



July 17, 2019

Dear Birchtree Families,

The 2019-20 school year is quickly approaching. I look forward to welcoming you back from what I hope was a fun and rejuvenating Alaskan summer.

I want to introduce a few new teachers to our Birchtree staff. At Kindergarten we have Ms. Camilla Lee, at 1st grade we have Ms. Tiffany Trice, at 2nd grade Ms. Cristina Casillo, and at 7th grade we have Ms. Marie-Louise Colver. Just so everyone is aware in a budget sensitive climate, these talented teachers were hired to fill already existing positions that were vacated at the end of last year, no new positions were created. These four teachers interviewed and were hired over the summer and we are excited to have them join our teaching family. Please welcome them when you have a chance and show them what Birchtree hospitality looks like.

As many of you have heard, this summer was a life-changing one for my family. One of my sons was diagnosed with brain cancer. Our time and energy has largely shifted to take care of his needs at this time. That being said, I want you to be aware of a returning Birchtree principal, Dr. Susan McCauley. She will be joining us to meet the school's administrative needs while I am focusing on my son's treatments. I will be back as soon as possible, but Dr. McCauley will be helping us move forward through the start of the school year. Dr. McCauley was the first principal at Birchtree and she has an in-depth knowledge of public education, Waldorf education, and our school. Please welcome her as well.

I am attaching the 3 policies (Attendance, Dress Code, and Commitment Hours) that were a focus of growth last year. We hope that they help you begin to schedule and plan your annual school calendars. Please read and review these documents as we will be asking you to sign off, at registration or before school begins, that you have read and will follow these policies.

Upcoming Dates to Remember:

- **In-Person Registration:** August 6-8th, August 6th and 7th will be from 9-3pm and the 8th will be from 1-7pm.
- **Open House:** August 15th: Come meet and greet the staff and visit the classrooms at either 5pm or 6pm, your choice.
- **1st Day of School for Students Grades 2-8:** August 16th, school starts at 8:30am and you can drop off any time after 8:00am. School ends at 3pm and students will all be brought outside for pick-up at that time.
- **1st Day of School for Students K-1:** August 23rd. K and 1st students will be contacted by those teachers for roll-in times the week of the 19th.

We look forward to seeing you at registration and we look forward to another great year at Birchtree.

Warmly,
Brandt Bowen
Principal



Attendance Policy

As a school, we greatly value rhythm and regularity. Both contribute to our students' individual and collective well-being in ways that are subtle and profound. Little else replaces the experience of lessons delivered as live education, particularly in Waldorf education where learning especially during the main lesson time is primarily auditory.

Expectations for Attendance

1. Class begins promptly at 8:30 and students are expected to be in class by that time.
Drop-off time at 8:20 helps to ensure that your child will be ready to begin the school day on time.
2. Absences will be recorded as follows:
 - a. Students who arrive between 8:30 and 8:40 will be counted as tardy.
 - b. Students who arrive between 8:40 and 11:00 will be counted for a half-day absence.
 - c. Students who arrive after 11:00 or leave prior to 11:00 will be counted for a full day absence.
 - d. Students who leave prior to 2:00 will be counted for a half-day absence.
3. Consequences of Chronic Tardiness & Absence
 - a. For students with 8 or more absences at any time during the school year, a written notice will be sent to parents reminding them of our attendance expectations.
 - b. For students with 12 or more absences any time during the school year, a conference will be held via phone call or face-to-face meeting to discuss how to improve the child's attendance at school, including the consideration of other schooling alternatives.
 - c. For students with 15 or more absences within a school year, a notice of "probationary enrollment" for the remainder of the semester will be sent to parents. For parents who wish to continue the enrollment of their children at Birchtree, parents will be asked to sign an Attendance Contract committing to

their child's improved attendance. The contract will consider how school staff can provide assistance to parents and to the child towards improving their child's attendance.

- d. Any student who has 20 absences will be dropped from enrollment at either the last day of the first semester (December) or the last day of the second semester (May). Parents may re-enter the lottery for the following year, but any preference for the lottery will not be re-instated.
- e. Extenuating circumstances will be considered only for medical issues, child custody issues, and/or family illness. Valid documentation of the issue would need to be provided to the school.
- f. Any school sponsored activity such as Battle of the Books or a class field trip if the activity is during the school day would not be considered an absence for the student.

Family Travel

Please attempt to schedule family travel during school vacation times. Family travel is still considered an absence per the attendance policy, however, if family travel occurs during the school year the following criteria needs to be followed to maintain the student's academic level:

- a) Written notice of at least 2 weeks is provided to the teacher.
- b) A plan is developed with the teacher for the completion of commensurate work.
- c) The plan is completed to the teacher's satisfaction.



Dress Code Policy

Our goal is to foster a learning environment with minimal distractions for students and to help prepare our students for high school and future employment opportunities.

Media, Logos, Images

In the spirit of Waldorf-inspired education, we do not allow clothing with media references or large logos or images. This expectation applies to all other parts of our dress code policy that follows. In order to reduce classroom distractions, we respectfully ask that students refrain from wearing clothing with media images such as large commercial logos or cartoon characters. Alternatives to the above would be clothing comprised of: solid colors, stripes, polka dots, or patterns. Outerwear with small brand logos are acceptable.

Concert and Assemblies

Concert and Assembly attire is expected to be simple, clean, neat and in alignment with the standards expected during the school day.

Hats

Hats and caps may be worn out-of-doors and are expected to be worn outside during cold weather. Once inside all hats/caps need to be removed and kept in backpacks.

Hoodies

Clothing with hoodies may be worn but the hoods should be off while indoors. After a warning, violators will be asked to tuck their hood into the back of their clothing.

Shirts/Dresses

Sleeveless shirts that fit appropriately around the arms as to not expose undergarments may be worn. Shirts may not be see-through, low-cut, and may not expose cleavage or midriff, while the student is stationary or while in motion.

Pants/Shorts/Skirts

Skirts and shorts must not be higher than three (3) inches above the knee. Low cut pants that reveal midriff and/or show your underwear may not be worn. Pants with holes above the knee, may be worn if leggings or tights are worn under them or they meet the (3) inch rule. If you wear leggings, jeggings, skin-tights, yoga pants, riding pants or other similar very tight pants, they should not be partially opaque or see through above the knees. In addition, your top must be at thigh length when wearing these types of pants or leggings. Pants that are too loose should have a belt or suspenders to avoid revealing undergarments or private parts. Pajamas and sleep-wear such as jammie-pants are prohibited.

Shoes

Please choose plain shoes that do not include electronic lights, sounds, wheels, or commercially produced pictures. Shoes need to be worn at all times in the building.

Body Art

Markings or drawings on the skin are prohibited. This includes writing on the skin with permanent or semi-permanent ink, stickers, glitter, and temporary tattoos.

Scents and Fragrances

Products that contain fragrances should be applied at home and should not be brought to school. To protect those students and adults in the school with sensitivities and/or allergies, apply perfumes, aftershaves, deodorants, and other products that contain fragrances as directed. Students need to be mindful of personal hygiene and take the necessary steps toward personal grooming.

Dress Code Violation Consequences

Students who do not meet the dress code will receive a written warning to be signed by their parent. Students may be sent to the office until suitable clothing is obtained for the school day. If a student does not have a suitable change of clothing, parents will be called and asked to bring in appropriate clothing or take their student home to change into something appropriate. Frequent violations of the dress Code Policy will result in a parent/teacher/student conference and may be subject to disciplinary action.



Commitment Hours Policy

Mandatory Commitment hours-36 hours/family

In order to maintain a sense of school community the APC passed the following policy: Beginning August 1, 2018, thirty-six Birchtree Commitment Hours will be required by each family. Providing learning experiences that focus on the head, heart and hands requires an increase of community support. The goal is to involve as many families as possible through attendance, participation, and service. Any time spent in service to our school community and culture demonstrate commitment to our school and count toward the 36 cumulative hours. Hours will be calculated April 1- April 1. If meeting hours becomes a challenge, families can work with the volunteer coordinator. If commitment hours are not met, the children will be unenrolled for the following school year. The family may enter the lottery for the following year to reenroll the children. On rare occasions, there may be family hardships that keep a family from meeting commitment hours. In cases of hardship, the family may petition the principal for a waiver.

Below are some possible school functions and activities where attendance and/or participation can count for family commitment hours:

- Parent Nights
- Festivals
- Helping in classrooms
- Projects assigned by teacher
- Grounds work (mowing, weeding, etc.)
- Sports/After school activities
- Field trips
- Cleaning classrooms
- Specialty skills
- Needs shared by teachers/office
- Tasks assigned by a teacher to complete at home
- Working with students in small groups within the classroom
- Supporting in Kindergarten or other classrooms
- Shoveling/sweeping sidewalks
- Time soliciting items for the annual 8th grade auction
- Mentoring Project for 8th graders

Upper grades (grades 6-8), are required to do 10, 15, and 20 service hours for grades 6, 7, and 8 respectively. Student service hours completed for the school count towards family commitment hours. Teachers will keep families informed of hours completed by upper grades students.

Commitment hours may be completed by any family members providing service that directly supports the school or a school sponsored event.

Commitment hours can also be satisfied by purchasing items needed for the school valued at \$20 per commitment hour or donating cash at a rate of \$20 per commitment hour.

Hours should be logged at the front office or via a mobile device. Information on how to do this is available by stopping by or calling the front office.

Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District

Birchtree Charter School Calendar

2019-2020

S M T W T F S

JULY						
	1	2	3	H	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

AUGUST						
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	PD	PD	WD	PD	SO	17
18	19	20	21	ER	23	24
25	26	27	28	ER	30	31

SEPTEMBER						
1	H	3	4	ER	6	7
8	9	10	11	ER	13	14
15	16	17	18	ER	20	21
22	23	24	25	ER	27	28
29	30					

OCTOBER						
	1	2	ER	4	5	
6	7	8	9	ER	11	12
13	14	15	16	ER	18	19
20	21	22	23	ER	25	26
27	28	29	30	PC		

NOVEMBER						
				PD	2	
3	4	5	6	ER	8	9
10	11	12	13	ER	15	16
17	18	19	20	ER	22	23
24	25	26	V	H	H	30

DECEMBER						
1	PD	3	4	ER	6	7
8	9	10	11	ER	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	WD	21
22	V	V	H	V	V	28
29	V	V				

August

6-8	On site Registration
12-13	Professional Development Day (PD)
14	Work Day for Teachers (WD)
15	Professional Development Day (PD)
16	School Opens for 2-8
16-22	Kindergarten & 1st grade Roll in
23	School Opens for Kindergarten & 1st

September

2	Labor Day Holiday (H)
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October

31	Parent Teacher Conference (PC)
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November

1	Professional Development Day (PD)
27	Vacation Day (V)
28-29	Thanksgiving Holiday (H)

December

2	Professional Development Day (PD)
19	Semester 1 Ends (83 Days)
20	Work Day for Teachers (WD)
21-31	Winter Vacation (V)
25	Christmas Holiday (H)

January

1	New Years Day (H)
2-5	Winter Vacation (V)
20	Martin Luther King Jr. Day (H)

March

5	Parent Teacher Conferences (PC)
6	Professional Development Day (PD)
9-13	Spring Vacation

May

19	School Closes/Semester 2 Ends (89 Days)
20	Professional Development Day (PD)
21-22	Work Days for Teachers (WD)

ER indicates early release dismissal at 2 PM

S M T W T F S

JANUARY						
			H	V	V	4
5	6	7	8	ER	10	11
12	13	14	15	ER	17	18
19	H	21	22	ER	24	25
26	27	28	29	ER	31	

FEBRUARY						
						1
2	3	4	5	ER	7	8
9	10	11	12	ER	14	15
16	17	18	19	ER	21	22
23	24	25	26	ER	28	29

MARCH						
1	2	3	4	PC	PD	7
8	V	V	V	V	V	14
15	16	17	18	ER	20	21
22	23	24	25	ER	27	28
29	30	31				

APRIL						
			1	ER	3	4
5	6	7	8	ER	10	11
12	13	14	15	ER	17	18
19	20	21	22	ER	24	25
26	27	28	29	ER		

MAY						
					1	2
3	4	5	6	ER	8	9
10	11	12	13	ER	15	16
17	18	SC	PD	WD	WD	23
24	H	26	27	28	29	30
31						

JUNE						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

