parents first and the child's physician, if needed.

If a child receives a bump on the body while at school, a cold pack is placed on the bump. If a scrape or cut occurs and is not an emergency situation, the

wound may be washed with soap and water and a bandage or Band-Aid placed on the wound. The child's teacher will let parents know about minor injuries.

Allergies and Medical Conditions

Please inform the school if your child has a special medical condition, needs, or allergies. We will work closely with you and your physician/specialist to create an Individualized Child Care Plan (ICCPP) to be followed at The Berry Patch.

Medications

No medication will be dispensed at The Berry Patch with the exception of individually dosed Benadryl and/or Epi-pen in the case of an allergic reaction or a medical condition that is evaluated case by case (i.e., diabetes, asthma).

Lotions and Sunscreens

With the exception of diaper ointments provided by our families, The Berry Patch does NOT apply lotions such as sunscreen or bug repellents on the children; therefore we encourage you to apply protective lotions or sprays prior to attending school.

Hand Washing

Hand washing is the best defense against spreading germs. We ask that all staff, children and volunteers wash hands thoroughly prior to entering our classrooms. Children should also be taken to the restroom before checking in each morning.

The children will be taught how and when to wash hands. All parents have given permission for the use of Hand Sanitizer when soap and water is not readily available. Hand Sanitizer will be kept out of reach of children and children will be supervised when it is used.

Dress For A Mess!

Please dress your child comfortably for play. Children enjoy themselves more if they do not have to worry about keeping their clothing clean and they will be exposed to many kinds of art media (i.e., finger-painting). Protective shirts/smocks are provided.

Outdoor Play & Gear

Children will experience outside play while attending The Berry Patch, therefore we want to remind you to provide appropriate clothing for the weather. If a child is not prepared for the weather we will make other arrangements for the child during outside play. The Berry Patch will ensure there is an opportunity to play in the shade on hot, sunny days. Strawberry groups may go out in the gentle rain, so please send raincoats and rain boots on those weather days.

Please clearly mark all clothing (including hats, mittens, extra shoes, and boots) with your child's name.

Extreme Weather

Outdoor play will be suspended when weather is unsuitable to the safety of the children. This includes air pollution, high heat and humidity, extreme cold temperatures and wind chill. Please check the temperature by 8:00 a.m. Children will go out as long as the outdoor temperature AND wind chill are above 10° F during the winter months.

Weather Related Closings

The Berry Patch generally follows the Edina Public School District's plan for weather related closings in order to stay consistent with our primary community. Parents will be notified via Brightwheel as early as possible in the event of a school closing. Tuition includes up to **three** school closings per school year. In the event that there are additional school closings, either additional days will be added to the school or families will receive reimbursed for missed days.

Potty Training

Children entering our Raspberry and Huckleberry program are not required to be potty-trained. It is required that children entering our Blueberry and Strawberries are fully potty trained. Our staff is happy to work closely with you as you navigate this process with your child. We define potty-trained as *a child who is wearing underpants (not pull-ups or diapers), is able to communicate when he/she needs to go, and is able to go independently, with support.*

Diapering

All parents of children who are not potty-trained are responsible for providing adequate disposable diapers, wipes and ointments.

For children requiring diapers or pull-ups, parents are asked to provide those diapers and pull-ups that are commercially available and disposable. Staff will check children frequently throughout the morning and change them as soon as a wet or soiled diaper is detected. Clothing that becomes wet or soiled will immediately be changed, placed in a plastic bag and sent home that day for laundering.

Visitors

Visitors to The Berry Patch must call the school cell phone to be admitted to our spaces and will receive a visitor badge upon arrival.

You are welcome to schedule a visit to see your child's classroom at any time.

Animals visiting school (for a specific reason related to the program, such as the MN Zoo Mobile) must be inoculated. Parents will be notified of any visiting animals (including pets.)

Nap and Rest Policy

All Berry Patch children may rest as needed. Each classroom has a quiet reading area that is a cozy place to take a break. Children who stay for afternoon programming (after Lunch Bunch) will have the opportunity to rest. Resting children will not be required to remain on their mat for more than 30 minutes.

Resting mats will be placed on the floor and in such a way that there is clear space between mats for children and adults. Mats will not be stacked when in use. Resting children will have a quiet area to rest that is physically separated from children who are engaged in an activity that would disrupt the resting child. All children will be supervised by sight and sound at all times while resting by a teacher who is in the room with them.

Children who are resting will keep their footwear on in case of an emergency requiring evacuation. Families supply any blankets or stuffed animals desired for rest time and will take them home daily.

Berry Patch staff will follow the surface sanitization Clean-Rinse-Sanitize procedure, as directed by our licensed Health Consultant, after the use of mats for resting.

Parking Lot Safety

In keeping with our desire to prioritize safety for our students at all times, we ask that you use extreme caution while entering, parking, and exiting the lots. Please teach your child to hold your hand while walking to and from your car. As a reminder: no young children should be left alone in a car while bringing your Berry Patch student to their classroom.

Snack Time and Lunch Bunch

The Berry Patch is committed to providing a healthy snack each day. In accordance with our licensing guidelines, we provide a snack with a minimum of two food groups represented and expiration dates of foods served are checked regularly. We do not offer foods that are choking hazards such as hot dogs, popcorn, raw peas, or hard pretzels. If teachers are serving foods at snack time that need cutting, they cut into pieces no larger than 1/2 inch squares.

SNACK TIME

The Berry Patch will provide a snack with water, a grain, and a fruit for morning and afternoon snack (for children staying for full-day class or afternoon enrichment classes. A Safe-Snack list will be given to families at the beginning of the school year if you would like to bring snacks for your child's class.

LUNCH BUNCH

For children registered for Lunch Bunch, The Berry Patch follows and strongly encourages families to follow USDA requirements for healthy lunches. Please visit the USDA Website for a list of recommendations and serving sizes. In compliance with licensing regulations, **The Berry Patch IS REQUIRED to supplement the following if NOT provided by the family: 1% milk, a serving of protein, grain, vegetable AND fruit.**

Please remember to:

- Label the **outside** of your child's lunchbox with first **and** last names.
- Provide a lunch with either non-perishable food items OR include an ice pack or thermos for perishables.
- Be sure all foods are cut in appropriate size pieces for your small child to prevent choking (for example, all grapes and olives should be cut in half or smaller).

Both snack time and Lunch Bunch are social opportunities where good manners and interesting conversation are encouraged.

Nut-Sensitive School

If your child has special food requirements or restrictions, please notify a teacher promptly. Due to food allergies, **we require that all snacks be store-bought and nut-free. Please carefully read labels to avoid nut products for all snack AND lunchbox items. We do not allow nuts or products manufactured with nuts at school.**

Birthday Celebrations

It is fun to bring a special treat for your child's birthday. **Please consider items other than sweet treats to share with your class.** One fun idea is to donate a new library book for The Berry Patch Library. If a food treat is important to your child, we request healthy, store-bought snacks. We cannot serve cake, cupcakes, candy or bakery items. The sugary treats can be a distraction to the classroom.

Transportation

Transportation to and from school is the responsibility of the child's parents. Each child must be brought to the child's classroom and picked up by an authorized adult. **All persons authorized to pick up your child must be on your child's Brightwheel profile.** For your safety and that of your children, you are asked to supervise all of your children closely as you walk in the parking lot and enter the classroom area.

Non-Smoking Space

The Berry Patch is smoke free; therefore, please do NOT smoke in or on the grounds of the school.

COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION



Parent/School Communication

The Parent-Teacher/Leadership Team relationship is foundational to us at The Berry Patch. We are committed to collaborating with families to make sure all concerns are addressed, progress is celebrated, and joys are shared.

Parents are asked to complete the "Let's Get Acquainted" section of our online Student Information Form before the school year begins. This provides teachers with valuable information about the children. This Information is used throughout the year as teachers plan activities and prepare for conferences.

Written parental permission will be obtained before any occasion of research, public relations activity or additional professional observation or request for student information.

Brightwheel

Brightwheel is the primary tool for communication with your child's classroom teacher, all-school alerts and documents, as well as personal communication with administration. You will receive message updates about your child's day/week—Raspberries & Huckleberries daily, Blueberries & Strawberries weekly. Email will also be used for some communication including monthly classroom newsletters.

Please familiarize yourself with the app by downloading it on your smartphone. Let us know if you would like us to send the **PARENT SUPPORT FOR BRIGHTWHEEL DOCUMENT**. ***Be sure to allow notifications so that you receive communication and alerts for your child.*

We ask that you reach out to your child's teacher directly via Brightwheel regarding any concerns. **Teachers have been instructed to not discuss concerns with parents at drop off or pick up to respect the confidentiality of this communication.** Teachers will reach out to you personally if there are concerns that need to be addressed.

Staff Personal Cell Phone

Teachers are not expected to use their personal cell phone number for Berry Patch parent communication. Berry Patch teachers will be able to check messages on Brightwheel between 8:30am-8:55am and again after their work day until 4:00pm. All communication received after 4:00 pm will be responded to the following day.

School News

A monthly All-School Newsletter from the Director will be sent to families via email to inform families of school-wide events and to encourage parents as

they care for their young children. This email will include links to our Parent Education Newsletter, Spanish Newsletter, and Music Newsletter.

Your family will get acquainted with your child's teacher and classroom in person on our Classroom Visits days prior to the first day of school.

Parent Feedback

Our Annual Year-End Survey is an opportunity for parents to share feedback on their Berry Patch experience for that school year. Findings from the survey are used to guide improvements to program policies, procedures and activities. Findings are available upon request.

LICENSE AND POLICIES



License and Certifications

The Berry Patch is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services - Division of Licensing in St. Paul, MN (651-431-6500). Parents are assured that high standards have been met regarding program, equipment, space and staff. Berry Patch West is licensed to accommodate 74 children ages 3-5 and 24 children ages 18-35 months each day. Berry Patch East is licensed to accommodate 130 children ages 3-5 and 40 children ages 18-35 months each day.

All staff members are certified in Pediatric First Aid/CPR, and maintain this certification by renewing every 2 years as required by the Department of Human Services Licensing Division.

Insurance

The Berry Patch carries Commercial General Liability Insurance.

Health and Safety Policy

We will continue to seek the guidance of community health resource people to maintain current health policies and will have our policies reviewed yearly by a Health Consultant. The Berry Patch will cooperate with state and local government disaster planning agencies working to prepare for or react to emergencies presented by a pandemic outbreak.

Grievance Procedure

All parents are encouraged to openly communicate with the staff. If a parent has a difficulty or difference with a staff member, he or she is to contact the Director immediately. The Director will promptly counsel with the teacher and develop a plan for correcting the situation. The parent will be notified of the action plan within 24 hours. If the situation is not resolved, a parent meeting will be called to work toward a solution.

The primary language spoken by children and parents at The Berry Patch is English, however, The Berry Patch will secure a person to interpret conversation in native language if deemed necessary.

DHS Maltreatment of Minors Mandated Reporting Policy

What to report. Maltreatment includes egregious harm, neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, substantial child endangerment, threatened injury, and mental injury. For definitions refer to Minnesota Statutes, section 260E.03. Maltreatment must be reported if you have witnessed or have reason to believe that a child is being or has been maltreated within the last three years.

Who must report. If you work in a licensed facility, you are a “mandated reporter” and are legally required (mandated) to report maltreatment. You cannot shift the responsibility of reporting to your supervisor or to anyone else at your licensed facility. In addition, people who are not mandated reporters may voluntarily report maltreatment.

Minnesota State Law requires that all cases of suspected child abuse and/or neglect must be reported by the school staff.

Where to report. If you know or suspect that a child is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.

Reports concerning suspected maltreatment of children, or other violations of Minnesota Statutes or Rules, in facilities licensed by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, should be made to the Licensing Division's Central Intake line at 651-431-6600.

Incidents of suspected maltreatment of children occurring within a family, in the community, at a family child care program, or in a child foster care home,

should be reported to the local county social services agency or local law enforcement.

When to report. Mandated reporters must make a report to one of the agencies listed above immediately (as soon as possible but no longer than 24 hours). Information to report

A report to any of the above agencies should contain enough information to identify the child involved, any persons responsible for the maltreatment (if known), and the nature and extent of the maltreatment and/or possible licensing violations. For reports concerning suspected maltreatment occurring within a licensed facility, the report should include any actions taken by the facility in response to the incident.

Failure to report. A mandated reporter who knows or has reason to believe a child is or has been maltreated and fails to report is guilty of a misdemeanor. In addition, a mandated reporter who fails to report serious or recurring maltreatment may be disqualified from a position allowing direct contact with, or access to, persons receiving services from programs, organizations, and/or agencies that are required to have individuals complete a background study by the Department of Human Services as listed in Minnesota Statutes, section 245C.03.

Retaliation prohibited. An employer of any mandated reporter is prohibited from retaliating against (getting back at): an employee for making a report in good faith; or a child who is the subject of the report. If an employer retaliates against an employee, the employer may be liable for damages and/or penalties.

Staff training. The license holder must train all mandated reporters on their reporting responsibilities, according to the training requirements in the statutes and rules governing the licensed program. The license holder must document the provision of this training in individual personnel records, monitor implementation by staff, and ensure that the policy is readily accessible to staff, as specified under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 14.

Provide policy to parents. For licensed child care centers, the mandated reporting policy must be provided to parents of all children at the time of enrollment and must be available upon request. The definitions section (p. 3-6) is optional to provide to parents.

Internal review. When the facility has reason to know that an internal or external report of alleged or suspected maltreatment has been made, the Director must complete an internal review within 30 calendar days and take corrective action, if necessary, to protect the health and safety of children in care. The internal review must include an evaluation of whether: related policies and procedures were followed; the policies and procedures were adequate; there is a need for additional staff training; the reported event is similar to past events with the children or the services involved; and there is a need for corrective action by the license holder to protect the health and safety of children in care. If the Director is involved in the alleged or suspected maltreatment, The Director of Finance will be responsible for completing the internal review.

Documentation of internal review. The facility must document completion of the internal review and make internal reviews accessible to the commissioner immediately upon the commissioner's request. Corrective action plan Based on the results of the internal review, the license holder must develop, document, and implement a corrective action plan to correct any current lapses and prevent future lapses in performance by individuals or the license holder.

The mandated reporting policy is intended to protect the rights of both the child and the accused staff member.