

Handbook

For

Kindergarten – Lower School

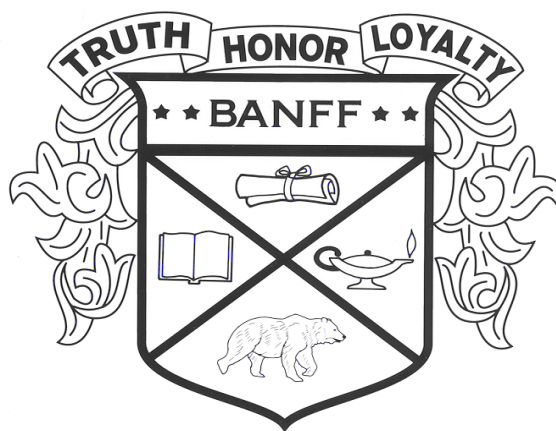
The Banff School
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FOREWORD

Welcome to The Banff School. This Handbook was prepared to introduce students and their family to the school's operational procedures, guidelines, rules, and general minutia. If answers to queries are not found herein, please call 281-444-9326 Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 4:00.

The Banff School, established in 1969, holds memberships in two professional organizations: the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

The administrators, teachers and students who make up the Banff community come from a broad spectrum of differing cultural, social and religious backgrounds. With this diversity as a foundation of the school, Banff's official policy of no discrimination on the basis of color, physical handicap, national origin, race, religion or sex is realized inherently as a daily reality. Respect for all people is a basic tenet of everyday life as well as a key component of the philosophy of Banff.



Dear Parents,

Welcome to Banff. We are pleased you have chosen to share your children with us. Equally we are gratified to know that you share in our goals.

Our teachers and our curriculum are chosen with the utmost care and consideration. Consequently, we have every confidence in both. If you do have special concerns during the year, please know I am always available to you.

At Banff we take very seriously the challenge and responsibility of educating and caring for your children. We want you to know we will honor your trust in us.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Irmgard Banff

PHILOSOPHY and OBJECTIVES

The Banff School distinguishes itself by devotion to academic excellence, emphasis on positive values, and commitment to increasing students' self-esteem. Education and the application of knowledge coupled with positive values enrich the quality of life for all people. Banff students demonstrate these values during the Banff school day, in activities in the local community, and as they travel and work throughout the world. Teachers and staff strive to exhibit exemplary conduct, through words and actions, which students will emulate as a model of constructive behavior.

The school's objectives are:

- Spark and nurture a thirst for knowledge;
- Develop individual talents, self-esteem and academic confidence to the utmost;
- Provide a foundation for the academic "fast track" and develop a winning attitude;
- Develop a sense of the potential for fulfillment and happiness in life;
- Encourage open minds and understanding hearts;
- Emphasize positive values;
- Develop social skills, good citizenship, cooperation, appreciation for the role of discipline, and individual responsibility;
- Inculcate an exemplary code of conduct, which, if universally adopted, will result in a better, kinder, healthier, happier world.

Realizing these objectives, during the Kindergarten and Elementary school years when the demands on students, teachers and parents are continually changing, is an ambitious goal. Physical, social and educational developments accompanying these dynamic and transitory years present a genuine challenge that the Banff community accepts, endorses, and understands. The Banff curriculum is designed to meet these challenges and stimulate students with sound and rigorous instruction in all fundamental academic areas while concurrently promoting growth. Students are required to complete all assignments. Regular school attendance and appropriate behavior are mandatory.

Communication between parents and teachers is crucial to a student's ability to perform at school. Since both parents and teachers have the welfare of the student foremost in their minds, it is imperative upon both parties to trust each other. Students need the security of knowing that their days will be somewhat predictable, and teachers need to be able to understand behavior that varies from the norm. Communication needs to go both ways. A few examples of items that are helpful for teachers to know are: when parents are traveling and there is a sitter at home; when illnesses and death in the family are experienced; when a parent is changing jobs; if a transfer of schools is being considered for the student; if a health issue for the student is serious, etc. Demonstrations of insecurity and inability to concentrate can be successfully coped with in the classroom when there is understanding among the adults involved. Banff teachers and administrators strive to give each student a professional and personal relationship that fosters growth and excellence. With constructive parent involvement this goal is realized.

The Banff Administrative Staff consists of: the School Director, Principals, the Director of Instruction, the Counselor, the Librarian and the Business/Office Manager. The list of teachers for a particular academic year is available upon request from the office.

The Banff community provides students a safe, healthy learning environment. The school year is full of hard work, exciting fun-filled learning experiences, and many enriching extracurricular activities.

FEES

Enrollment fees:

Enrollment fees are due annually with student application or renewal forms. Enrollment fees are non-refundable.

In addition to enrollment fees, students may also pay:

1. Art supplies
2. Field trips
3. Mo Ranch
4. "Destination Imagination"
5. Programs
6. Competitions
7. Classroom or specific subject supplies as determined by teachers

Tuition:

The Banff School is a not-for-profit Texas corporation. As such it is dedicated to providing the best education possible in a private school environment while maintaining a quality business structure and reputation in the community. Timely tuition payment is a significant component of this picture.

Tuition payment for the year is a contract between the student's family and the school. The terms of the contract are:

- * 10 equal monthly installments; the first of which is due June 1st and monthly thereafter until the last payment on April 1st.
- * None of these payments is refundable.
- * Payments are to be delivered to the school office by the first day of each month. The school does not bill for routine payments.

If tuition is not received when due, the 1st day of the month, there is a grace period until the 8th day of the month. If payment is not received by the 8th of the month, a late charge of 10% will be added to the tuition fee and an invoice will be posted to the family within the week. If the school does not receive the tuition by the 15th of the month, the student is dismissed. A \$25.00 fee will be assessed for each returned check. After receiving 2 returned checks, all future payments must be made in cash, money order or by cashiers check.

Late pickups:

Everyone's life is busy and some days hectic. The school understands this reality and balances it with the needs to provide proper supervision for the students. Calls to the office to inform of delays are appreciated. There is automatically a late fee for students not picked up on time. The fee of \$5.00 for any portion of an hour after 3:00pm will be due upon pickup.

All accounts, including tuition payments and charges for late pickup days must be paid in full for report cards to be sent home.

Books:

Textbooks issued by the school in the fall are on loan to the students. There is no fee charged as long as the books are returned in good condition. However, students must pay for damaged or lost textbooks and library books prior to receiving their final report cards.

Additional paperbacks, dictionaries, etc. that is required for class work, must be purchased by each student. Teachers will notify parents of these items.

INTRODUCTION AND REGULATIONS

Discipline is one of the most important tools learned in life. Although discipline is not a subject taught at Banff, it is essential for the happiness and safety of everyone. As students move through their elementary school years, the responsibility for discipline migrates from the teacher to the student. Corporal punishment is against the philosophy of The Banff School. This continuum is assured by the students' following Basic Rules of Conduct:

Conduct:

1. Treat others with respect and strive to earn their respect. Kindness, honesty, and concern benefit us all and serve as a positive example for others to follow.
2. When angry, attempt to understand. If still angry, attempt to make the situation better. Words are either weapons or tools. Think before speaking. Fighting with words or objects is not allowed. Discuss differences and listen to the other person. If necessary, walk away to avoid a fight.
3. Accept responsibilities for actions. Admit mistakes and make amends. Forgive and understand. People all make mistakes. Mistakes are learning opportunities for growth not occasions for punishment and belittlement.
4. Additional rules may be promulgated verbally and/or put in writing, as the need becomes apparent.
5. Teachers' directions are to be followed at all times.
6. Cooperate to enhance learning opportunities and the academic environment.
7. A threat of any kind to another student, teacher or staff member is prohibited. Lying, cheating, and stealing are serious offenses. They are not accepted. The entire Banff community loses if these actions occur.

The School will impose penalties for bad conduct. The penalties include loss of campus privileges, exclusion from school activities, and detention. Professional counseling may be required as a condition for continuing enrollment. Persistent or significant bad conduct will result in suspension or in dismissal from school. These penalties will be imposed for the conduct of a student on campus, at school-sponsored or school-approved events, or off campus at any other location or time when, in the judgment of the School, the conduct threatens the reputation of the School, its students, or employees, threatens the safety or welfare of students or employees, or interferes with or obstructs the missions or operations of Banff.

The Principal has the authority and responsibility for dismissing a student from the school for any of the following reasons:

- Conduct that threatens the safety or health of any student or employee;
- Conduct that subverts the school's purposes or interferes with the work of teachers or students;
- Stealing or unauthorized possession of another person's property;
- Academic dishonesty, including cheating or plagiarism;
- Vandalism;

Punishments:

Punishments at Banff are few. Ultimately, those whose behavior is contrary to the rules, procedures, and purposes of the School shall lose the privilege of attending.

For less major offenses faculty gives detention hours. Detention hours must be served at the time and day given by the teacher or other faculty member. Students who accrue any significant number of detention hours – for the same or for a variety of offenses – will, in the company of their parents, meet with the principal.

Bullying:

Bullying means any written or verbal expression, physical act or gesture, or pattern thereof, by a student that is intended to cause or is perceived as causing distress to one or more students. Bullying includes, but is not limited to, conduct by a student against another student that a reasonable person should know has the effect of:

- a. harming the student
- b. damaging the student's property
- c. placing the student in reasonable fear of harm to his or her person or property
- d. creating a hostile educational environment for a student

An act of bullying, by either an individual student or a group of students, is expressly prohibited on school property or at school-related functions. This policy applies to students who directly engage in bullying as well as those who condone or support another student's act of bullying.

Consequences for students who commit acts of bullying may range from positive behavioral interventions up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.

PROBLEM SOLVING AT BANFF

This school exists for the purpose of education. It is a daunting and rewarding task sometimes accompanied by problems and conflicts. The Banff School stresses honesty and immediacy in situations that impede students' academic performance.

First, because few problems disappear by themselves, acknowledging that there is a problem that must be coped with is a threshold. If the problem exists in a singular class, direct contact in a straightforward way with the teacher involved is the second step. Teachers appreciate a student's honest attempt to remedy a problem at its source and will always work with the individual to the best of their ability. Thirdly, when the problem cannot be remedied at the classroom level, the Principal is there to help. Students and teacher jointly seek this help.

Problems are often resolved when attitudes of understanding, action, and good will are present. Perhaps nothing is more valuable for the Banff student to learn in preparation for college and adult life than techniques for successful problem solving.

VISITORS ON CAMPUS

Parents are welcome to visit Banff. The courtesy of an advance call to schedule the staff and/or teachers' time is appreciated. All adult visitors must sign in and receive a visitor's pass at the front office before they can visit any area of the school. No student-age visitors will be allowed unless accompanied by the parent of a student presently enrolled at Banff.

OFF- CAMPUS TRIPS

Field trips are planned for educational purposes to meet classroom objectives. These objectives might include specific curricular activities and/or celebrations of accomplishments. Field trips are a privilege with participation based on grades, behavior, and attendance or some combination. Students accept full responsibility for their actions while on the trip. Students must adhere to schools rules of conduct during the outing. Classroom field trips require a good deal of planning and integration into the curriculum. Attendance is mandatory. If for any reason, you cannot attend the planned field trip, you will be asked to stay home, as there is no supervisor available for one student. A report may be required the next class day on a topic related to field trip. Information about required dress code, payment of any necessary fees, time away from campus, and the site(s) to be visited on the field trip is sent home as soon as it is confirmed. Forms, which release Banff from liability and grant students permission to participate, go home with students two weeks in advance of the scheduled outing. These forms must be signed by a parent and returned to the classroom by the due date printed on them. Classroom teachers and staff make arrangements for transportation, supervisors, food, etc.

All members of a school group must travel in the transportation provided by the school. Teachers do not have the authority to waive this requirement. Extraordinary circumstance requests, (seeking a waiver of this policy), will be considered by the school office only in timely advance of the scheduled activity.

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Hours of operation:

The school buildings and grounds are open from 7:00a.m. - 6:00p.m, Monday through Friday. Because the school is responsible for students' safety and welfare while they are on campus, there is a caveat to this routine. School facilities are open only when proper supervision is available. Observing the scheduled drop off and pick up times of students is critical, as staff needs to leave promptly at 6:00p.m.

No Banff student may enter a Banff school building outside of the regular school day for any purpose. Supervision by a staff or faculty member is required for any variances. A student violating this rule risks dismissal from school as well as prosecution for illegal trespass.

In case of bad weather such as hurricanes, flooding, or icy streets, local radio or television stations will announce school closings. Banff follows this directive. Parents are also welcome to call the school for information concerning school closings. Please never attempt to reach Banff in dangerous weather conditions.

Food:

Gum, food, or beverages may not be consumed in the classrooms.

Miscellaneous:

Students are not to bring large amounts of money or valuables to school. The school is not insured or liable for items brought in violation of this guideline.

Electronics:

MP3 players, IPODS, CD players, etc. will not be needed during the day. Cell phones and portable media devices are not to be visible or turned on during the instructional day including breaks and lunch. If these items are misused, they will be confiscated and held in the office until a parent or guardian retrieves them.

HEALTH

Required Immunizations and Screening:

Within the first 10 days of each school year, a Banff School Health and Immunization Record, completed by the student's physician, must be on file in the office.

Vision and hearing screening must be performed, according to Texas requirements, for all first time entrants four years of age or older, as well as for all four year olds, kindergarten, first, third, fifth, seventh and ninth grade students.

Physical Fitness:

Physical education during the school day is stipulated by the state of Texas. This requirement is met by various team activities such as kickball, basketball, baseball, relay races, etc.

Accidents, Emergencies, Illness and Medications:

Emergency numbers must be filled in on the student Application Form. This information is for the health and safety of the student in the event of any accident. Many teachers have CPR training, and all teachers promptly treat minor accidents occurring during class. In case of emergency, the school will try to reach a parent by phone. If neither parent can be reached, the student's doctor will be called.

Students who are ill should be kept at home. Teachers will work with parents to make sure work does not suffer if the illness is extended. Following normal absences of a day or two, it is the responsibility of the parent to contact the teacher for his/her makeup work.

Communicable Disease Policy:

If a student, teacher, or staff member contracts a contagious disease, the school must be notified so parties in the Banff community may be made aware. In the event of a communicable disease diagnosis, Banff endeavors to follow the most current recommendations of the United States Centers for Disease Control and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Exclusion from school activities may be necessary. If this is the case, exclusion will continue until a doctor's written release certificate is presented to the school office.

Medications:

Teachers are prohibited from administering any type of medication. If a student requires periodic medication, office staff must be notified and written authorization must be on file.

DRESS CODE

Banff's dress code reflects a neat, clean, and complete appearance at all times. Overall appearance reflects on the school's desire to express a serious attitude toward education. A focus on learning, respect for others, and pride in the school is indicated and helped with the prescribed dress code. Any form of dress or hairstyle, including unnatural hair color, which is considered distracting or disruptive to the purpose or conduct of the school will not be permitted. Boys are not allowed to wear jewelry in piercings. Girls may wear jewelry only in piercings on lower ear lobe. Students with ear piercing deemed excessive by the administration will be asked to remove them.

Guidelines for **Kindergarten – Lower School**

On **Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays:**

Students are to select any combination of the wardrobe selected by Banff and offered by Mills. Students must purchase all uniform items from Mills. The polo shirts will have The Banff School embroidered on the front.

Other restrictions include:

Shoes will be laced, tied, buckled, or fastened as designed. Work or military boots or thong sandals with or without backs may not be worn. Due to daily outdoor physical activities, girl's heel height must be appropriate.

All shirts must be tucked in at all times, shorts and slacks must be belted.

Hats or caps of any kind or make are not worn during the school day. Only navy jackets may be worn in the classroom.

All shorts and skirts must be an appropriate length. Appropriate length is determined when the garment parallels the ends of the fingertips when the student's arms are extended straight down at the side. Additional length is acceptable.

On **Wednesdays**, the attire is: **(items must be purchased at Mills)**

Girls: Kindergarten – 3rd grades: red plaid jumper, white midy blouse

Girls: 4th and 5th grades: red plaid skirt, white polo or oxford shirt

Boys: Kindergarten-5th grades: navy slacks or shorts, white polo or oxford shirt

When **Full Dress Uniform** is specified on an announcement for a special school function, the attire is: **(items must be purchased at Mills)**

Girls: Kindergarten thru 3rd grade - red plaid jumper
white midy blouse
navy midy tie

4th and 5th grade - red plaid skirt
white button down oxford shirt
navy floppy tie

Boys: Kindergarten thru 5th grade - navy slacks
white button down oxford shirt
navy tie

Special Note:

Students who are uncertain about dress requirements should consult in advance with the office. Final determination of appropriate dress rests completely with the faculty and administration. If a student is not dressed appropriately for class or field trips, parents will be called and the student will be denied participation until the dress conforms.

All articles of clothing usually removed during the school day should be labeled with student's first and last names.

Unclaimed articles of clothing left at school over the summer will be given to a charitable organization at the beginning of the next fall term.

LUNCHES and CAFETERIA RULES

Hot lunches are catered by an independent contractor and may be purchased at the School. They are well-balanced meals with drinks available. Whether students bring their lunch from home, or purchases our catered meal, they must eat in the cafeteria or other designated areas. Students must be mannerly and courteous while eating.

1. Good eating manners are required.
2. Waiting in line is expected. Cutting in line is unacceptable.
3. No running to or through the cafeteria.
4. Cooperation with catering personnel is expected.
5. Courtesy is standard behavior.
6. Throwing of food or drink will result in disciplinary action.
7. Students place all trash in the garbage containers.

TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks are issued during the first week of class. All school owned and issued books will be covered during the first week of classes. Neither scotch tape, duct tape, masking tape, etc. nor contact paper may be applied to these books. Textbooks are inspected for damage (a fee will be assessed for any damage incurred) and returned to the school at the end of the year.

LIBRARY

Use of the Banff library is a privilege extended to students and faculty. Specific required procedures are:

1. Books must be properly checked out.
2. The library is a place for study, research, or recreational reading. Students will be quiet.
3. Magazines, dictionaries, and encyclopedias must be used in the library. They are non-circulating items.
4. Teachers and students are to return items to their proper places.

5. Proper handling of magazines and papers to avoid damage is appreciated.
6. The Librarian is available to help students and teachers – ask for assistance.
7. All library books must be returned to the library by the last day of classes.

SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

Many of the options listed below are incorporated to some degree into the curriculum. Items listed herein, however, are in addition to classroom curriculum with special emphasis and enrichment for the students.

1. Art classes
2. Performing arts: all levels of dance (ballet, tap and jazz), drama, musical theatre, choir, piano, vocal instruction
3. Sports and physical activities: all levels of gymnastics, tennis (group and private)
4. “Destination Imagination”
5. “Mo Ranch”
6. PSIA Competition

TUTORING

Given the Kindergarten and Lower School aim of encouraging students to learn independently, tutoring is rarely recommended. When it is appropriate, however, as in the case of prolonged illness or serious academic difficulty, requests or recommendations for tutoring will be communicated to the parents by the administration or teacher.

Only under very unusual circumstances will a teacher tutor his/her own student. If this situation is necessitated, the Principal must give approval prior to commencing the sessions.

Tutoring is never undertaken with a guarantee of its effectiveness.

A request from parents for tutoring of their student by a faculty member outside the school day is a relationship between the parent and teacher. The teacher sets tutoring fees, generally starting at \$30.00 per hour, and is independent of The Banff School.

HOMEWORK

Homework is carefully planned to reinforce and expand experiences and presentations in the classroom. Late homework does not accomplish either of these purposes. Students are required to complete all homework assignments. Daily assignments will be posted on the RenWeb program under www.banffschool.org. Teachers will also post assignments in their classroom. The teachers RenWeb page will also feature pertinent information regarding homework requirements, important dates, special events, etc.

On the average, students should spend no more than one to two hours or 30 minutes per subject per day in preparing for class.

Students are encouraged to be independent in carrying out their assignments albeit faculty help should be sought whenever needed. Because of the emphasis placed upon longer assignments (reading, research, theme-writing), students need to plan carefully so that homework will not be excessively heavy when these projects are due.

SCHOOL and CLASS ATTENDANCE

Regular, punctual attendance is necessary for the success of all endeavors at Banff and is expected of all students. The school categorizes absences and tardies as excused or unexcused. An absence or a tardy occurring for reasons of illness, school function, religious holiday, or family emergency is excused. In such cases, the student has the right to make up missed work. With a few exceptions, other absences or tardies are unexcused.

Parents are requested to notify the school office as close to 8:30 a.m. as possible if their student will be absent.

Absences:

Early dismissal for vacation is considered unexcused. Students requesting excused absences for a reason not included above should see the Principal at least a week ahead of the intended date. Parents must write a note of excuse, dated and signed, that specifically explains the reason for the absence, details the time absent, and lists phone numbers for contact. The school will notify parents of absences following the fifth occasion.

Tardies:

Students are allowed a total of three unexcused tardies per semester. Additional unexcused tardies will result in notification by the school to parents. Three tardies are the equivalent of 1 absence.

ARRIVALS AND DISMISSALS

It is the responsibility of parents to see that all students from their carpool enter the building before the car leaves.

Official arrival time is at 8:20 a.m. Because teachers are preparing work for the day there is no one available to receive students who arrive before 8:20 a.m. Parents must make advance arrangements with the office if an earlier delivery time is necessary.

Classes begin promptly at 8:30 a.m.

Classes are dismissed at 2:50 p.m. Due to staffing and teacher responsibilities there is no supervision available for students who are not picked up promptly. If for any reason a student cannot be picked up on time, the office must be notified. Students will not be released to anyone other than parents or carpool parents unless WRITTEN permission is on file with the office.

Pickup for students who have arranged to stay at school after 2:50 p.m. must occur before the school closes at 6:00 p.m. Late fees of \$15.00 per quarter hour will be charged for violation of this requirement. Payment is due upon pick-up.

TESTING and EXAMINATIONS

Students take classroom tests on a scheduled basis as announced in class. The Stanford Achievement Test is given to all lower school students and The Metropolitan Readiness Test is given to kindergarten as a final exam in the spring. A copy of a student's skills analysis showing specific areas of strengths and weaknesses will be made available to parents at conferences. Unusual circumstances should be discussed with the Principal.

Parents' questions or comments about their student's test grades or performance should be addressed to the teacher. A parent-teacher conference may be arranged by calling the school office for an appointment.

When a student misses a test because of an excused absence, he or she is entitled to sit for another test.

GRADING and REPORTING

Teachers use letter and number grades as shorthand means of noting academic performances of students. Grades are used to motivate, to reward exceptional effort, to give notice to students of their need to improve, and denote comparison among students and reflect ability as a practical necessity to establish standards. At Banff grades are never used as a means of discipline for misbehavior.

Semesters are divided into two nine-week grading periods. The teacher will contact parents during the reporting periods if there is clear indication the student is doing unsatisfactory work. Likewise, parents should contact teachers if they have questions or information that will help a teacher work with their student.

For the Lower School classes, numerical scores shall be established for the subjects of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. For Kindergarten classes, marks of E, S, I, and N are used for grading purposes. Promotion for all classes shall be based upon accomplishing the required essential curriculum elements as well as social, emotional, and physical growth.

Report cards must be taken home and signed by the parent and returned to the teacher for the next grading period. In grades 1 thru 12, progress reports are sent home every 3 weeks, which needs a parent signature and promptly returned.

The grading system is on a scale of 0 – 100. Numerical grade/letter categories are:

90 – 100	A
80 – 89	B
75 – 79	C
70 – 74	D
69 –	below F

Academic Probation:

Students who has an average in English, mathematics, history, science and foreign language that is below 70 the first semester quarter will be placed on academic probation. Teachers will notify parents. The student will have to achieve an average above 70 the following grading period to continue at Banff.

Academic Honors:

Each year, Banff recognizes exceptional accomplishments of its students. Top scholar awards are presented in the individual academic disciplines, in the arts, and in extracurricular activities. Citizenship awards and other special honors are also recognized.