



BEYOND THE BOOKS

Student and Parent Handbook
2024-2025

Dear Beyond the Books Family,

Thank you for joining Beyond the Books Education! We look forward to a wonderful year of growing and learning! Please read this policies and procedures handbook carefully to learn more about how we run our association.

This handbook should be the guide to answering all of your questions. Please feel free to contact us if you have any remaining concerns!

We look forward to seeing you in September!

Sincerely,

Nicole Gries

Director & Owner of Beyond the Books



BEYOND THE BOOKS

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Policies and Procedures

2024-2025

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1. About Beyond the Books Education

Mission statement

At Beyond the books, we have faith in educating the whole child and tailoring learning to meet the needs of each individual student. We have a firm belief that each child learns differently. When children are kinesthetically engaged, their learning is more profound. When children learn using a multi-sensory approach, they grasp a much deeper understanding.

Beyond the Books is a private homeschool group that fosters the enrichment of the whole child. It is through creativity, imagination, social skills, self-interests, and problem solving that discovery is ignited. We strive to develop the whole human being in order to help each child reach their intellectual, emotional, social, creative and inquisitive potential in school and life.

Philosophy

We believe that the experiences children have, and the tools they are given, during the first years of learning are crucial to a child's development academically, socially and emotionally. We believe that quality education has the following:

- Hands on learning that allows children to learn by doing.
- Experiences that are based on students' interests and help them foster a love for learning.
- Learning that is geared toward a child's ability level and not just their grade level to promote confidence and motivation, and not frustration.
- Small class sizes to allow individual student attention.
- A balance of teacher-directed student learning, creative expression, and child-directed independent learning.
- A nurturing environment promoting kindness, respect, communication, and peaceful problem solving.

Our association strives to encompass these characteristics.

Goals:

- Provide a structured and balanced academic program that provides various opportunities to explore interests in art, yoga, theater, cooking and more.
- Establish a foundation for lifelong learning by encouraging problem solving, experimentation, research, curiosity and perseverance.
- Establish a nurturing, loving environment based on cooperation, respect, kindness, communication and problem solving, where all children are valued.
- Increase each child's abilities in communication and relationship building, compromise, respecting differences in opinion and showing kindness.

2. About the director

Hello families! My name is Nicole Gries and I am the owner and director of Beyond the Books Education which was founded in 2022! I love baking, watching movies, sitting on my porch and traveling. My husband (and partner in founding BtB) have two beautiful little boys and a dog. Our sons are 7 and 5 and are very active and love to work outside with their tractors and shovels 10 months out of the year (would be 12 if we let them!). They both were homeschooled since diapers (they've always had an eagerness to learn and my oldest was reading at 18 months!) and never attended a public preschool or kindergarten setting. The public education setting was changing and I was not happy with how I was expected to teach young children, so I knew I would be able to educate them the way I felt was best at home. They both attend Beyond the Books now and I am so grateful to have them here with me!

Prior to starting this program, I had been a public school teacher for over 10 years, after working as an aid in a private preschool for 6 years. After graduating from Monmouth University in 2012 with degrees in elementary education K-5, special education, English as a second language, and Anthropology, I was hired in Keyport as a second grade inclusive (for ESL) teacher. After that, I spent the next 8 years as a first grade inclusive teacher, before becoming an ESL teacher for first through fifth grade. In 2019, I applied for a job at my dream school in Manalapan, where I went to school as a child. I eagerly accepted the position as a kindergarten teacher one month before lockdown began and we went virtual. It was not the way I wanted to start my new position but it made me work even harder to assure that my kindergarteners didn't miss a beat being out of school. The entire class elected to follow me to first grade the following year. When mandates began, being a person that does not even take an aspirin for a headache and has never gotten a flu shot, I knew I would have to make a very difficult decision. I resigned 10 days before the school year began. I decided I would find a way to do what I love to do, how I know it should be done, and provide families with another option. In 10 days, I turned a basement into a classroom and was able to round up 12 students (some from my class the previous 2 years!) and start a first and second grade learning pod.

My experiences in a low income district, a top rated district, homeschooling my children and teaching in a basement, have shaped the educator I am today. When the standardized tests are gone, the technology is absent and academics are tailored to each child in a multi-sensory manner, children flourish, become vibrant and in a sense; organic. They start to play pretend, ask questions, wonder, WANT to challenge themselves and learn more. That is the mission of Beyond the Books; to provide an educational experience that ignites and develops the whole child, that

nurtures every child's individual strengths, encourages their love of learning and helps shape them to be their own powerful, confident, unique little person.

3. Hours of operation

Academic year:

We generally follow the MERS school calendar with a few minor changes due to our occupancy at Ivy League. We will begin our year in mid September and end mid June. (Dates to be determined.)

Class schedules:

Classes begin promptly at 8:00 with our Morning Meeting. Students may begin to be dropped off at 7:50. Our day ends promptly at 2:00. We are a firm believer in the family unit and choose to have this early start and early ending so that extended family time can be valuable.

Closures:

We generally follow the Manalapan Englishtown Regional school calendar. A calendar will be given to you with our welcome packet before the year begins which will tell you when we are in session. The calendar can also be found on our website. If MERS and/or Sportika is closed due to inclement weather, we will be closed too. Parents will be notified via the Remind app and the Facebook page if we are closing.

4. Enrollment

Enrollment:

Enrollment is handled on a first come, first serve basis, with priority given to our current families. When you enroll your child, you must sign the membership application, fill out the registration forms and pay the first month's membership fee. This money will be utilized to pay for your child's math textbooks, Wilson tile and white boards and other necessary curriculum and classroom materials.

Beyond the Books will not exceed 10 children in the pre-k/k class and 12-14 children in the first through fourth grade classes (some students follow a special schedule). In the event that a class fills up, a waitlist will be created and openings will be filled based on availability. If you enroll your child in the middle of a month during our academic year, membership for that month will be prorated. It will be divided by the number of academic days in that month to give you the amount you will pay per day until the end of the month. This amount will be paid in one payment upon enrollment.

Beyond the Books reserves the right to accept or reject a family (or learner) that is not in the best interest of the association. Every reasonable attempt will be

made to connect the family with a facility that is better suited for the child's needs in the least restrictive environment.

Withdrawal:

When a sudden life change occurs (like a move or job loss), you may need to withdraw your child from the association. Should you withdraw your child prior to the beginning of our academic year, a 50% refund will be granted due to the fact that we have already purchased materials for your child. If you need to withdraw during the year, a written notice is required to terminate membership, effective immediately. No refunds will be given. Exceptions are at the discretion of the board of trustees.

Refunds:

No refunds will be given for days missed due to illness, weather, vacation or the like.

Termination:

Beyond the Books reserves the right to immediately terminate enrollment for reasons including, but not limited to, the following:

- Non-payment of membership after 5 days
- A parent becomes confrontational with any staff member or the families it serves
- A parent displays inappropriate behavior on the grounds of BtB. This includes but is not limited to, language and actions that are vulgar, abusive, dangerous, or sexually suggestive.
- A student demonstrates behavior that is dangerous, violent, sexually suggestive or shows consistent bullying towards another student.

*Termination for these reasons does not entitle the family reimbursement of any monies paid.

5. Membership and fees

Membership:

When you enroll, you agree to enter into a 10-month contract with the intention of keeping your child in Beyond the Books for the full year. You also agree to pay the full year's membership, payable in monthly payments; however, BtB does not believe in locking you in. We understand that life circumstances can change and you may need to withdraw your child from our program during the year (Please see withdrawal and termination). The first payment is due upon registration with each payment due by the 1st day of each month for 9 additional consecutive payments beginning October 1st. The last payment is due June 1st, 2024. If you need to pay biweekly on the 1st and 15th, that option is available. A full month's membership is due every month from September to June regardless of the number of days off, or missed.. Membership will NOT be prorated due to winter break, spring break or in June when we are only in session for half of the month.

** See below for enrollment fee information

Prek4 & Kindergarten rates:MWF 8:00-12:00 - \$550 per month/ MTWF 8:00-12:00 - \$650 per month/M-F 8:00-12:00 - \$750 per month/M-F 8:00-2:00 - \$850 per month
First - fourth rates: M-F 8:00-2:00 - \$850

Payment procedures:

Payments can be made via cash or check payable to Beyond the Books. Cash is preferred and appreciated, as we pay our rent on the same day membership fees are due and allows the money to process immediately to pay our rent. Electronic transfers such as Zelle and Venmo are NOT accepted. (Venmo is accepted ONLY for fundraisers when mentioned). If you are looking for a more convenient option, many banks offer a program to automatically set up payments to be mailed out on the first of each month. Feel free to look into this option at your bank.

Fees:

Membership is considered late after the 2nd of each month. A \$40 late fee will be charged on any payment received by the 3rd of the month. If membership is late for an additional 2 days, another \$40 late fee will be applied by the 5th of the month. If membership has not been received by the 6th, your child will no longer be enrolled in Beyond the Books and membership will be terminated until the full tuition and the late fees are paid.. If there are extenuating circumstances regarding your finances, please contact the director to discuss how we may be able to work with you better.

Late pickup:

You should be prompt when picking up your child with the expectation that all students will be picked up no later than 2:15. However, it is a fact of life that unexpected events occur. Therefore, you will be given a one-time "excused" late pick up. Each additional late pick up after 2:30 will result in a \$10 late pick up fee.

Refunds:

Enrolling your child reserves a spot for that child. The monthly membership payment is due whether or not your child attends. No credit or refund is due for your child's missed days due to sickness or vacation.

6. During the day

Clothing:

Our indoor classrooms are climate controlled. We try to get our students outside everyday as long as it is not too cold. We ask that you check the weather daily to assure your child is dressed comfortably for outdoor play. On days we are inside, we have access to the facility's turf and basketball courts where students can run, and participate in sports, or in our classrooms where they can engage in dramatic play and art.. We still ask that you consider this when dressing your child and selecting their shoes.

Physical Education:

Beyond the Books is proud to partner with Sportika for our physical education program. Once a week (usually on Friday) a coach from Sportika will provide an hour lesson for our students. The Prek/K students will have it for a half hour, while the rest of the students (1st-4th grade) will have it for the full hour. Students will participate in games and sports that promote sportsmanship, teamwork, agility training, problem solving and so much more. It is important to wear sneakers and dress comfortably on these days.

What to bring:

Your child will have an area to store their backpack and jackets. Full day students need to bring lunch with them daily, and a snack. Half day students need to bring a healthy and filling snack each day. Please refrain from lunches that require heating as we do not have microwaves in the classrooms. Please use a thermos if your child's lunch needs to remain warm.

Absences:

Please inform your child's educator, or the director, if your child is going to be absent for the day, or an extended period of time. Please make every effort to have your child be present and on time every day. Consistency is important!

Homework:

We believe that a small amount of homework is a necessary part of the teaching and learning process. Homework is assigned in Kindergarten through fourth grade to reinforce or review what is being taught. Parents are encouraged to keep a constant check on assignments.

7. Arrival and departure**Arrival:**

Children should arrive promptly by 8:00, having already eaten breakfast. Drop off will begin at 7:50. Students will wait with their educator until all students in their class have arrived. They will then be escorted to their classrooms to begin their day.

Departure:

Parents/guardians should arrive promptly at 2:00 to pick up their child (12:00 for half day program students). Our pick up window is from 2:00-2:15 with a 15 minute grace period after that. All late pick ups after 2:30 will be charged a late fee. (See membership and fees)

Upon departure, if there were any concerns with your child during the day, we will briefly let you know, and we may call you after the day is over to discuss the matter in more detail. If you have any additional concerns, please reach out to your child's educator or the director after the academic day so you can have our full attention.

Child release:

Only adults authorized on the Child Pick Up Form will be allowed to take your child home. Please let the director know if there are any changes in the routine schedule of who is picking up your child. In the event of an emergency, and you need to send someone not listed on the registration form, you must call to notify the educator and the person you have designated will have to show proof of identification.

In the case of special custody arrangements between the child's parents, please provide complete detailed instructions and any legal documentation when enrolling your child. All instructions will be enforced by Beyond the Books.

8. Curriculum

Overview:

We have carefully selected a curriculum that has proven effectiveness in academic success after many years of teaching. Our curriculum is standard based, but there are modifications made to assure that students are learning in a kinesthetic manner everyday. Students will learn reading, phonics, math, spelling, writing, grammar, social studies and science. Surrounding and within our curriculum based lessons, students will have meaningful conversations to engage their interests, share and learn to regulate their emotions, and learn effective communication and relationship building skills. They will participate in compliment circles to share kindness and learn to be compassionate towards others. They will engage in various problem solving exercises to build their abilities in communication and compromise. They will learn affirmations to promote self love and awareness. Our method of teaching to the whole child is to empower them in all aspects of life. We do not believe in teaching any sort of Critical Race Theory or gender studies, as we strive to teach children that every single person is different and to value and appreciate the differences in one another. We feel strongly that these types of teachings are a parents' responsibility.

Pre-K 3 & 4 - currently not available

Students in our Pre-K 4 & Kindergarten combination class will be taught using a curriculum that pulls from various programs and philosophies such as High Scope

and Montessori, as well as the director's personal philosophy from many years of teaching and homeschooling. Our program is almost entirely student led, but provides a strong academic foundation. It is designed to allow students to explore, interact, socialize and problem solve while exercising their creative imagination through purposeful play. There will be components of individual and social play where children gain knowledge through interacting with their environment. Small group and workshop time will allow students to develop foundational skills as well as begin literacy development using Wilson Foundations. Our kindergarteners will be using MyMath for hands-on mathematics learning. Students will also have individual time with the educator to work on specific skills for each child. Educators play a purposeful role working alongside children during play to encourage learning.

First through fourth grade

The following standard based curriculum will be used to instruct grades 1-4, as well as aspects of them in kindergarten and Pre-K. Students in these grade levels will be taught on their personal ability level for language arts and math. Therefore, during these times, students may rotate to another classroom for instruction tailored to their needs.

Wilson Foundations

Wilson Foundations is a completely hands on approach to learning phonics, reading, writing, handwriting and spelling. At the beginning stages, students use picture keywords to correlate to letters, sounds and even lines on a paper to learn proper letter formation. Once letters are learned, students use tile boards to kinesthetically make, read and spell words as well as learn alphabetical order. They will take words apart, build words and even mark words as they get into the higher grades to identify word parts. Wilson does not just teach students about grammar and how to spell, but gives them a deeper understanding of WHY words are formed and spelled a certain way so that they can apply this knowledge to more challenging reading and writing in the future. Grammar is taught throughout lessons, but is taught independently in the 4th grade.

MyMath

My Math is a common core structured math program that focuses on building confidence in a specific skill before moving on to the next one. It encourages students to talk about math, explain their thinking process and build math fact fluency. It encourages and utilizes the use of math manipulatives in all stages and lessons. At Beyond the Books, we will also be supplementing with student-centered math games that align with the skills students are learning to continue building practice, confidence and enjoyment of mathematics.

Writing

Our writing program was created by another teacher (not one of our own) and gives children exemplary writing instruction with ample opportunity to practice everyday. This program allows children to write the kinds of books that they enjoy reading, as well as give meaning to their writing by allowing them to choose the topics and write about what is important or interesting to them. Children receive valuable scaffolded instruction using mentor texts from some of their favorite authors to guide their writing process. Students' efforts are shared and celebrated along the way.

Social studies and science

Social studies and science skills are based on the NJ content standards. We use various teacher created (not one of our own) curriculums that are creatively designed to be hands on, experimental and engaging. Our Pre-K and Kindergarten Science program is entirely student discovery based. It ignites curiosity, gives daily experiences in exploring scientific topics and has a STEM center in the classroom where students can visit during playtime to continue to explore what they are learning in their lessons. At BtB, although our teacher-created social studies curriculum is amazing, informative and engaging, we try to make social studies come to life. This may include bringing in visitors or parents to share their jobs for community learning, running drills with a US Army Sergeant for Veteran's Day, taking field trips and so much more!

9. Daily schedule

The daily schedule will vary amongst the grades and will be shared with you with corresponding times for each part of the day once it has been finalized. Please note that each group will have similar aspects of the day. Morning meetings are an important part of our day, helping us to build relationships, learn about one another, practice kindness and teamwork. We start with the pledge of allegiance, do the calendar and participate in different expressive activities such as a compliment circle, Little Talk, affirmations, news or a team building exercise. We then review what our day will look like. All students will have recess together - prek for a half hour of dramatic play in the room followed by a half hour with the rest of the grade levels. Grades 1-4 will have a full hour all together. Below you can find a general idea of what a day will look like.

Prek4 & Kindergarten

- Soft start play while educator does one on one interventions with students
- Morning meeting
- Wilson phonics and sight words
- Math

- Snack
- Workshops (word work games, letters and sounds, writing, phonics games, choice time, guided reading and more)
- Read aloud and retell or activity
- science/social studies
- Recess in the classroom in dramatic play areas
- Recess with all students indoors in the gym or on the playground
- Friday Special will look different. See section on Friday Special

First through fourth grade

- Do now or gratitude journals while educator does one on one interventions
- Morning meeting
- Wilson phonics and sight words in leveled classes
- Workshops and guided reading in leveled classes (reading, letters and sounds, writing, sight words, choice, games, poetry and more)
- Math in leveled classes
- Recess with all students indoors in the gym or on the playground
- Lunch
- Social studies/science
- Writing
- Friday Special will look different. See section on Friday Special

10. Special occasions

Field trips

We will take several field trips throughout the year to local attractions. We will do our best to keep field trips at a low cost. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend these trips, and family members of all ages are welcome to come along, although additional people will have to pay the admission price that our students pay. The field trips require additional parental supervision and transportation. If you are unable to attend the field trip, we will ask your permission to allow your child to be transported and escorted with another parent. Educators will help to arrange this.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a special milestone for a child so it is important for us to celebrate them in the classroom! Feel free to bring in a special birthday treat and we will sing Happy Birthday after the students have eaten their lunches or snacks. Beyond the Books is NOT peanut free; therefore, if your child has a peanut allergy, we recommend sending in a special snack that day which is safe for your child to eat.

Holidays

Traditional holidays will be celebrated in a variety of ways. Students may make decorations for them, engage in activities about them or discuss the history and beliefs behind the holidays. For Christmas for example, students will celebrate all week long making gifts, gingerbread houses, a holiday party, making cookies, drinking hot chocolate, playing games and watching a festive movie. On Saint Patrick's day students will create Leprechaun traps in hopes of catching a sneaky little Leprechaun. On Halloween, students will participate in a parade around the building, followed by a trunk or treat experience. All children will participate unless a letter is submitted indicating that you wish your child to be excused from doing so. Children not participating will engage in other fun learning activities. Again, if your child has an allergy, please send in special snacks for them on holidays.

Additional important occasions

Parents night - TBT in September

Parent conferences - Dates TBD 2x per year

Prek/Kindergarten graduation - TBD

End of year celebration - TBD

11. Your child's health

Cleanliness Methods:

In an effort to reduce the spread of germs, children will be reminded to wash their hands after using the bathroom, before eating and after recess. Classrooms will have sanitizer for those who wish to clean their hands at additional times throughout the day. Hygiene, such as coughing and sneezing into the elbow, using tissues and not sharing food and drinks are continuously discussed. All furniture and materials are wiped down and disinfected after meals and when necessary. Our classrooms and bathrooms will be cleaned everyday after dismissal by the janitorial staff of Sportika.

Illnesses:

Despite our best efforts, children do get sick. Keeping your child home when he or she is showing signs of a cold, fever, or any other illness or virus prevents the spread of germs to other children. If in doubt, it is best to keep your child at home. When your child is sick, please call your child's educator or the director, to let us know he or she will not be in attendance that day. If a child becomes ill during the day, he or she will be made comfortable while a parent is notified to pick up the ill child.

Children should remain home until they have been clear of the following symptoms

for 24 hours: strep throat, vomiting, rash, diarrhea, eye discharge or pink eye, fever of 101F or greater, lice or nits in the hair.

Beyond the Books does not require testing for COVID-19; however, if your child is showing symptoms such as fever, congestion, headache, loss of taste and/or smell, please keep them home until they are symptom free for 72 hours. The same applies for if you decide to test your child, and the result is positive. Beyond the Books does not require a quarantine time, nor will we go virtual for a positive case of Covid-19. Please let us know immediately if your child is exposed to or contracts a contagious disease.

Immunizations:

Beyond the Books is committed to medical freedom and will not require any member to receive immunizations or the Covid-19 shot, nor will we ask you for that personal information.

Allergies:

Beyond the Books is NOT a peanut free program. If your child has a severe peanut allergy, we kindly suggest that this may not be the right fit for you and will help you find a more suitable learning environment. If your child's peanut allergy is oral in the sense that they can be around peanuts but not ingest it, please let us know and we will assure that they do not come in contact or ingest anything other than what you provide them. In this case, please make sure to pack your child their own special snack for birthday or holiday celebrations. If your child has any other allergies, please let us know.

Administering medication:

If your child needs to be given medicine during the day, you will need to provide verbal and written permission and instructions. The medicine must be kept in its original container, clearly labeled with your child's name. Medications will be kept out of reach of children and will be administered by the director or the child's educator. This will be discussed with the parent.

Lice:

If you suspect your child has lice, you must contact the director immediately. Children may not return to Beyond the Books until after they have been treated with an approved shampoo/conditioner and all nits are removed and they are examined by a doctor and provided clearance.

12. Your child's safety

Emergency and Accident procedures:

We stress carefulness and safety at Beyond the Books. Children are supervised at all times. Materials and equipment are checked thoroughly to make sure they are in safe and working condition. Cleaning supplies and medications are kept out of children's reach. However, accidents do happen. Beyond the Books does not have a nurse on site; however, we are trained in CPR and first aid. All educators have a backpack in the classroom, which travels with them when the class moves around the building, that has first aid supplies, a choking device and each child's emergency contact form. In the event of a medical emergency, 911 will be called. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible in the event of any illness or injury requiring immediate medical assistance. Emergency forms are kept in the backpacks, as well as in an easily obtained file for quick reference. You will be notified of any illness or injury that occurs, whether big or small, while your child is in our care.

Child abuse:

By law, any person responsible for the care of children must report to Child Protective Services any suspicion of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, child neglect or exploitation. We are not obligated by law to inform parents if the police or Child Protective Services have been called about possible abuse.

Emergency drills:

For the safety of all children, emergency fire drills will be practiced routinely throughout the year, as well as one lock down drill.

13. Behavior

At Beyond the Books, we are committed to fostering kindness, compassion, respect, trust and care. Our educators only use positive reinforcement in their classrooms to acknowledge and encourage good behavior and choices. They design communication and social relationship activities in their morning meetings and throughout the day to teach our students the importance of treating others fairly and respectfully. To support this type of nurturing environment, we do not allow any fighting, pushing, kicking, hitting, name calling, bullying, physical aggression or exclusion at our association. We will help your child identify and appropriately express their emotions, as well as guide them in using conflict resolution and communication skills to help solve their problems.

Beyond the Books is a happy, loving environment; however, disagreements between children do occur from time to time! We always encourage children to try

and solve their problems on their own using communication or an "I message" first. If that does not work, an educator will step in, get down on their level, and guide them in doing so. Each child will get a chance to talk and express their feelings and why they are feeling that way. We try to encourage children to see the other person's point of view even if they still disagree. If the students cannot come to a resolution, then we direct each child to another activity. Students will be taught how to apologize properly for negative behavior in order to recognize what they did and that it was wrong. If the behavior is violent or consistent, a parent will be notified and sometimes a conference will be held to discuss how we can get the child to improve in their decision making. In the event that a violent or aggressive behavior is continuous, BtB reserves the right to assist the family in finding an alternative educational environment.

14. Parental Involvement

At Beyond the Books, we strongly encourage parental involvement in a child's educational journey. Children need to know that their biggest supporters are proud of what they are doing on a daily basis. Parents are encouraged to attend field trips and provide transportation for additional children if needed. Parents are expected to discuss concerns or questions with us. Parents are expected to read all notes and newsletters that go home. Parents are expected to aid children in completing their homework and supporting their academic growth at home. Twice a year, parents should attend conferences with their child's educator. Parents should sign up for the Beyond the Books group with the Remind 101 app, as well as the Remind group for their child's class. Parents should encourage their child's positive behavior and discuss with them any issues they had during the day.

Parent volunteers:

Volunteers are welcome at Beyond the Books! Friday Special is a great opportunity to get involved in your child's class. Whether it is by being a lucky listener and listening to your child read, assisting your child's class with an experiment, art project, or special activity. Each educator will inform the parents of their class about great opportunities to get involved in! In addition, parent helpers are welcome to assist our educators during the day by supporting them in the classroom, allowing them to have more 1 on 1 time with children. After the first month (to allow students the time to settle into their new routines), a volunteer sign-up sheet will be available.

Fundraisers:

Because Beyond the Books is a completely private homeschool group, we do not receive any funding from any outside sources. We try to plan monthly fundraisers to help us raise money to pay for programs like gym with a Sportika coach, other special programs, material and supplies. Please consider donating throughout the year, or participating in these monthly fundraisers to help us create the best environment and year for our students.

15. Friday Special

Friday Special at Beyond the Books is exactly that! We want to make sure that students are exposed to a variety of activities, life skills, social situations and of course FUN! Students get a chance to work with their peers on games and activities that support what they learned that week, while educators work in small groups. Students will have time on Friday to express their creativity and engage in arts and crafts or science experiments that correlate with what they learned that week. We try to make sure there is a group science lab project and a group arts and craft each week. In addition, all students will have their monthly "special" every Friday. Unlike public school, where students have art, music, library and gym, we like to expose our students to more that our world has to offer such as culinary arts, theater, yoga, life skills, and more! Parent volunteers are welcome on Friday. Please speak to your child's educator or the director for how to sign up!

16. Communication**Assessments:**

Beyond the Books does not believe in standardized testing. We strive for meaningful teaching and utilize assessments that help drive our instruction. At the Pre-k level, students are assessed several times throughout the year (fall, winter, spring) on numbers, letters, their name, colors, shapes and more to track their growth. These results are shared with parents at conferences. At the K-4 level, students' reading is tracked using the DRA which is given 3 times during the year. Sight words, letter recognition and basic number and counting skills will be assessed three times as well. Math tests are given at the end of each chapter and Wilson Foundations tests will be given at the end of each unit. Spelling tests will be at the discretion of the educator. Educators will use this data to determine how to alter their instruction to meet the needs of their students. Physical test grades will be sent home with parents. All other assessments will be discussed during conferences. Report cards will be given out 3 times a year.

Newsletter and Remind:

We keep parents informed of their children's daily activities in several ways. Each educator is required to send out either a weekly newsletter detailing any special events and activities for each month. They will also utilize their own class's Remind 101 group to communicate with parents individually or as a whole. Frequent updates will also be posted on our private Facebook group or website to showcase our daily learning fun.

Conferences:

We hold conferences twice a year to discuss children's growth and development and to set goals for learning. These conferences will be held in December and April (See calendar) and will be scheduled by your child's educator. Besides these planned conferences, parents are invited to request a conference at any time they wish to speak privately with the director or their child's educator.

Website and Remind:

Please visit our website beyondthebookseducation.com and sign up for the Remind 101 app for any school reminders, closures, updates or information about upcoming events.

17. Unenrolling from public school

We at Beyond the Books understand that it can be a major decision for your family to change from public school to a private homeschool program. We are so grateful you chose our program and we are here to support this transition the best we can!

When you make the decision to unenroll your child from public school, simply write a letter to your child's principal or superintendent stating that you will be removing your child from the public school system and will be homeschooling your child until further notice. You have zero obligation to alert the school that you are sending your child somewhere private! In fact, we ask that you do not share our information to public sources. In New Jersey, you have the freedom to educate your child how you wish and that is none of the school's business. If they require you to fill out a form and there is a question asking where you will send your child, you simply leave it blank or state that you are personally homeschooling them. A New Jersey homeschool parent can decide to supplement their child's studies however they please, including tutoring, group social outings, or private education.

That's it! They are unenrolled and you can begin a new journey where your child's education and personal development will be nurtured, valued and

individualized. If a school member discovers you have enrolled your child into another type of educational setting, you can simply reply that you send your child to a homeschool program that provides supplementary education and extracurriculars. You as the parent have every right to choose the educational path for your child. That is the message that we, at Beyond the Books, stand by. To give your family another option and give your child an educational experience that is tailored to them; to help them grow and develop as a whole child academically, socially, emotionally and with the confidence to become a lifelong learner!