**Beyond the Spectrum**

**Parent and Student Handbook**

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**7333 International Place, Sarasota, FL 34240**

**Phone: 941-907-3443**

**Fax: 941-527-0526**

**Website:** [**www.beyondthespectrum.org**](http://www.beyondthespectrum.org)

**Executive Director: Lora Carpenter, lora.carpenter@beyondthespectrum.org**

**Financial Director: Peggy Caruso, peggy.caruso@beyondthespectrum.org**

**Mariposa Program Director: Sarah Bass,** [**sarah.bass@beyondthespectrum.org**](mailto:sarah.bass@beyondthespectrum.org)

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**Note: Please retain the Handbook for your records and return only the acknowledgement form. Thank you!**

**Revised 7-21-2023**

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**MISSION AND PURPOSE**

Our mission is to serve individuals and families in our community affected by Autism, Down Syndrome and related diagnoses. Providing individualized therapeutic and educational services, our goal is for every individual to achieve their highest potential in a safe, caring, family-friendly environment. Empowering every student by teaching beyond the classroom.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Beyond the Spectrum does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, gender, age, race, color, national or ethnic origin, or disability in the administration of its admissions or educational policies, scholarship and loan programs, other School-administered programs, or in employment. The school complies with the amended Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

**HOURS OF OPERATION AND BEFORE AND AFTER CARE**

Office hours: 8:00 – 4:00, Monday – Friday

School hours: 8:30 – 2:30, Monday – Friday

# BEFORE AND AFTER CARE

Before-school care available 7:30 – 8:30, Monday – Friday

After-school care available 2:30 – 5:30, Monday – Friday

Please contact the front office for scheduling. For payment information, please contact Peggy Caruso at 941-447-8400.   
Families must have a credit card on file for their child to participate in after care.  
Any child remaining at school after 2:45 will be charged for after care services.  
 **There is no aftercare on half days.**To ensure safety through maintaining appropriate student/teacher ratios all aftercare arrangements must be made at least 24 hours in advance. We understand emergencies arise and we will address those as needed throughout the school year.  
Students should be picked up each day no later than 5:30 p.m. After 5:30 each evening a $10.00 per minute late fee will be instituted. Emergency situations will always be considered by Administration. Numerous late pick-ups may result in the student being dismissed from our After Care Program.

**SCHOOL CALENDAR**

Please log onto beyondthespectrum.org and click “Family Resources” to locate the calendar. If any changes are made, families will be informed by email and a note to home.

# SEVERE WEATHER POLICY

Experiencing extremely severe weather is always a real possibility in Florida. Our closing policy in case of such weather conditions is as follows:

1. All closures and re-openings follow Sarasota and/or Manatee County School Board decisions unless special circumstances affect Beyond the Spectrum family or staffing.
2. The phone message/mass text will be changed and updated by 7:30am, as needed, to announce closures and re-openings, as the phone service allows. Please ensure you sign up for the text alerts. Information is provided in your child’s BEE Binder.
3. Tuition responsibilities will not change. Tuition payments must be made as usual.

# SECURITY/PICK UP POLICY

**We will never release a child into the care of any person whose name is not on the enrollment form and /or Pick-up List.** For the safety and security of every child a pictured identification, preferably a current driver’s license, must be presented to the attendant, teacher, or office personnel if they do not personally know you. All parents and/ or designated pick-up person(s) should be prepared to show proper identification if asked. As part of our efforts to keep your child safe, ALL parents, legal guardians, and authorized pick-up persons MUST complete the Authorized pickup form. Additional copies of this form are available upon request.

**FIRE DRILLS**

As required by law, BEYOND THE SPECTRUM conducts monthly fire and/or emergency preparedness drills, as dictated by our emergency preparedness plan. These drills are conducted while the children are present. Every effort will be made to address any auditory sensory issues that any child may have.

# GENERAL POLICIES

Parents are expected to uphold the objectives, rules, and purposes of Beyond the Spectrum. Parents who show an ongoing lack of respect to the teachers, staff, or other students will be addressed personally by the Executive Director. If a parent continues to cause undo confusion or problems, the Executive Director will take further action that could result in the dismissal of the child. Parents are expected to work with their child’s teacher to create an environment that promotes respect and caring for other students, adults, school property. Any behavior of parent(s), guardian(s) or visitor(s) deemed disruptive or disrespectful by Beyond the Spectrum administration or staff can be ejected from the building or premises. Failure to comply with requests to maintain composure will be subject to a trespass warning filed by Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office.

# FINANCIAL POLICIES

Out-of-pocket tuition payments are invoiced on either a monthly or quarterly basis, depending on the initial set up with the finance office. Monthly tuition is due by the 15th of every month and quarterly payments are due on the 1st of September, November, January and April. Tuition rates remain the same regardless of holidays, professional days, sick days or inclement weather closures and will be collected on the regular schedule. Beyond the Spectrum offers a variety of payment options including Visa, MasterCard, Discover and Debit payments. Past due tuition payments incur a $15.00 late fee. All tuition accounts must be kept current. Please contact the finance office if you are unable to make your payments. If payments should fall behind one month you will be contacted by a member of administration to arrange payment. Out of Pocket payments that fall into arrears (without administration approval) of one quarter may result in your child being unable to attend Beyond the Spectrum. As parents ourselves we do understand the economic pressures on families with children with disabilities. Clear and open communication allows us to move forward in a manner best assisting your family and the school. We make every effort to work with our families. All registration fees and curriculum/activity fees are non-refundable. A 20% discount is available to families with more than one child attending Beyond the Spectrum unless the students are already receiving a tuition discount based on their type of funding.

**ADMISSION, DISMISSAL AND RE-ENROLLMENT**

**Admission:** Complete and submit an Intake Packet along with a recent IEP and/or any behavioral reports. Upon receipt the applicants name is added to the waitlist. The Program Director(s) review the documents to determine appropriate placement. When a seat becomes available, the Registrar schedules an in-person assessment for the child/children and school tour for the parent(s) or guardian(s).

**Dismissal: Beyond the Spectrum does not take dismissal of a student lightly.  Only after all avenues are exhausted including parent-teacher conferences with or without the student present, in- or out-of-school suspension, meetings with Program Directors, teachers and therapists will a student be dismissed.**

**Re-admission: Should a parent or guardian request readmission to Beyond the Spectrum, the parent or guardian speaks initially with the Executive Director.  The Executive Director confers with the Program Director(s) to assure there is space available for the student to return and with the Director of Finance to assure accounts are up-to-date.   Before the readmission is approved, the program director will reassess the applicant.**

# WITHDRAWAL

Beyond the Spectrum requests two week notice to be given to the office before your child's withdrawal date. A letter of termination is required. Annual registration fees are non-refundable.

# ABSENCES AND TARDINESS

If a child is unable to attend classes parents should notify the Beyond the Spectrum as soon as possible by calling the school at 941-907-3443. If your child is dual enrolled in the ABA clinic, it is the responsibility of the parent/caregiver to inform both the school and the clinic of absences. Absences and tardiness affect the quality of your child’s educational and behavioral advancement. There are a specified number of educational hours each scholarship student must receive to remain in compliance with the State of Florida. Please note that excessive absences will result in your child losing their scholarship funding from the state of Florida.

Our classrooms begin their day by 8:30 am and the number one priority for a teacher is to be with his/her children. Our teachers understand your need to convey concerns or questions to them are very important to you. A communication log is sent home every day for the teacher to make comments. We encourage the parent/caregiver to do the same. Teachers welcome the opportunity to discuss comments/concerns with you before or after school. Please arrive to school on time. Your cooperation in this matter is necessary and greatly appreciated.

**DROP OFF AND PICK UP POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

Beyond the Spectrum utilizes a car rider policy which opens at 8:20am. Please use the 2nd entrance to enter the parking lot. If you arrive prior to 8:20am please wait patiently until staff arrives to escort children. If you choose to walk your child into the lobby, please sign your child in then a staff member will escort your child to class. PLEASE be vigilant of surroundings and drive in a slow and cautious manner. Student and staff safety is of upmost importance.

**COMMUNICATION WITH ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF**

Beyond the Spectrum has an open-door policy. Please contact the front office to schedule an appointment to meet with the teacher so that we are not disrupting the daily activities and routines of the students. Visitors must check in at the office and sign the visitation log. Any visitor, who has not been registered on the pickup authorization, will not be allowed to visit the student on the school campus. Safety is our main priority.

**CURRICULUM**

Beyond the Spectrum uses multiple forms of curriculum based on your child's assessments which are done periodically throughout the year. Our teachers implement the Florida Common Core Standards into their lesson plans. Diploma seeking students follow Access Standards.

# HEALTH AND MEDICAL RECORD REQUIREMENTS

Children enrolling at Beyond the Spectrum must have a current physical exam and up-to-date immunization records before attending. It is the parent/guardian’s responsibility to keep all medical records current per County Licensing regulations. Necessary health and immunization forms are as follows: HRS Form 680 (blue immunization form) or the HRS Form DH 681 (blue Religious Exemption from Immunization form) HRS Form 3040 (yellow physical examination form). The originals of these forms are required for admission.

# STUDENT ACCIDENT AND INJURY POLICY

During activities and play, it is possible for a child to get injured. If an injury occurs, an incident report is written. The parent/guardian is notified immediately for a serious injury. If not serious, an incident report will be sent home for parent/guardian review. All accident claims should be made through the parent/guardian’s insurance company before making any claim to the Beyond the Spectrum’s insurance company. Should your child need emergency treatment the staff shall attempt to contact the parent/guardian immediately. In the event staff is unable to reach a parent or guardian, Beyond the Spectrumshall be authorized to secure such medical attention and care as may be necessary.

**Please remember the school must be able to reach the parent/guardian at all times! If there are any changes to your contact information, notify the office immediately.**

**STUDENT HEALTH POLICY**

**If your child is out sick, please call the school by 9:00am.** For your child’s health, as well as the health of other children and staff, students will be sent home immediately with a fever of 100 degrees or above. Students may not return to school until they have been fever free for a 24 hour period. ***Any student sent home sick from school for any of the following reasons must remain home for the entire following school day, at minimum***. For instance, if a child is sent home on Monday, they may not return to school until Wednesday.

C**hildren are to remain at home or will be sent home if he/she:**

* Has a fever within the last 24 hours
* Has diarrhea; children with 1 or more abnormally loose bowels/diarrhea in a single school day will be sent home immediately and may not return to school until they have been free from diarrhea for a 24-hour period
* Has vomiting; children with 2 or more cases of vomiting in a previous 24-hour period, or unless the vomiting is determined to be due to a non-contagious condition and the child is not in danger of dehydration
* Has been on prescribed medication for less than 24 hours
* Has a stiff neck
* Is sneezing or coughing excessively due to a viral or bacterial illness and is causing the child to become red or blue in the face
* Has difficult or rapid breathing
* Has nasal discharge that is cloudy, thick or yellow/green (if a child has continuous drainage that is clear, but affects classroom hygiene, the child will be sent home)
* Unusually dark urine and/or gray or white stool
* Yellowish skin or eyes
* Has infected eyes, especially red eyes with discharge and drainage, or matting of the eyelids (must be examined by physician and approved in writing for return to school)
* Has the presence of any rash (must be examined by physician and approved in writing for return to school, rash must not be communicable)
* Any exposed, open sores that are raw and/or bleeding must be treated and kept properly covered
* Any child diagnosed with impetigo, ringworm, scabies or strep throat may be allowed to return to school after completing 24 hours of appropriate treatment
* If the child has any of the following conditions: wheezing, lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, and difficulty breathing or other signs of illness
* If the illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in class activities and/or results in greater care need, than the staff can provide, without compromising the health and safety of other children
* Has been found to have lice and/or nits (See Lice and Nit Policy below)

If a child shows symptoms of illness the child will be isolated and the parents called to pick up the child immediately. If a parent is unable to be reached the emergency contact listed on the child’s application will be phoned and asked to pick up the child. These conditions have been dictated by the Department of Children and Families Administrative Codes.

**Any student sent home sick must remain home for the entire following school day, at minimum**.

# LICE AND NIT POLICY

If Beyond the Spectrum staff detects lice in a child’s hair, the child will be sent home immediately for treatment. Beyond the Spectrum will treat areas, equipment, toys and furnishings where the child has been in contact. The child may return to school two days after treatment has been initiated and verified. Parents must provide verification of treatment by submitting a product box top, empty bottle or a signed statement that treatment has occurred. Each child is required to be rechecked by Beyond the Spectrum staff prior to returning to the classroom. The No Nit Policy, (which is also used by the Sarasota and Manatee County school systems) means that if nits or eggs are still in a child’s hair, even after treatment, the child will not be allowed to return to school and will be sent back home until the child is completely nit and/or egg free.

**MEDICATION DISPENSING POLICIES WILL STRICTLY BE ADHERED TO AT ALL TIMES**

# Medicine Dispensing Policy

No medication will be dispensed by Beyond the Spectrum staff without written physician and parental authorization**. All medicine sent to Beyond the Spectrum must be hand-delivered to the office**. **DO NOT LEAVE MEDICATION (PILLS, CAPSULES, TABLETS INCLUDING SUPPLEMENTS AND VITAMINS) IN YOUR CHILD’S BACKPACK OR LUNCH BOX**. Before any medication is administered, a Medication Authorization Form must be completed, signed and dated by the physician. Medication must be sent in the original container with the physician’s instructions clearly marked on the outside. If you want your child to have over-the-counter medication you must complete an Over-the-counter Medication Authorization form. We will follow the specific guidelines given on the outside of the container. It must also be made specifically for children. You can ask your pharmacist to divide some medication, so you can leave it here, without having to remember to pick it up and bring it back each day. **No over-the-counter medication made for adults will be given to any child**. State regulations specifically indicate that any school can refuse to administer medication. Beyond the Spectrum staff has agreed to administer medication in order to help our parents. If any parent causes confusion or fails to cooperate with our procedures, Beyond the Spectrum will refuse to administer medication after giving that parent notification. We are not allowed per safety and standard policy to dispense any oral medications.

The medication form includes the following:

1. Child’s name
2. Name of medication
3. Amount of medication to be given
4. Time(s) medication is to be administered
5. Beginning and ending date medication is to be given
6. Method by which medication is to be given (ex: orally, injection, topical, etc.)
7. **Please note, by law we cannot dispense liquid medication**

**STUDENT BEHAVIORS**

**An important goal of Beyond the Spectrum is modification of student behavior(s). Teachers and therapists work diligently to assist children with overcoming possible impediments to success. We rely on parents and guardians to continue the treatment plan initiated at school while the children are at home.**

**When we give a parent or guardian forms to complete, we ask you to return these forms on or before the requested due date. If we do not receive the forms on or before the initial due date, we will send parents and guardians a reminder. If the second due date passes and we have not received the forms, your child will not be allowed to return to their classes. Once we receive the completed forms, your child may then return to Beyond the Spectrum.**

# PARENT CUSTODY AND DOCUMENTATION

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide court documentation supporting custody rights or the revocation of parental rights of either parent/guardian. Beyond the Spectrum is required by law to act according to actions and requirements set forth by these legal documents. In the event there is no documentation provided, we are required to act according to the information provided on the student application. If there are any discrepancies in provided information, the enrolling parent/guardian will be contacted regarding the immediate situation. In the event the terms are not acceptable by either parent and/or legal guardian, Beyond the Spectrum will not hesitate to call 911 and request an officer be sent to oversee the situation and ensure the full intent of the family law.

Beyond the Spectrum works diligently to remain a neutral party in cases of divorce and custody. Employees will testify only when subpoenaed to appear.

**PARENT CONFERENCES/ REPORT CARDS/ PROGRESS NOTES**

During the school year, parent/teacher conferences and report/progress reports will follow the school schedule provided for you in your enrollment packet. Conferences are scheduled by the teacher or administration outside of classroom hours to discuss your child’s growth and progress. If there are pressing matters that need to be discussed with your child’s teacher, please send in a note requesting a phone call. Your child’s teacher will call you at their earliest convenience. Please feel free to request additional after--school meetings with the teacher and/or Director at any time during the year.

# GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If there is a disagreement with a policy or a decision, or if you are having a “problem” with your child’s teacher, please refrain from discussing this in front of your child or other parents. We ask that the following procedure be followed:

1. FIRST, speak directly with the teacher in question and try to correct the problem through communication
2. Schedule an appointment with the Program Director
3. Schedule a Parent/Teacher/Administrator conference

# PERSONAL ITEMS POLICY

Beyond the Spectrum provides age-appropriate toys, videos, and games. ***PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO BRING TOYS, VIDEOS, GAMES, OR ELECTRONIC DEVICES INCLUDING LAPTOPS, PHONES, AND TABLETS UNLESS USED FOR COMMUNICATION OR OTHERWISE APPROVED BY THE PROGRAM DIRECTOR.*** Beyond the Spectrum is not be responsible for lost personal items. All personal items such as clothing, lunch boxes, jackets, backpacks and sweaters, should be marked with your child’s name.

**Listening/Recording Devices: Personal location devices or electronic devices with two-way communication /listening capabilities are strictly prohibited. This allows us to ensure the privacy and safety of all staff, therapists and students according to national HIPAA regulations**

# Student Clothing/Supplies/Shoes

* Change of clothes include outer clothing, underwear and socks. Please place all clothing items in a large Ziploc bag and label with your child’s name)
* Lunch box with cool pack and a water bottle marked with child's name

# BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

If you wish to celebrate your child’s birthday, please notify the program director or classroom teacher and we can help plan the celebration. We have many children on restricted diets. Please notify us ahead of time so that we may have the children that are unable to partake of any items brought in provided by their families so that they may join in and celebrate as well.

# SNACKS AND LUNCHES

Parents are responsible for supplying student’s snacks and lunch. Please ensure you are sending an appropriate amount of food for your child to remain comfortable throughout the entire school day. Please send in silverware as needed. If your child is in aftercare, please provide a snack for that time. If your family is facing financial hardship causing food insecurity, inform any member of administration so that we may help ensure your child is adequately fed throughout the day.

**FUNDRAISING**

As a non-profit organization, fundraising is a very important cultural necessity that allows us to provide students with no cost therapies. We ask that you help us by participating in our fundraising efforts. Please share our campaigns on social media and among friends and family. No donation is too small and all efforts are appreciated tremendously.

**Weapons on Campus**

Weapons are NEVER allowed on Beyond the Spectrum property. This policy includes staff, parents, guardians and students. A “weapon,” as defined in section 2 of the *Criminal Code,*includes “anything used, designed to be used or intended for use (a) in causing death or injury to any person, or (b) for the purpose of threatening or intimidating any person, and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, includes a firearm and, for the purposes of sections 88, 267 and 272, anything used, designed to be used or intended for use in binding or tying up a person against their will.

Possession of a concealed carry permit does not exclude (an) individual/s from this policy.

Law enforcement will be contacted to oversee the situation if a weapon is discovered or if an individual is suspected of possessing a weapon. ALL individuals MAY BE subject to arrest pending law enforcement investigation. Any student violating this policy is subject to immediate dismissal. Any parent or guardian violating this policy is subject to trespassing or arrest. Any staff member violating this policy is subject to immediate dismissal.

Weapons include but are not limited to: firearms (loaded or unloaded), knives, tasers, brass knuckles, bats, hammers, chemicals/ poisons – anything ingested which could cause an adverse reaction such as nausea, vomiting, breathing difficulties, hypertension or hypotension.

This policy includes any and all handmade instruments fashioned for the purpose of threatening, intimidating or causing injury to another person.

**DISCLAIMER: Beyond the Spectrum administration, staff, teachers, teacher’s assistants and program directors have the right to search, without prior notice, a student, staff, parent or guardian’s person. This includes but is not limited to backpacks, purses, desks, lunch bags and pockets. Individuals are also subject to a “pat-down” if deemed necessary.**

Beyond the Spectrum administration reserves the right to amend the contents of this document with or without prior notice

# FLORIDA ABUSE HOTLINE

The Florida Abuse Hotline accepts reports 24 hours a day and 7 days a week of known or suspected child abuse, neglect, or abandonment and reports of known or suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of a vulnerable adult. If you suspect or know of a child or vulnerable adult in immediate danger, call 911.

To make a report you can: report online at <https://reportabuse.dcf.state.fl.us/>, call 1-800-962-2873, Florida Relay 711 or TTY 800-955-8771 or fax your report to 800-914-0004

Beyond the Spectrum administration and staff are State of Florida mandated abuse reporters and are required to report any concerns they may have. Beyond the Spectrum has NO LEGAL ability to discipline a reporting staff member up to and including termination.

**Beyond the Spectrum Parent and Student Handbook Acknowledgement**

This form acknowledges that I/we, the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of:

Print Student Name

have received, read, understand, and agree to abide by the policies and procedures stated in the Beyond the Spectrum Parent and Student Handbook.

I/we have read and understand all policies, including the following emphasized policies.

**(Please initial each line)**

\_\_\_\_\_ School hours are 8:30 – 2:30, Monday – Friday. Excess absences or tardiness may impact funding

\_\_\_\_\_ Student personal items policy – No toys or technology without director approval

\_\_\_\_\_ Financial policy – late payment policy

\_\_\_\_\_ Safety and security policies – Student will only be released to those listed on the pick-up form

\_\_\_\_\_ Medical and medication requirements – Parents must bring medications directly to front office

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent communication policy – Communicate through BEE binders and email

\_\_\_\_\_ Student health and attendance policy - Any student sent home sick must remain home for the entire following school day, at minimum

Parent/Guardian 1 Signature Date

Parent/Guardian 1 Signature Date

**Note: Please retain the Handbook for your records and return only the acknowledgement form. Thank you!**