



The Bridge of Georgia
Center for Ability Development

**Family Handbook of
Policies and Procedures
The Bridge of Georgia School
2021-2022**

Revised 3/2/21



Dear Bridge Family,

It is with great joy I welcome you to The Bridge of Georgia for the 2020-2021 school year. Know that you are bringing your child to a place where they will be valued and loved and taught in a way that helps them achieve their very best. It is our goal to "begin with the end in mind" so that we might send students out into their communities prepared for rich and meaningful lives.

As we begin our eighth school year, we have an excitement that I hope is contagious. Opening our doors to teach students with various diagnoses in a different way was a little overwhelming that first year. We wanted to do it well. We were compelled to see these students in a way that valued the gifts they bring, rather than accentuating the challenges they deal with daily. This time, we enter the academic year with a history of seeing children succeed at a higher level. We have seen behavior reduced, language acquired, and friendships formed. We have seen children whose parent were led to believe that they couldn't (fill in the blank) find that they, indeed, can.

Although we are entering a very different kind of school year we are eager to partner with you to help our students continue to learn and to grow while navigating a world that is very different than it was this time last year.

I hope that you will feel the sense of family we have at The Bridge. I hope your child will find a second home here... a place where they can know they are loved and deeply valued, as are you. It is my desire that you find a continuum of services and support that reaches outside these doors and into your home as we work together for your child.

When we opened our doors in 2013 our tagline was, "Exciting things are happening here" and they still are. I believe the very best is yet to come! Are you ready?

Blessings,

Tamila Burt

Executive Director

tami@thebridgeofgeorgia.org



Dear TBOG Family,

As this school year begins, I am filled with excitement and anticipation at what this year will hold for each of us. Once again, we have been blessed with an amazing staff that embodies the desire to provide an atmosphere of "family" for our students. I feel certain your child will feel the love and acceptance early on.

My goal as your Academy Administrator is to minister to the entire family, and not just the precious one we welcome in our building every morning. Please know I am here for you and my office is always open should you have a need.

I am both humbled and honored that you are trusting The Bridge of Georgia with your greatest blessing.

Sincerely,

Patty Wilkins

Academy Administrator

**The Bridge of Georgia School
Family Handbook
2021-2022**

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The Bridge of Georgia Guiding Statements

Our Purpose

The purpose of the Academy is to provide optimal learning at every level in an environment that fosters community amongst students at all ability levels. Our purpose is to teach in the way that our students learn so that, in turn they may reach their highest possible level of success.

Our Mission

Knowing that every individual is created with a purpose, we seek to help students fulfill their purpose by providing an inclusive environment to develop their abilities through academics, therapies, social and life skills, and vocational training to ultimately find a meaningful place within their community.

Our Vision

Our vision is to see children learning in an environment that fosters community and teaches all individuals to see the very best in each other. It is our vision that acceptance will carry over into the community as children grow up and learn job skills and are looking for their place in their community. It is our vision to find solutions to the barriers that reduce the opportunity for these individuals to be accepted and valued in their communities.

Our Philosophy

The philosophy of The Bridge of Georgia, simply stated, is to believe in the value of each child and to support them to be as successful as they can be. We believe that hope is powerful and that when the whole family is supported we can generate a level of hope that wasn't possible without that support. We believe that children learn best in an environment that is most like the greater community with children with all different strengths and challenges learning and developing together. We strive to create an environment that is conducive to children being challenged in the areas of strength while being supported in the areas that are difficult for them.

Ultimately, we believe every individual has been created with a purpose and plan for their life. We seek to help them find their purpose and support them in building a plan to carry it out.

Governed by the Board of Directors

The Bridge of Georgia Board of Directors, along with administration is responsible for establishing the operational and personnel policies and the promotion of the Center.

School Information

School Address: 109 Blaine Street
Monroe, GA 30655

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 542
Monroe, GA 30655

Academy Administrator: Patty Wilkins

Phone: 770-266-3390

For Billing Questions: Debbie Adams

For ABA billing questions: Crysti Blaylock

School Hours: 8:15 – 3:30

***We begin accepting students at 8:00am**

***Students are tardy at 8:30am**

***Please bring notes for absences to be excused**

Admissions Policies

Policy Interpretation

All written policies and areas of concern either specifically or not specifically covered in the Family Handbook are subject to clarification and/or change by the school leadership. Age requirements must be met by September 1. The Admissions Committee has the final authority for acceptance and class placement. **Placement will be based on our ability to meet your child's needs.**

Notice of Non-Discriminatory Policy

The Bridge of Georgia admits students of any race, color, nationality, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, nationality, or ethnic origin in administration of its educational practices or admissions policies.

Admissions Standards

The Bridge of Georgia reserves the right to deny entrance to any student if, in the opinion of the Admissions Committee, it is in the best interest of the school and/or the student because the child is not determined to be a good fit for our learning environment.

Pre-Enrollment Requirements

- Completed application submitted to the school.
- The non-refundable application fee must be paid for each student at time of application unless covered by a scholarship or grant.
- An admissions assessment and visit with a class.

Enrollment Requirements

- A non-refundable assessment fee is due at time of assessment. Student will be assessed in math and reading before starting school when possible. We will attempt to set up a visit to a classroom for student as well.
- Transcripts and student records including IEP's and supporting documents are required for students transferring into The Bridge of Georgia.
- A current Certificate of Immunization (Form 3231) is required prior to the student's first day of class. It is Georgia law that all children in public and private school have immunizations before attending. Medical waivers regarding immunizations must be notarized and on file before attending.
- A copy of your child's birth certificate is required.
- A financial contract with The Bridge of Georgia regarding payment of tuition and fees will be created before the first day of school for private pay students, and after the first SB-10 installment for SB-10 students.

Re-enrollment Procedures

Re-enrollment students must be in compliance with all requirements for enrollment. Attendance at The Bridge of Georgia is a privilege. The school reserves the right to refuse re-enrollment to any student or students of families who do not support the purpose, objectives, standards, policies, rules, and regulations of the school. In addition, no family may be re-admitted unless all financial obligations have been met from the previous school year. Any student with excessive unexcused absences and/or tardies will have their file reviewed by The Board in order to determine if their spot should be surrendered to another student who is able to access the learning environment more consistently.

Withdrawals and Dismissals

When accepted as a student at The Bridge of Georgia, the agreement that is entered into between the school and the family is expected to be a yearly commitment. The Bridge of Georgia has made financial commitments to faculty and staff in order to assist with the education of students enrolled. However, if parents wish to withdraw their child, they should formally do so through the school's administration office. This request must be made on the official Withdrawal Request Form. **Parents are responsible for tuition payments for 30 days after written notice is received and acknowledged from The Bridge of Georgia administration.** If 30 days written notice is NOT received, parents agree to be fully liable for the annual tuition and any other fees for services rendered (including but not limited to late payment fees.)

Report cards and transcripts are released to students, parents, or other schools only when the student's account is current.

Student Probation

All students to The Bridge of Georgia are accepted on academic and behavioral probation for the first 9 weeks. Students will undergo an assessment period in which the staff may make recommendations for more support. This can include behavioral or academic support. All academic testing will be completed before recommendations are made. If recommendations are made for more support, parents will be given the opportunity to go over results with teachers and administrators. Additional support will be at the expense of the family. 1:1 support persons must be selected, trained and employed by The Bridge of Georgia.

Class and Grade Placement

The classes at The Bridge of Georgia are fully included classrooms. Our curriculum is designed to meet the needs of each individual learner at their ability level. You may find that students in your child's class are performing above or below their same-age peers. Because of this, your child will have an exciting opportunity to learn and grow in an environment that is very much like the real world, where individuals have varying abilities and backgrounds. In addition, students will be divided into same-level groups for learning in core academic areas.

Re-evaluation of Placement

Each situation will be evaluated individually. If a child is admitted, the administration reserves the right to re-evaluate that placement within the first 9 weeks. The teacher will carefully evaluate and observe students during this time. If a child seems to be improperly placed, the teacher will request conference to discuss the situation immediately.

Kindergarten Entrance

In order for a student to enter Kindergarten, The Bridge of Georgia requires that a child be 6 or older by September 1 of the school year the child is entering.

Class Size and Make-Up

All classes are limited to 12 students. The typical class has 8-10 students. Each class has at least one teacher and one assistant. Be assured that additional assistants are hired as class size increases and the need for additional support is noted. In addition, we often have interns from The University of Georgia who work alongside our teachers. It is our goal to have four students per adult working in the classroom. If your child requires 1:1 support in the classroom, you may choose a tuition level that meets these needs.

Issuing of Transcripts and Right of Privacy

The Bridge of Georgia maintains cumulative records for each child, which are kept on file in the main office. A pupil's records are available to parents or legal guardians by placing a written request with the office. They will be made available within two full business days. The original records will be copied and sent to parents or guardians or other schools upon written request if the student's tuition and fees have been paid. If a child is withdrawn for any reason, all tuition and fees must be paid in full before any transcripts or records will be released.

Right of Privacy

Only the administration staff, the child's teachers, or the child's therapists may see the child's records without written permission of the child's parent or legal guardian. Records may not be removed from the school office.

Financial Policies

Payment Procedures

A monthly invoice will be emailed to parents prior to the first day of each month stating monthly tuition and any outstanding balances on your child's account. Please return payment by the 5th of each month to our front desk. **Please do not send tuition checks in your child's book bag.**

Payments can be made online by debit, credit card or check.

Questions or concerns regarding monthly invoices should be emailed to Debbie Adams, at dadams@thebridgeofgeorgia.org. Debbie will respond to questions within 48 hours. Debbie can also be reached by phone at 770-266-3390.

Late Payment Fee

This \$40 fee will be charged per student/per month if the appropriate tuition payment is not received by the 5th of the month.

Delinquent Accounts

The Bridge of Georgia reserves the right to take appropriate action in dealing with delinquent accounts. Such actions may include, but are not limited to, efforts to collect any past due amounts.

Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Students

Scholarship reimbursements for tuition and fees are received by The Bridge of Georgia from the state. These payments are scheduled quarterly at the discretion of the state. When the check is received, The Bridge of Georgia will notify the parent or guardian and he/she must come to the school office and endorse the check within 30 business days. This will enable The Bridge of Georgia to deposit the check towards tuition reimbursement as required by the Georgia Department of Education. Upon endorsing a check to The Bridge of Georgia, the parent(s) and the school validate that the payment amount is correct. Any discrepancies thereafter shall be resolved between the parent(s) and The Bridge of Georgia.

If the check is not endorsed within the required time frame, parents/guardians become **personally liable for the entire tuition amount**. Parent(s) cannot remove a scholarship check from a school's premises and cannot refuse to endorse a check; either or both could result in forfeiture of the scholarship. Parent(s) will then remain responsible for payment of any tuition and/or fees owed to The Bridge of Georgia. If the scholarship amount does not cover all tuition and fees due, parents agree to make 10 monthly payments of the balance due beginning August 2021 and ending May 2022.

Academic Policies

Curriculum

At The Bridge of Georgia School, we choose a curriculum that allows students of different ability levels to work and reach their full academic and social potential. We have chosen Edmentum as our primary curriculum school-wide at The Bridge of Georgia. Exact path is a part of this curriculum that sets each learner on an individual learning path. Plato Courseware is aligned for high school credits and offers a GED and job readiness curriculum.

Reading- Reading A-Z supplements our instruction by providing students with additional leveled PreK-6th grade resources that match their ability level. This web-based curriculum provides foundational and key reading skills including letter formation, phonological awareness, high-frequency word practice, fluency building activities, and key skills to build reading comprehension for students at every level. This curriculum aligns with Georgia language and reading standards.

Progress Reporting/Report Cards

Academy Grading/Progress Reports

Progress Reports will be distributed to parents at the end of each quarter showing progress or level of achievement in the below content areas. Report cards are provided to parents at the end of each semester to indicate their child's progress or level of achievement in the below content areas.

- Language Arts/Literacy
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Social/Life Skills
- GAPP Goals

Students in each class will be graded using the same standards. Report cards may reflect different levels of accommodations and support. This allows a teacher to communicate accurately a student's progress towards meeting content standards.

Some students may receive a modified report card based on individualized instruction or goals. Modifications in grading are outlined in individual student GAPPs.

GAPP meetings and/or parent-teacher conferences will be offered in October and March. Please see the school calendar for dates. Goals will be agreed on and modifications in grading will be discussed at this time. Person Centered Planning meetings will also be scheduled at the teacher and parents scheduling for all upper school students age 14 and above.

Growth and Performance Plans (GAPPs)

Growth and performance plans will be maintained on each student at The Bridge of Georgia. Goals will be determined or continued at the October conference each school year. These goals could be a combination of academic, social, vocational, and life skill goals. GAPPs help us to begin with the end in mind.

Beginning and End of Year Assessments

All students at The Bridge of Georgia will be assessed at the beginning of the school year (or upon enrollment) and the end of the school year. Results from these assessments will be sent home to parents at the end of the school year.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held twice a year in October and March. Teachers will review or create student Growth and Performance Plans (GAPPs) with parents at this time)

Person-Centered Planning Meetings

During the first grading period, students who are age 14 and above may participate in a person-centered planning meeting. You may invite stakeholders in your child's life and their TBOG team will also participate. This opportunity to hear your student's hopes and dreams for the future and helps us all determine how to support them in their endeavors.

Health Policies

Employees are instructed in the universal precautions and procedures for general hygiene and are required to follow them.

We require the State Health Immunization Form 3231. An updated certificate of immunization is required each time immunization is issued. Students in Preschool and in the Academy Classes (K -12th grade) should have Form 3231 on file in the school office. Exemptions to the Immunization Policy may be submitted to the Board through Debbie Adams.

Illness

Students are not allowed to attend school with any contagious symptom such as, but not limited to, the following:

- Fever of 100.1 or more **(A student sent home with a fever, diarrhea or vomiting or other contagious illnesses must be free of symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school.)**
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Any symptom of infectious childhood diseases
- Severe coughing
- Sore throat
- Pink eye or other eye infections
- Open lesions
- Undiagnosed rash
- Symptoms of or exposure to COVID-19

Please note that a child with excessively snotty nose, cough or diarrhea may be sent home, even if a contagious illness is not confirmed, if necessary to create a healthy environment for the whole class.

Communicable Diseases:

The office must be notified if a child is diagnosed as having any of the following communicable diseases:

Campylobacter	Chickenpox	Common cold	Conjunctivitis
Diphtheria	Strep throat	Hepatitis A	Herpes Simplex I
Impetigo	Influenza	Lice	Measles
Meningococcal	Salmonella	Ringworm	Rotavirus
Viral Gastroenteritis	Scabies	Shigellosis	Coronavirus

Students with these diagnoses may return to school after being released by a physician.

Emergency Notification Procedure

A parent is notified immediately of any illness or injury requiring professional medical attention. In the event a parent cannot be contacted, an emergency contact person will be notified. If none of these are available, the child's physician may be contacted. If an illness or injury requires immediate professional medical attention, 911 will be called. Children are transported to the hospital listed on the registration card or the nearest hospital. Parents will be notified by the school office if a student is exposed to a confirmed noticeable communicable disease (ex: chicken pox), an injury occurs while at school, or other emergencies occur (such as fire, physical plant problems or severe weather).

Non-Emergency Notification

- A parent is notified upon arrival if a student has become moderately ill or has an injury which does not warrant professional medical attention.
- When symptoms of illness occur during the day, a child is moved to a supervised area away from other children and provided the necessary attention until leaving the school or returning to the class.
- If a student remains in the office for more than three hours, they will be considered absent for the entire school day.
- Parents will be contacted if the staff notices an adverse reaction to medication approved by the parent for the school to administer.

Incident Report Form

Incident Report Forms are completed by the teacher or supervising adult when an accident or injury occurs. Depending on the nature and/or magnitude of the injury, a parent signature may be required when the child is picked up.

Medications

When it is imperative for medications to be taken at school, the parent/guardian must give complete and detailed instructions to the dispensing of medication(s). All medications brought on to school grounds must be checked in to the school office. The student will be taken to the school clinic to authorized personnel assigned for medication dispensing. The Bridge of Georgia personnel will not distribute narcotic medication of any kind. Under no circumstances should any student have medication of any type on his or her person including book bags.

IMPORTANT: All medications must come to and be dispensed through the school clinic. Verbal authorization is not sufficient; we must have current paperwork and medication in the school clinic.

- **Over-the-counter Medications** - Only cases in which the student absolutely needs over-the-counter medication to attend school should the parent send over-the-counter medication to school. The parent must complete the Authorization for Medication Form which includes student's first and last names, grade, name of medication, date, dose, time to be given, and reason for taking medication. Medication must be received at the school office in the original child-proof container. Medication received in any other manner than as specified above will not be administered to your child. If over-the-counter medication is to be administered on a long-term basis or on an on-request basis, you must provide the school with a doctor's statement.
- **Prescription Medications** - If prescription medication must be taken at school, the parent/guardian must complete the Authorization for Medication Form. For long-term prescription medications, this form must be updated yearly. Prescriptions must be in the original child-proof prescription container.
- **All medications** not retrieved by the parents/guardians by the last day of school will be disposed of in accordance with State Pharmacy Regulations.
- **Allergies/Medical Conditions/Food Needs** - If your child has allergies, medical conditions, or special food needs please make us aware of these by including this information on our *Emergency and Medical Contacts Form*. It is the parent's responsibility to inform The Bridge of Georgia staff of any allergies or special health considerations.
- **CBD** - At this time we are not permitted to administer CBD to students in any form. While we know some families consider this a vital part of their child's medical plan, we are not permitted to administer it under GA law. This will have to be administered at home.

Safety and Security Policies

All persons, parents, and visitors MUST check in at the front office to obtain a visitor pass upon entering the building. This is for the protection and security of all the children.

Emergency plans have been developed and are available for parent review.

In order for The Bridge of Georgia staff to give the students our undivided attention from the moment they enter the classroom and to provide safety during morning drop-off, parents are required to use carpool instead of entering the building. If you need to speak with your child's teacher, please set up a conference time by emailing your child's teacher. 1st week walking down to class acceptable, no more after 1st week.

A STUDENT MAY ONLY BE RELEASED TO AN AUTHORIZED PERSON.

CAR TAGS ARE PART OF OUR SECURITY PROCEDURES. You will be given a car tag to use during afternoon carpool. This should be displayed in the front window of your car.

Written permission must be sent that morning if there is any change from the usual authorized person to pick up your child. All names of anyone who is authorized to pick up your child must be listed on the authorized pick-up section of the Emergency and Medical Contact Form. In case of an emergency, please call the school office with the name of the person to pick up your child. They will need a picture ID which will be photocopied for security reasons. You may update the names of those listed on your Authorized Pick-Up List at any time by visiting the front office.

In the rare case of an extreme emergency, a parent may change the authorized pick-up via telephone with the proper identification and by following specific office requirements. This will only be used in case of extreme emergency.

Parental Access

The Bridge of Georgia welcomes parents to be an active part of their child's education. To ensure the safety of our children, we ask you to come directly to the front desk upon entering the building to obtain a VISITOR PASS and sign in. Parents and visitors are not allowed in the classrooms prior to checking in at the office. While we appreciate our parent volunteers, it is imperative that parents do not interfere with classroom instruction. We reserve the right, during times of community-wide spread of illness, to limit all access to the building by anyone other than staff and students.

Communication with Students

Lunches, homework, book bags, and other items that may need to be delivered to your child should be left at the front desk. If you need to send a message to your child during school, please call the office, and the message will be delivered. We do not call students to the phone except in the case of an emergency. A message may be given to a student to call a parent during a convenient break (i.e., lunch). Students are not allowed to use cell phones during the school day. Therefore, any messages or calls should be directed to the school office. Cell phones brought to school will be placed in a secure location in the front office.

Child Abuse Policy

The state of Georgia requires The Bridge of Georgia's staff and volunteers to be mandated reporters and to report allegations of suspected child abuse to the Department of Family and Children Services (DFACS) when there is cause to suspect that physical or emotional abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation, inadequate supervision, or other forms of abuse have occurred. While The Bridge of Georgia is expected to communicate with parents the well-being of their child, the administration is placed between the parent and the state, acting on behalf of the child and in accordance with state law. The Bridge of Georgia may not always contact parents in advance of making a report to DFACS. Reports made by a Bridge of Georgia mandated reporter are in the best interest of the child. The Bridge of Georgia may also undertake an inquiry of school personnel prior to making a report to determine whether or not there are sufficient grounds to require reporting.

Emergency Evacuation

In case an emergency situation requires The Bridge of Georgia to evacuate our facility, parents will be notified immediately and where to pick up at an evacuation location. The staff will require a parent/guardian to present their security car tag to the classroom teacher in order for their child to be released.

Weather Closing

In the case of inclement weather, we will alert families through the listings on CBS, ABC, NBC, and FOX. Please watch for The Bridge of Georgia on these stations. We will also post on our website and Facebook page. Safety is always our first priority. If The Bridge of Georgia does not close and you live in a county that has dangerous road conditions, please keep your child home and be safe. We will offer cyber learning as an option.

In Event of a Facilities Problem (Loss of Water, Heat, Electricity)

In the event of a facilities problem (the loss of water, heat or electricity) the administration will assess the situation and verify the severity of the issue. If the situation cannot be repaired quickly, parents will be contacted via email or telephone to come and pick up their children in a typical carpool manner. If parents are unable to come, students will be moved to a safe location until parents can come. Students will be evacuated to wait until he/she can be picked up by a notified parent or the all-clear is given to return to the school. Parents must use their carpool security tags for pick-up. The evacuation point will be communicated to parents via text or email at the time of an evacuation.

Weapon Policy

Ensuring the safety of our students and staff no weapons will be allowed on campus or at any off campus event. Possessing a firearm, destructive device, a firearm muffler or firearm silencer, knife, or a pneumatic gun on school property or at a school-sponsored activity is grounds for expulsion.

Dress Code Policy

Dress Code Philosophy

The dress of a student at The Bridge of Georgia should show respect for personal appearance, the school, and the learning process. The way students dress strongly influences their behavior, self-image, and the effort they exert in school. It is our desire to encourage students in developing an attitude about their appearance which shows a high degree of self-respect and self-worth.

- Because children learn through engaging with their environment, we ask that students dress comfortably in clean clothing that is appropriate for the weather.
- T-shirts should not have any offensive print or pictures on them.
- Shorts should be worn under dresses.
- Appropriate footwear must be worn to reduce the opportunity for injury on the playground and when doing gross motor activities.
- No hats may be worn in the building without permission from the classroom teacher.
- Shoes have to remain on at all times.
- Athletic sandals, flip flops, and slippers may not be worn on P.E. day.
- All girls' apparel must be worn modestly, not too tight and not too low.
- Midriffs must be covered.
- Tank top straps must be no less than 2 adult fingers wide.
- Shorts must be worn modestly, not too tight or too short.

***All students need a weather appropriate change of clothing to be kept on our campus during the school year.**

- **If your child needs additional personal hygiene products (such as pull-ups or feminine hygiene items) please provide plenty to kept on site in a discreet location.**

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be closely monitored and enrollment must be reported to the local school system for which your child is zoned. Each student is required to bring a note following each absence. There is a **20-day absentee limit** for the school year. Parents will be given a written notice when absences reach 10 and 15 days. All students missing 20 days or more in a school year will be forwarded to the Board of Directors for possible retention. For this reason, it is important that you are diligent about sending doctor excuses throughout the year.

Authorized Absences

The state of Georgia accepted reasons for a student to be considered excused from a school absence or tardy include:

- Personal illness which jeopardizes personal health or health of others
- Doctor/Dentist/Therapy/Other Healthcare Professional
- Serious Illness or death in immediate family
- Religious Holiday
- Voter registration (18 years or older) or voting
- Conditions rendering school attendance impossible or hazardous to student's health or safety
- Tests and physical exams for military service including National Guard • A student misses school days to spend time with active duty combat-zoned parent(s) who are about to leave for overseas deployment or who are between military deployments.

Written notification must be received from a parent or guardian to authorize an absence. Please send in the Student Absence/Tardy Excuse Note along with any other documentation such as a doctor's excuse to be turned in to the front office when your child returns to school. Please notify the School Administrator if your child will be absent for an extended time period (more than 1 week) for any reason.

Unauthorized Absences

An absence is considered unauthorized when written notification from the parent has not been received by The Bridge of Georgia.

Makeup Work

- Teachers will maintain regular procedures for late work and make-up work in order to encourage academic success.
- If an extended absence occurs due to illness or a prior arrangement, please give the teacher advance notice.
- The staff will be happy to get any needed books and materials from the teacher if the parents call and make this request.
- Exceptions may be made to the make-up work policy in cases of extended absence.

Truancy/AWOL

From the time a student arrives on campus in the morning until the school dismisses, students are required to check out through the office before they leave school grounds. Students who leave campus without checking out or who are absent from school without their parent's knowledge will be considered truant. Students who skip a class or classes will be considered AWOL. Students who miss school for invalid reasons will also be considered truant. Disciplinary action will be taken. A student must be in school for a minimum of 3 1/2 hours to be considered present.

Student Driving Policy

- Students driving their own vehicles to school will be issued a parking sticker and have assigned parking space.
- Students must fill out a form describing the vehicle with make, model and color.
- Students must submit a copy of their driver's license and vehicle registration.
- Student drivers will be released at regular carpool dismissal and will exit the building when carpool begins.
- When student drivers arrive they will walk to the front doors and be allowed entry when morning carpool begins.
- Upon entering the building, student will turn in his/her keys to the front desk with cell phone and they will be returned to him/her at the end of the day.
- AtNO time will a student driver be allowed to leave the campus in his/her vehicle during the day.
- Student driver will not be allowed to transport other students in personal vehicle at any time.
- No alcoholic products, weapons or firearms may be brought on the school grounds at any time in vehicle.
- Speed limit in the parking lot is 10 MPH. Students will be issued a warning if speeding. After 3 warnings, their driving privileges at school will be revoked for thirty days.

Driving to school is a privilege and that privilege can be revoked at any time should the student be irresponsible or unsafe in their driving practices on campus of coming to and from campus.

Tardy to School

Tardiness to class is not only a bad habit; it disrupts the learning process for the tardy student and the classmates who are interrupted.

- Students who arrive after 8:30 are tardy and must be checked in at the sign-in station by a parent/guardian before going to class.
- Students that are not in school for 3 1/2 hours are considered absent.
- Ten (10) unexcused times tardy will result in 1 absence.

Excused Tardy

The following are instances where an excused tardy (to school) will be given:

- Student Illness
- Accident
- Doctor/Dentist/Orthodontist appointment
- Car Trouble
- Severe Weather
- Acts of God
- Family Emergency

Please speak with the Academy Administrator if your student will be tardy on a regular basis due to circumstances outside of your control.

Check- Out Procedures

Please try to avoid making appointments for your child during the school day. However, if it is necessary to do so, please follow the check-out procedures below:

1. Send a note/email to let the teacher know when your child will be picked up.
2. Only authorized people on the pick-up list will be able to check your child out of school.
3. Report to the office and complete the sign-out sheet. **Students being picked up early must be signed out prior to 2:45 or 45 minutes before the end of the school day. No student will be released to check out after that time except in carpool. The last 45 minutes of the day are very busy as students finish out their day and prepare for carpool. Eliminating early pick up between 2:45 and the end of the day helps reduce chaos.**
4. **The Lobby is locked and will not be opened between 2:45 and 3:45.**
5. The office will call the student from class. **Students will not be brought to the lobby to wait for pick-up during the school day. This takes needed staff out of the classroom and reduces teaching time. Please allow time for your child to be brought to the front office.**
6. Upon returning to school, come to the office to sign your child back in. Your child may return to the classroom unassisted or someone in the office will walk the younger ones back to class.
7. Your child must be in school for 3 ½ hours to be counted present at school for the day.

Discipline Policy

Basic Approach to Discipline

PURPOSE

Behaviors are addressed in a way that addresses the function of the behavior for that child. Because of this, how the staff at The Bridge of Georgia addresses a behavior for one child may be somewhat different than how they address the behavior for another child. We seek to address behaviors in a way that brings about positive change and maintains the dignity of the child.

LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES

Ultimately, as an adult, children will become entirely responsible for their actions. We must gradually guide the children toward this responsibility and give them opportunities to experience the consequences of their actions. The teacher must take care that these consequences are not too severe or beyond their capabilities. Our expectation for the children must be appropriate to their developmental level.

GUIDELINES FOR DISCIPLINE

The methods of guidance and discipline used shall be positive, age-appropriate, consistent with the developmental needs of the children, and applied with the full knowledge and understanding of the parents. Strategies for behavior change begin with a functional behavior analysis and a plan is developed for that child that will be used in all settings. We believe appropriate behavior skills must be taught.

Mindset Crisis Intervention

Teachers and Support Staff at The Bridge of Georgia are Mindset certified yearly. Understanding effective communication and human physiology during aggressive moments, as well as the core philosophy of maintaining care, welfare, safety, and security, provide the solid foundation for this training. Training gives staff the needed tools to de-escalate potentially unsafe situations while protecting their relationship with students. Safety holds are used as a last resort to protect the safety of the student requiring restraint, other students, or staff. Every measure is taken to de-escalate behaviors and promote self-calming behaviors before physical safety holds are used.

Notice to Parents

There is a possibility of students being injured at school due to behavior incidents that occur from time to time. If your child is involved with this type of incident, you will be notified by the classroom teacher and/or an administrator of the school by the end of the day the event occurs. Often students work with staff to develop a behavior contract that gives the student the opportunity to learn self-management skills while gaining rewards for maintaining the goals of their contract.

Use of Technology

Students are encouraged to use technology resources for educational and communication purposes. Use of such resources is a privilege, not a right. Students must conduct themselves in a responsible, efficient, ethical, and legal manner. Unauthorized or inappropriate use, including any violation of these guidelines, may result in cancellation of certain privileges, and/or disciplinary action, and/or civil and/or criminal liability.

Internet/Network Guidelines:

- Students are responsible for their behavior and communication on the Internet.
- Transmission of any material in violation of any State or Federal law or regulation is prohibited.

Students are expected to abide by the following generally accepted rules of network etiquette:

- Be polite, courteous, and respectful in your messages to others. Use language appropriate to school situations in any communications made through The Bridge of Georgia school computers.
- Refrain from using obscene, profane, vulgar, sexually explicit, defamatory, or abusive language in your messages.
- Do not transmit pictures or other information that could be used to establish your identity without prior approval of a teacher.
- Students may not use school computers in such a way that would disrupt their use by others. Students should refrain from intentionally wasting limited resources.
- All copyright issues regarding software, information, and attributions of authorship must be respected.
- Privacy in communication over the Internet and the Network is not guaranteed. To ensure compliance with these guidelines, The Bridge of Georgia School reserves the right to monitor, review and inspect any directories, files and/or messages residing on or sent using The Bridge of Georgia School's computers. Messages relating to or in support of illegal activities will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
- Use of the Internet and any information procured from the Internet is at the student's own risk.
- The Bridge of Georgia School is not responsible for any damage a user suffers, including loss of data resulting from delays, non-deliveries, miss-deliveries, or service interruptions. The Bridge of Georgia School is not responsible for the accuracy or quality of information obtained through its services.
- Information (including text, graphics, audio, video, etc) from Internet sources used in student papers, reports, and projects should be cited the same as references to printed materials.
- Disclosure, use and/or dissemination of personal identification information of minors via the Internet is prohibited, except as expressly authorized by the minor student's parent/guardian.
- Chat rooms and other forms of direct electronic communications (i.e., Instant Message services) are prohibited.
- Students are not allowed to use computers designated for teacher use.

Internet/Network Guidelines cont.

- Students may use personal devices (such as laptops, iPads, Smart Phones, etc.) on the school's Public Wireless Network when approved by the classroom teacher. All traffic on these devices is subject to all the policies written above. Students may not use data connections such as cell phone data plans that bypass the school network during normal school hours.
- Students may not take or transmit pictures or video without teacher permission
- Misuse or abuse of electronic mediums (including iPads) can be subject to disciplinary action.
- Students will adhere to the age requirements and guidelines of all websites
- Students will protect their personal information and respect the privacy of others' information
- Students will respect teachers by keeping all communication school related
- Students will show respect for themselves and others by accessing, posting and hosting information and images that reflect positively on themselves and others.
- Students will not access or use hate-based or sexually explicit materials, nor will they disparage others.
- Students will follow all guidelines set by teacher(s) regarding the use of electronic devices.
- Students will care responsibly for the computers owned by The Bridge of Georgia.

The Bridge of Georgia reserves the right to access, view, or monitor any information stored on or transmitted over the School's technology resources, on or over personal equipment that has been brought to school or used to access the school's network and on or over personal equipment that violates any aspect of this policy.

Morning and Afternoon Carpool Procedures

Morning Drop-off Procedures

All academy students may be dropped off in the front carpool line beginning at 8:00. Students should not leave their vehicles until they are safely in place near the porch area of the school. Students may not enter the school until we begin receiving students at 8:00. Please understand that the car lane is not supervised by The Bridge of Georgia staff until 8:00. If you choose to arrive prior to 8:00 it is your responsibility to ensure the safety of your student until carpool begins. Students are tardy at 8:30 and parents will need to walk students in regardless of age. If you are coming into the building between 8-9 and 1:30 – 2:30, please refrain from parking in the carpool line.

- If carpool with The Bridge of Georgia personnel has ended, students may not be dropped off to walk into the school without being escorted by a parent or guardian.
- If a student arrives after 8:30 am, it will be necessary for the parent to sign the student in at the sign-in station.
- For the safety of students, parents, and staff, please remain in your cars during carpool. If you need to come into the building, please park in the designated area.
- **Parents are not allowed to walk their students to the classroom. This enables our classes to continue without interruption.**

Afternoon Pick-Up Procedures

Academy afternoon carpool is held in the front of the building, just like morning carpool. Afternoon carpool begins at 3:30 and continues until 3:50.

- Please enter the parking lot going north on Edwards Street while making a right-hand turn into the front parking lot.
- Each car will pull up to a numbered cone and put their car in park.
- Students will be loaded from the passenger side of the car only. If loading from the passenger side not possible, a Bridge of Georgia staff member will escort the child to the other side of the car.
- Cars must remain at their designated cone until all five children have been loaded. They will then receive the signal to leave.
- Drive slowly and be attentive to students and other drivers at all times.
- When exiting the parking lot, make a right-hand turn onto Blaine Street.
- Students not picked up by 4:00 will be sent to the front office for pick-up.
- Parents will be charged \$1.00 per minutes if they are late after 4:00.
- Early pick-ups must be made at least 45 minutes prior to afternoon carpool. Pick-ups after this time will have to wait until the classes are dismissed.
- Parents are expected to be courteous to other Bridge families during carpool hours.
- If you must enter the building to talk to your child's teacher, please park in the parking area after you have picked up your child in the carpool line.

Car Line Etiquette

When picking up and dropping off your children:

- Be patient, careful, and watchful
- Go slowly: 5MPH Speed Limit
- Do not pass other drivers on the left side of the carpool lane. Please be patient when students are being loaded.
- Face forward when moving
- When dropping off, your child should be prepared to exit the car once the door is open.
- Stay in your car and allow school personnel or their designee to assist your child or out of the vehicle.
- For the safety and security of parents, students, and staff, please remain in your car during carpool. If you need to come into the building, please park in designated parking spot.

Georgia Law Regarding Car Seats:

The Bridge of Georgia School is dedicated to educating all students in a safe and supporting environment. Beginning and ending each day in a safe manner is essential.

The Bridge of Georgia will release students at carpool to parents or authorized persons for pick-up. It is the parent's responsibility to follow Georgia car seat and transportation laws. The Bridge of Georgia School is not liable for drivers not adhering to these car seat or transportation safety laws.

Realizing the crucial role that car seats play in child safety, Georgia lawmakers passed laws and regulations pertaining to their use. Car seat safety as outlined below is the responsibility of the parents or authorized pick-up person.

According to Georgia law:

- ALL children under the age of 8 whose height is less than 57 inches must ride in the backseat of a car. A child is safer in the back and farthest away from the force of an airbag. Remember that airbags are designed to save adults, and since they deploy with great force they can be fatal to children.
- Children under the age of 8 are required to be in either a car seat or a booster seat suitable for their age and height.
- If there is not a back seat in the vehicle (e.g., a truck) or if other restrained children are in the back seat, Georgia law permits a child under the age of 8 to sit in front if restrained in the proper car seat or booster and the child weighs at least 40 pounds.

General Policies and Information

Parent Conferences and Communication

Our staff encourages close communication between parents and the school. If you need to talk with your child's teacher or the School Administrator, please feel free to email and request an appointment. Appointments with the teacher must be set up with consideration of the teacher's schedule.

It is our desire to keep you well informed. Please refrain from walking your child to class to talk with their teacher. These small conferences should be scheduled as well. Remember our teachers have obligations to the students for the entire school day. Our teaching time begins the minute the first student walks into the classroom. This time is valuable. Please protect this time and schedule an appointment with your child's teacher.

Parents are asked to respect the privacy of teachers and staff members of the school by making inquiries concerning school matters during regular school hours. ***Please do not call or text school personnel outside of these hours unless it is an emergency. Teachers have been encouraged to maintain communication with families during their regular work hours.**

If you text the staff in your child's room, do not expect an immediate response. Staff are encouraged to check their phones on breaks and outside of teaching time. Parents should discuss all school matters with involved parties only. Please discuss any concerns with your child's teacher or the School Administrator. Talking about these concerns with appropriate parties will ensure that the school can address them promptly and in cooperation with parents, making the best learning experience for your child.

Parent Volunteers

There are times we will count on parent volunteers for events and activities. Each class will need a room parent to coordinate volunteers from within that class. Your child's teacher will coordinate events in conjunction with room parents.

Items from Home

1. Please mark all items with your child's name including clothing, backpacks, lunch boxes, folders, and school equipment.
2. Please keep a complete change of weather appropriate clothes in your child's backpack at all times. **REMEMBER, PUT NAMES ON EVERYTHING!**

Lunch and Snack

Please include a lunch and snack for your child each day including a drink. Be sure their lunch box is clearly marked with the child's name.

Please do not send meals that require more than 2 minutes to heat. Heating food at home and sending it in a thermos is preferred.

***Please send all items your child needs to eat lunch including utensils and napkins. Utensils are not always on hand at The Bridge.**

Please note that when a child with a severe food allergy is enrolled in a class, it may be necessary that all children from that class refrain from bringing that item to lunch.