



Early Learning Center

2026-27 STUDENT HANDBOOK

BATTLE GROUND ACADEMY

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Once you have read this handbook, please sign the handbook agreement form in Magnus.

SECTION 1

Academic Program

The Early Learning Center at BGA offers a dynamic academic program that values learning through inquiry, emphasizing mastery of foundational skills, balanced with critical thinking, and problem-solving in a vibrant learning community. In a preschool classroom, this often takes the form of play – whether it is through thematic centers, hands-on experiments, or thoughtfully planned dramatic play, preschool-aged students learn best when they are actively interacting with their peers and their environment. Because we recognize that every child learns differently, our program is designed to be responsive to the needs of individual learners. Teachers are able to monitor the progress of each child through formal and informal assessment and will provide support as needed so each child grows in their understanding.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Our program uses a variety of curricula to encourage student curiosity, growth, and learning. The ELC offers a robust array of assessment tools to ensure students are meeting milestones and tracking toward kindergarten readiness across all learning domains. Student progress is evaluated based on a collection of evidence in student work as well as age-level expectations that guide teacher observations about student performance. Progress reports will be provided three times per year to parents to communicate student growth in all areas, including literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional development. Additionally, parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice per year.

While designated progress reporting and conferencing are scheduled throughout the year, teachers are proactive to share updates regarding student performance as needed. In addition, we encourage you to contact your child's teacher any time you have concerns about your child's academic progress.

- October 7 – Parent-Teacher Conference Day
- November 3 – End of Grading Period 1
- February 3 – Parent-Teacher Conference Day
- February 18 – End of Grading Period 2
- April 16 – Interim Report
- May 18 – End of Grading Period 3

While the Early Learning Center does not require children to complete homework, we strongly encourage you to read to your child nightly as part of your evening or bedtime routine. Reading aloud to a child provides not only a time for bonding but also exposes children to a diverse vocabulary; improves reading stamina; and models concepts of print such as left-to-right progression, why we read, and the elements of a text.

SECTION 2

General Policies

DAILY SCHEDULE / LATE-START WEDNESDAY

The school will operate according to the school calendar published online unless otherwise noted in the weekly newsletter. The Early Learning Center's academic day is from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday with drop-off beginning at 8 a.m. You will need to walk your child in to school and sign them in with their teacher. All students should be in the classroom, ready to learn, by 8 a.m.

Wednesday mornings are designated for faculty professional development. School starts at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesdays (exceptions noted below), and early care is available beginning at 8 a.m.

Noted exceptions: A few times each year, the entire PreK–12 faculty and staff gather for a full faculty meeting. On those days, the ELC will still start at 8:45 a.m. with drop-off beginning at 8:15 a.m. These dates are:

- September 23
- November 11
- January 20
- March 31

Extended Late-Start

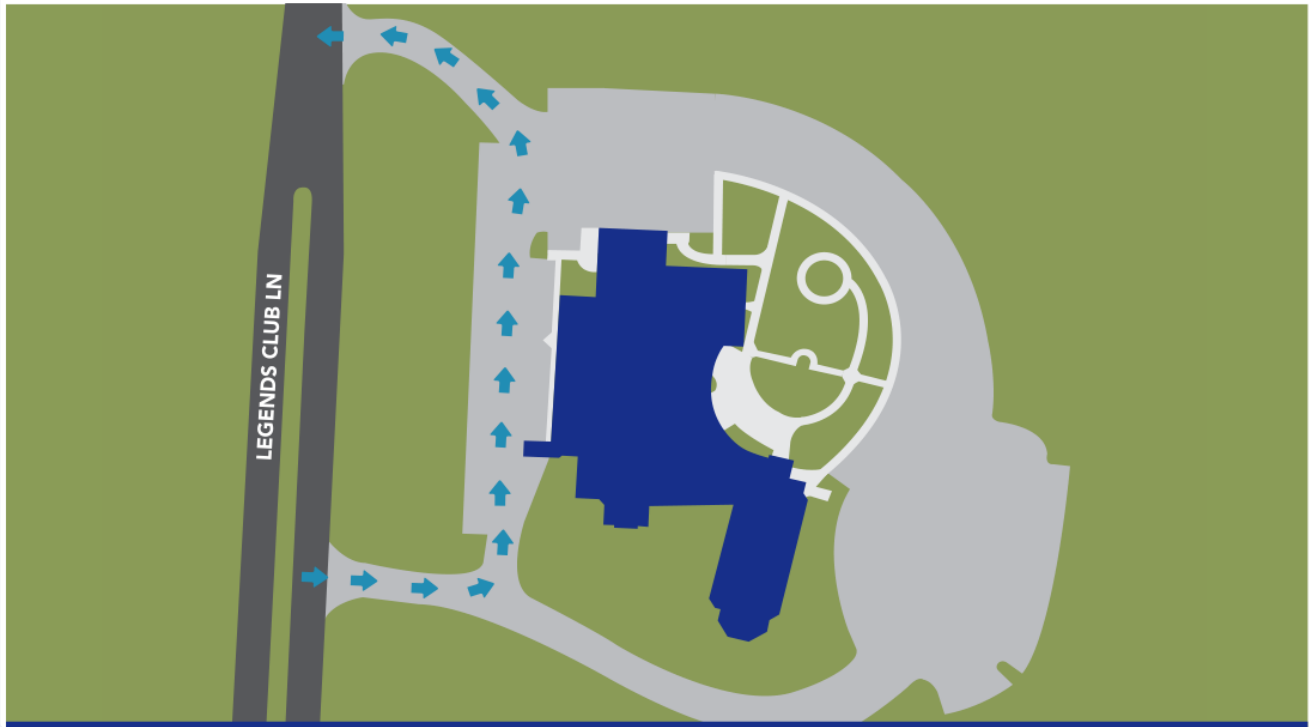
Twice per year, BGA's faculty and staff engage in extended professional development, resulting in a 10 a.m. late start. Doors will open at the ELC beginning at 9:45 a.m. For families requiring earlier drop-off, we offer supervision starting at 8:15 a.m. A virtual form will be sent out in advance to register for early care. This form helps appropriately plan supervision. These dates are:

- October 28
- March 3

ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Arrival

Please enter through the west entrance of First Presbyterian Church (to the right of the playground when facing the building). Take your student directly to their respective classroom and check them in. If students arrive after 8:15 a.m., ring the front doorbell and a staff member will let you in to sign in your child. As you exit, proceed to the east exit to Legends Club Lane. Students who arrive after 8:15 a.m. will be marked tardy.



This map shows the general flow of traffic for arrival and dismissal.

Dismissal

Dismissal is at 2:45 p.m. Please enter through the west entrance of First Presbyterian Church. Check out your child at their classroom door. As you exit, proceed to the east exit to Legends Club Lane.

Dismissal Changes or Delays

Inevitably, situations may arise that result in a change of dismissal plans for your child. If someone other than a parent or primary caregiver is signing out your child, please email your child's teacher ahead of time, copying their associate teacher and Brooke Humphreys. Tell the person picking them up to arrive with a state-issued photo identification.

Early Dismissal

If a child must leave school before dismissal, other than in cases of emergency, advance notice from parents is requested. The parent should contact the front office and the child's teacher via email, copying his or her associate teacher and Brooke Humphreys. This notice must designate who will be picking up the child and the time the child needs to be at the front office for dismissal. All students need to leave and re-enter through the front entrance. An adult must sign out the student at the front desk. If the student returns to school that same day, the adult must sign the child back in at the front desk.

PLANNED ABSENCES

In order for a student to receive consideration for an excused absence for reasons other than illness, parents must submit a completed Planned Absence Form at least one week prior to the

anticipated absence. The planned absence will be considered by the Head of the Early Learning Center, and the absence will either be approved as excused or determined to be unexcused.

ATTENDANCE

Arriving on time and being in the classroom each day establishes consistency and predictability for students. Because our program is academic in nature and each day of learning builds on the next, excessive absences and tardies do not serve students well. Once ten absences or tardies have been noted per semester, a meeting with the administrative team will become necessary so that we can come together and find solutions to help your child arrive in a timely manner.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

The ELC will follow Battle Ground Academy's inclement weather policies. If BGA is on a two-hour delay, the ELC will be on a two-hour delay. If BGA is closed for inclement weather, the ELC will be closed as well. Families will be alerted through a phone call, text, and email if there are any changes in start or end times.

REST TIME

The Early Learning Center will provide children with a short rest time after lunch. Students who do not nap will be provided with a quiet activity to complete on their rest mat. If your child chooses to bring a lovey, blanket, or stuffed animal from home, please reinforce that it must stay in their bag before and after rest time.

SUPPLIES

To prevent confusion or lost items, label all of your child's belongings, including water bottles and a change of weather-appropriate clothes.

The ELC Provides

- Backpacks
- Rest mats
- Rain boots
- Rain suit
- Snack

Parents Provide

- Water bottle
- Lunch
- Blanket for rest (must fit in a backpack)
- Full change of clothes, including socks, underwear, and outerwear, if seasonally appropriate, in a labeled zip-top bag

Your child's rest mat will be sent home each Friday for laundering.

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Explore Programs

The Early Learning Center Explore Program provides a variety of options to enrich a child's educational experience. These fee-based classes cultivate a love of the arts, sciences, humanities, and athletics while promoting creativity, problem-solving, wellness, and cultural awareness. Specific offerings will be made available at the beginning of each semester.

Extended Care

Extended Care is offered to support the busy work schedules of parents. All students may be enrolled in after-school care at the Early Learning Center.

For more information on our after-school programs, contact Brooke Humphreys at brooke.humphreys@mybga.org.

SECTION 3

Community Expectations

CHARACTER AND INCLUSION

Character is an integral part of our mission and further articulated in our core values. We are an inclusive and welcoming community that cares for the well-being of others. Character is developed intentionally through education and daily interactions in an inclusive school community. We uphold the Honor Code by treating one another with respect, honesty, integrity, and generosity of spirit.

Children thrive in a school community that is truly inclusive – one that values every individual for their unique perspectives and contributions. Diverse experiences and ideas are vital elements of our shared humanity, and our programs are informed by, and responsive to, our core values. We equip our students with an understanding and appreciation for diversity that prepares them to be thoughtful and successful citizens of the world.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The ELC at BGA believes that in order for the school to “ignite and nurture student curiosity, intellect, and character,” students need guidance, structure, and clear expectations as they grow and mature, and that by working in partnership with one another, the school and parents can provide an environment that helps us fulfill our mission. All students will make mistakes and missteps in their time at the ELC, and the goal for the school’s response is to recognize the natural growth area of our youngest learners and to ensure limited disruptions to the school learning environment.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT

A major goal of behavior management is to clearly communicate expectations, empower children to use effective problem-solving strategies related to behavior, develop self-discipline, learn from mistakes, and make wise choices. Even for our youngest learners, we diligently seek to foster habits that are in the best interest of the child today and in the future.

Children are expected to conduct themselves in ways that support belonging and make our school safe, caring, and welcoming.

- BGA Wildcats must be respectful, responsible, and ready to learn. This means being a respectful listener with teachers and peers; a responsible community member who models good citizenship in word and deed; and an engaged and accountable learner.
- BGA Wildcats must treat others with both verbal and physical respect in such a way that other members of our community feel safe and included.
- BGA Wildcats must respect the campus, school property, and the personal property of all community members.
- BGA Wildcats must demonstrate kindness and courtesy during interactions with others.
- BGA Wildcats must model appropriate behavior and adhere to school expectations at all times.

Behaviors that occasionally fall short of expectations may be successfully corrected with reminders, redirection, and logical consequences. If misbehavior persists, a variety of escalating responses will be utilized to reinforce expectations. If classroom discipline procedures are not working, parents, teachers, and the director will meet to share information and create a behavior plan for the child. The director has the authority to call parents for immediate pickup if the disruptive behavior continues for an extended period or could be harmful to the child or other children.

The ELC's behavior management system is rooted in promoting and reinforcing positive behaviors through clear expectations, positive reinforcement, and modeling of appropriate social-emotional constructs. Children will be encouraged to understand that their actions have an impact, both positive and negative.

Consequences for inappropriate behavior will be appropriate, fair, and learning focused. Depending on the severity and frequency of the behavior, consequences may include verbal reminders, redirection, loss of privileges, or discussions about behavior consequences with the teacher. Teachers will provide opportunities for children to role play difficult situations in order to try again at communicating their needs or following directions as expected.

Parents play a crucial role in supporting behavior management efforts. We encourage open dialogue between parents and teachers to ensure consistency between home and preschool. We will work together to address any behavioral concerns and celebrate positive changes.

POTTY TRAINING

We require that all of our students are potty-trained, including at rest time, before coming to the ELC. Families are asked to keep a spare change of clothes at school at all times. We recognize that occasional accidents are a typical part of early childhood. When accidents occur, staff handles these instances with compassion and discretion. Children are assisted as needed and are encouraged to clean up and change into fresh clothing with gentle support. It is typical for accidents to increase in frequency as children transition to new routines and environments. As such, we offer the first six weeks of the school year as a grace period. Once children are acclimated, frequent accidents (more than once in a week for two or more weeks in a row) will necessitate a meeting so that staff and families can work together to determine next steps.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND PARENT PARTNERSHIP

The Early Learning Center employs a whole-child approach to education. Enrollment is guided by a child's demonstrated cognitive abilities, social-emotional development, and language/communication skills.

Our program is designed to support a wide range of developmental profiles. However, it is not a therapeutic or clinical program. Children must be able to participate in classroom routines with reasonable, age-appropriate support, interact safely with classmates and adults, and participate successfully in a group-based learning environment. Persistent behaviors that significantly disrupt learning, pose safety concerns, or require one-to-one support beyond what the program can provide may impact a child's ability to remain enrolled.

Developmental or Behavioral Concerns

If a child demonstrates a consistent pattern of emotional dysregulation, disruptive behaviors, cognitive stagnation, or delayed communication skills, the Early Learning Center will respond using a tiered, developmentally appropriate framework. The goal is to always put the child's well-being at the forefront. As part of this framework, families will meet with the ELC administrative team to discuss concerns, walk through reasonable accommodations, and outline parameters for remaining enrolled. If the learning environment or the well-being of the child continues to be compromised, a mid-year separation may become necessary.

UNIFORM POLICY

Home and school should carefully cooperate in the matter of dress. All students are expected to be well groomed, and clothing should be appropriately sized and worn as intended. It greatly benefits our learning community when students come to school dressed appropriately.

- Outerwear and accessories should be labeled with the student's name.
- Students may not wear hats or hoods inside the school building.
- Closed-toe shoes are required. Tennis shoes are required for safe, active play.
- Make-up of any kind and press-on nails may not be worn.
- Socks are required with shoes such as topsiders or athletic shoes. Socks must be solid white, black, navy, or gray, or BGA spirit socks. Girls are allowed to wear solid color (navy, black, white, and gray) socks, leggings, and tights under the regular uniform bottom.

UNIFORMS

We are offering multiple uniform options this fall – some optional and some required. Preschool is messy (and fun!), and we want your child to have an affordable, washable, and comfortable clothing option.

At the start of the year, we will provide two branded ELC T-shirts to your child; however, if you prefer to dress your child in a BGA polo or jumper with a Peter Pan blouse, you may purchase those through Flynn O'Hara.

Required: All students must own a royal polo. There will be times, such as picture day or field trips, where this is required dress for all students.

Boys:

- BGA polo shirt or ELC T-shirt
- Khaki pants or shorts (any brand), jeans (no holes or embellishments)

Girls:

- BGA polo shirt or ELC T-shirt
- Khaki pants, skort, or shorts (any brand), jeans (no holes or embellishments)
- Jumper and Peter Pan blouse, shorts underneath

All:

- BGA outerwear (must be branded when inside the classroom)
- BGA spirit wear shirts, including camp shirts, may be worn on Fridays.

Optional: Polo from Flynn O'Hara, girls jumper and Peter Pan blouse from Flynn O'Hara, BGA outerwear (must be branded when inside the classroom).

Please note that we will provide a BGA backpack for your child with their name embroidered on it.

Uniform reminders may be issued for students who are not dressed according to the requirements specified in the uniform policy. Questions regarding uniform policy may be addressed to Head of the Early Learning Center Julia Belsante.

Flynn O'Hara Uniforms

204 Ward Circle #400

Brentwood, TN 37027

615-662-6582

stores.flynnohara.com

BGA School ID #TN019

Hours:

Monday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Tuesday–Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

BGA Roar Store

(For spirit wear)

Located in the Harlin

Roar Store website

Check Sound Waves for special times.

Hours:

Tuesday, 7:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Friday, 7:30 to 10:30 a.m.

SECTION 4

Student Life

BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays are a special time for children, and they enjoy celebrating by sharing snacks with their classmates. Parents must coordinate with their child's teacher to send a peanut-free snack for their class to celebrate the child's birthday. Please do not send drinks, ice cream, candy, etc. The teacher will distribute the birthday snacks at an appropriate time. Birthday treats shared at school should be allergy safe. Brooke Humphreys can share a list of snacks that are allergy safe and any classroom-specific allergy considerations. Please coordinate safe snacks with her.

MEAL TIME

Students will provide their own lunches. Snacks and water will be provided by the ELC during a classroom's scheduled snack time. Snack schedules will be posted on a weekly basis on the ELC Parent Bulletin Board. Students will wash hands before and after meals and snacks. During meals and snack, students will sit at tables within their classroom. Two staff members will be present during meal times, and each child's mouth must be visible to at least one adult at all times. A caregiver who is trained in first aid for choking will be present at all meals and snacks. Good table manners are both modeled and verbally encouraged by teachers. Following meals, students will learn to clean up their space by properly disposing of trash, wiping their area with soap and water, and taking turns sweeping under tables.

FOOD PREPARATION

We recommend cutting food into manageable bites to reduce the risk of choking. For example, hot dogs should be cut in strips and grapes or cherry tomatoes should be cut in half.

FOOD ALLERGIES

We seek to provide and maintain allergy awareness, create reasonable accommodations, allow for personal student advocacy, provide safe, nutritional support to all students, and establish a supportive and compassionate community. Given the number of allergens, as well as the differing levels of risk relating to each student's allergic reaction, we need to make clear that the ELC at Battle Ground Academy cannot and does not guarantee an allergen-free environment.

Battle Ground Academy has adopted a "nut awareness" policy to promote a safe and inclusive school environment for students with severe allergies to peanuts and tree nuts. The prevalence of peanut and tree nut allergies in children seems to rise every year, and these allergic reactions can be quite severe. For those with severe peanut and tree nut allergies, any exposure, through contact or ingestion, can cause an anaphylactic response.

If your child has a food allergy, you must notify us in writing so that we can make appropriate accommodations. Food allergies can be life threatening, and each child with a food allergy should have an action plan for emergency care completed by parents with input from a family physician. Additionally, classrooms with a child with a severe allergy will have the allergy noted through

signage on the outside of the classroom door and on the classroom cabinets above handwashing stations.

Community practices that will help reduce the risk of serious allergic reactions:

- If your child has eaten peanuts, peanut butter, or nut products before coming to school, please be sure your child's hands and face have been thoroughly washed before coming to school.
- Families should not send food containing peanuts, peanut butter, or nut products. Soy and sunflower butters are alternatives to peanut butter.
- Foods brought to school for class celebrations must be approved by the school nurse in advance.
- All snacks provided by the ELC will be peanut and tree nut free. If students have other allergies, an appropriate snack substitution will be provided.

FIELD TRIPS

The Handbook Agreement provides permission for your child to attend all school-sponsored field trips. Parents will be notified of field trips through weekly newsletters. Students will be transported on field trips via BGA buses except under special circumstances. All children will attend school field trips unless parents notify the school in writing. Teachers will organize field trips. Parents are occasionally needed to chaperone. Please do not bring younger children along when serving as a chaperone.

PRIVATE PARTIES OFF CAMPUS

The ELC at BGA is an inclusive community, and we encourage friendships in and out of school. When planning private, off-campus parties (birthday parties, sleepovers, swimming parties, skating parties, etc.), we ask that you consider the feelings of all children. Please encourage children not to talk about a party during school hours if everyone has not been invited. Invitations to all parties should be emailed or mailed from home. They cannot be distributed at school. In addition, gifts should not be exchanged at school.

SECTION 5

Required Forms

Because the Early Learning Center serves children under age 5, state DOE regulations require BGA to share additional information and obtain additional parent signatures. The information below is in line with these policies. Signatures acknowledging that you have read this information must be completed in Magnus on the ELC Handbook Acknowledgement Form.

Please take a moment to log in and review any outstanding items. Your attention to this matter helps us stay in compliance and ensures a safe, well-prepared start for all.

ACCESS TO DOE RULES & REGULATIONS

Access to DOE Rules & Regulations can be found [here](#).

KINDERGARTEN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In accordance with Tennessee State Law, attendance at the Early Learning Center at Battle Ground Academy does not satisfy the mandatory kindergarten prerequisite for a child's enrollment in first grade. Caregivers will be required to provide a signature in Magnus acknowledging that they understand that their child must meet the required kindergarten attendance and curriculum standards set by the state or applicable educational authorities to be eligible for first grade enrollment.

SMOKE-FREE FACILITY

The Early Learning Center and all BGA campuses are smoke-free facilities. We do not permit smoking or vaping on school property.

SECTION 6

Early Learning Center Contact List

Name & Role	Contact For	Email & Phone
Julia Belsante Head of the Early Learning Center	Contact for after-hours emergencies.	Julia.Belsante@mybga.org (615) 567-2050
Sarah Poligone Assistant Head of the Early Learning Center	Contact for after-hours emergencies.	sarah.poligone@mybga.org (615) 567-2050
Brooke Humphreys Early Learning Center Administrative Assistant & Director of Extended Care	Contact for ELC office, attendance, Lost and Found, check-in/check-out, medications and health forms, and day-to-day communication regarding extended care.	brooke.humphreys@mybga.org (615) 567-2050
Ansley Page Associate Director of Admissions for Early Learning Center and Lower School	Contact for any admissions needs.	Ansley.Page@mybga.org (615) 567-2008
Kirra Pugh & Samantha Harber ELC Parent Association Co-Chairs	Contact for opportunities to be involved in our school community.	otoole.kirra@gmail.com samannpar@gmail.com
Andrew Phelps Assistant Head of School for Finance	Contact for tuition, billing, or accounts needs.	Andrew.Phelps@mybga.org Harlin – Glen Echo Campus (615) 567-8519
Tiffany Fernandez Controller	Contact for tuition, billing, or accounts needs.	tiffany.fernandez@mybga.org Harlin – Glen Echo Campus (615) 567-9009

SECTION 7

Early Learning Center Major Dates

To access the Early Learning Center Major Dates calendar, click [here](#).