



WHOLESOME GENERATION

OPERATIONAL HANDBOOK 2018 - 2019

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OUR WHOLESOME GENERATION PHILOSOPHY

At Wholesome Generation, we believe we shortchange our children when we provide them with an uninspiring learning environment, as this can negatively impact learning. If children are not motivated and inspired, then they will not learn and reach their full potential. Stimulating learning environments are essential for young children's growth. Research suggests that an environment that nurtures learning provides the necessary resources and time for investigative play and experimentation. It is one in which children are free and motivated to make choices and to explore answers without feeling intimidated. Opportunities such as these provide the development of critical thinking skills.

Wholesome Generation is a progressive learning environment, specifically a project-based health education model, including an organic gardening + culinary component, and mobile "Food-For-Life" Outreach + Community-Building model, all designed to incubate health into everyday learning. Our WG program is Nature-focused and students spend a minimum of 4 hours outside daily. Connecting with nature and our surrounding communities provides opportunity for growth and development, training, cultural presentation, health education, and helps grow our local food culture.

OUR WHOLESOME ENVIRONMENT + FUNDAMENTAL REGGIO PRINCIPLES

The Reggio Emilia Philosophy to teaching young children puts the natural development of children as well as the close relationships that they share with their environment at the center of its philosophy. Early years programs that have successfully adapted to this philosophy share that they are attracted to Reggio because of the way it views and respects the child.

Parents are a vital component to the Reggio Emilia philosophy. Parents are viewed as partners, collaborators and advocates for their children. They assist our Team and communicate with love and respect and support our School values. Teachers respect parents as each child's first teacher and involve parents at various Opportunities. It is not uncommon to see parents volunteering within Reggio Emilia classrooms throughout the school.

OUR CORE VALUES

Respect for Each Child

With the Reggio Emilia philosophy children are treated with respect, meaning that they are taken very seriously. Serious in what they have to say, their needs, their interests, and their emotions. Children take the initiative in their playing and activities, which help them to study and discover the world. That way they have insights in the functioning of the world around them and the place that they can and would like to take in it.

Through Reggio Emilia respect means that from the day they arrive at the day care centre they will be treated with the above-mentioned respect. When they are still very young the respect is shown by the way communication with the child takes place. When the children get older, the emphasis shifts to the manifestation that the children develop themselves to concrete their own ideas.

Children are capable of constructing their own learning

Children are driven by their interests to understand and know more. They form an understanding of themselves and their place in the world through their interactions with others.

Our Wholesome Generation programs foster a strong focus on social collaboration, working in (oftentimes) multi-age groups, where each child is an equal participant, having their thoughts and questions valued. The adult is not the giver of knowledge. Children search out the knowledge through their own investigations.

Children are Communicators

Communication is a process, a way of discovering things, asking questions, using language as *play*. Playing with sounds, rhythm and rhyme; delighting in the process of communicating.

Children are encouraged to use language to investigate and explore, to reflect on their experiences. They are listened to with respect, believing that their questions and observations are an opportunity to learn and search together. It is a process, a continual process. A collaborative process, rather than the child asking a question and the adult offering the answers. The search is undertaken together.

The environment is the third teacher

The environment in our early learning classroom is recognized for its potential to inspire children. An environment filled with open spaces free from clutter, where every material is considered for its purpose, every corner is ever-evolving to encourage children to delve deeper and deeper into their interests.

The space encourages collaboration, communication and exploration. The space respects children as capable by providing them with authentic materials & tools.

Also similarly to Montessori, the space is cared for by the children, and the adults. WG asks parents to help with classroom design and setting up study areas, and all ideas are welcome.

The adult is a mentor and guide

Our role as adults is to observe (our) children, listen to their questions and their stories, find what interests them and then provide them with opportunities to explore these interests further. Reggio Emilia takes a child-led project approach.

An emphasis on documenting children's thoughts

You'll notice in Reggio and Reggio-inspired settings that there is an emphasis on carefully displaying and documenting children's thoughts and progression of thinking; making their thoughts visible in many different ways: photographs, transcripts of children's thoughts and explanations, visual representations (drawings, sculptures etc.) all designed to show the child's learning process.

The Hundred Languages of Children

Probably the most well-known aspect of the Reggio Emilia Approach. The belief that children use many different ways to show their understanding and express their thoughts and creativity. A hundred different ways of thinking, of discovering, of learning. Through drawing and sculpting, through dance and movement, through painting and pretend play, through modeling and music, and that each one of these *Hundred Languages* must be valued and nurtured. That they are all a part of the child, that learning and play are not separated. The Reggio Emilia Approach emphasizes hands-on discovery learning that allows the child to use all their senses and all their *languages* to learn.

OUR WHOLESOME GENERATION MISSION AND GOALS

OUR WHOLESOME MISSION: To model the indispensable role of healthy eating habits, sustainable ecological systems and quality nature education grouped in our modern times.

PURPOSE: Engaging children and families in wholistic, sustainable lifelong learning pathways through play, food and community engagement.

OUR VISION: Wholesome Generation is a non-profit educational institute designed to co-create better ways to connect youth to nature, to healthy food, and live a healthier lifestyle—all while restoring our natural systems, public health and celebrating global majority communities.

WHAT WE DO

We educate children and their families. Everything we do is tailored to make the learning experience exceptional for our community. WG connects students to the greater world around them – through the classroom and curriculum, through community and service programs, through the international cultures + languages representing our community, and through hands-on learning both in the classroom and around the globe.

- Nurture a deeper understanding of local ecology through place-based, integrated nature education, inviting children and their families to form an ongoing relationship with the world we share.

- Steward the health of our community by empowering youth and their families to create healthier lifestyle choices by offering affordable access to fresh, local plant-based food, and nutrition education, through all our programming.
- Model a strong work ethic to youth, as they learn where their food comes from and how essential it is to balance a healthy food culture + ecological systems, allowing for a greater human-nature connection.
- Foster mindful practices that help children improve learning and academic performance and learn valuable social and emotional skills that build personal resilience for a lifetime.
- Provide training, special events and tours of our model school to cultivate awareness about how sustainable systems are a critical tool to help solve our environmental crisis.

Religious Orientation

Wholesome Generation strives to create an atmosphere where all religions are valued and where belief is a matter of personal choice. While our program is not religiously oriented, we encourage you to share your traditions and customs with us so we can incorporate them into our program for your child.

Hours of Operation, Holidays, Hourly Care

WG is offering children ages 16 months – 9 years of age a place to flourish. Enrichment programs are woven into the children’s daily learning activities. The Schoolhouse is open for full-day programs,

- ***Monday-Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM***
- Parents drop off child(ren) between 8:00 AM and 8:45 AM
- Morning Circle, starting at 9:00 AM.
- Parents pick up is between 3:30 PM and 4:00 PM *for general care hours.*

Children who are scheduled to stay until 5:00 PM, and are still not picked up by 5:03 PM from after-hour care will be charged an additional \$1.00 for every minute of delay, ***which should be paid at the time of pick-up.*** This cost helps cover the overtime costs paid to our teacher(s).

Schoolhouse (Holiday/Other) Closings / Staff-Planning Days

Our school will be **closed** in observance of federal holidays, breaks and Staff Development [Planning Days]. The link to our Closings can be found here:

<https://wholesomegeneration.org/our-community/event-calendar/>

Please know that additional closures might occur for additional Staff Planning Days or Events such as Weather, etc. There is no reduction in tuition for school closings as these closures were factored into the monthly fees (the same applies to the cost of food/month). Should the School need to close for any other days than those listed above, Parents will be provided with an advance notice. We cannot be held responsible for closures due to events beyond our control (or rescheduled field-days regarding Teacher absences, location closings, Holidays falling on select trip/learning experiences, or weather).

Since WG is a private Community School, our calendar follows the best practices for student excellence, teacher retention and growth, and classroom continuity. We reserve the right to amend our Calendar at any time. WG will not be able to offer hourly care. Hourly care is designed for those who need limited care to attend to doctor visits or other intermittent appointments.

Registration | Enrollment Requirements at WG

In order to enroll a child into our WG programs, an initial interview is conducted with the parents/guardians and child to explain our philosophy and program and to determine the child's developmental needs and family passions.

The parents/guardians must pay a **registration/classroom + deposit fee** for each child and submit a **copy of the child's current immunizations (or exemption)** and **completed Enrollment Package** before the child can be admitted to the program.

The enrollment forms are located on our website and contain:

- the Child Profile,
- the Parent/Guardian Statement of Understanding,
- and a notarized copy of the Medical Authorization Form,
- as well as our Schoolhouse Waivers,
- and other applicable forms.

A recent copy of the **child's physical examination** must be submitted within 3 days of registration. Our WG registration fee, as well as the supply fee, is an annual fee, and will not be refunded. All forms are updated annually. Parents will be notified of any changes to policy throughout the year and provided with an updated copy of policies and procedures.

Parents are required to notify the Executive Director and Center Director immediately if there is a change in name, address, phone number or place of employment. The same applies to court orders for custody or drop-off/pick-up changes (guardian information, etc). Please also let us know when there is a change in emergency contacts. It is important that our files are kept current, so we may contact you in case of an emergency.

WG will accept children regardless of race, color, sex, creed, disability, political persuasion, national origin, or ancestry. WG is prepared to serve children from 16 months to 13 years of age.

Fees and Payment Policy

Monthly fees are due on **the first day of each month** and no later than **the 3rd day of the month**. Payments not made on time are subject to a late charge of \$25 after the 3th of the month, and \$45 will be charged for any returned checks. No refunds or reductions will be made for absence due to illness, withdrawal, vacation, teacher absences, rescheduled activities or field-days, or any other circumstances. WG provides families with an opportunity to submit payment via credit card (please expect to add a small convenience fee for the privilege of doing so).

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Accidents and Injuries

Our main concern and basic commitment at the Schoolhouse is the safety of your child. The children are supervised in their indoor and outdoor activities; however, accidents may occur when children play and interact with one another. In any case, parents (guardians) will be notified of any accidents and its circumstances. If the accident is minor, the center staff will report the incident when the child is picked up (verbally) and fill out an accident report. The parent and/or staff member can then decide if the child needs medical attention.

When a serious accident occurs and the child needs immediate medical attention, our first action will be to obtain the needed help. The second action will be to notify the parents (verbal and written). The Schoolhouse will refer to the child's enrollment form for emergency numbers.

Please discuss any concerns you may have regarding our accident policy or accidents reports with the Executive Director and Center Care Director. Head injuries in our Toddler room will be communicated at the time they occur and the parent will decide if their child can stay at school or will be picked-up.

Arrival Time

When you bring your child to WG, an adult over the age of 16 must accompany your child to their classroom and sign your child in on the attendance log (iPad). Under no circumstances should a child be dropped off outside on the street. **Children will not be accepted until the posted arrival time of 8:00 AM, or after the suggested drop off time of 9:00 AM.**

WG assumes no responsibility of your child until the child is signed in and accompanied to their classroom (and with their Teacher). Please ensure you make contact with your child's teacher and let them know your child has arrived. It is not healthy for your child to have you sneak away. Please work with your child's teacher in appropriate "goodbye's" that will best meet the developmental stage of your child (for our early learners).

WG maintains an environmentally healthy program and we ask that you please do not leave your car running while you drop off your child.

Also, dropping off after the suggested time (of course you might occasionally arrive later, but *please don't drop off after 9am*, as this causes disruption to our morning circle, and/or class flow).

We also try to keep our center germ free and ask that you refrain from wearing your outdoor shoes inside our classroom or on the deck/patio. *If you work in a clinic or hospital environment, we ask that you change before coming to the center (even if you work in an outpatient facility). This has cut down viral illnesses so much and we are grateful for your support.*

Birthdays and Holidays

Some holidays are beyond the understanding of young children. When we celebrate a holiday at WG, we design concepts and activities that give the children more experience with and understanding of the

holiday (for example: *Martin Luther King Day*). We will notify the parents of the times and formats of any celebrations. Generally, there will be no special requirements of the parents.

We feel it is important for our young children to become familiar with the values, beliefs, and cultural traditions of different people and the ways they celebrate special occasions. From time to time we will provide such opportunities.

We would appreciate knowing, if, and how, any of the parents could assist us.

The most important occasion for a child is his/her own birthday. We will honor the child at this time by doing something special, perhaps a special activity and organic healthy snack. Parents who wish to bring in a snack at this time should notify the Teacher and our Chef. Children's birthdays may be celebrated by bringing a healthy snack to serve the children during the morning snack, but all snacks need to be approved before bringing them to the Schoolhouse. This simply helps us to avoid food reactions of other children.

Please do not send with your child any treats unless he/she brings enough for the whole classroom [pre-approved]. If your child is planning a home birthday party and wishes to invite classroom children, please send the invitations to all children as children who may not get invited will feel left out and may not understand why they are not invited.

Complaints

Our goal at Wholesome Generation is to provide you and your child with a beneficial and memorable learning experience. If a parent/guardian has a question or concern regarding the care provided at the Schoolhouse, the parent is requested to speak first with the child's teacher. If the issue cannot be resolved with the teacher, please speak with the Center Director immediately. We will do our very best to come up with a resolution for you, your child and our program.

We are open to feedback; however, disrespectful communication and/or aggressive communication towards our teachers/staff via cell phone or email may result in dismissal from the community. Our values are respect and communication with kindness and in a supportive manner, at all times.

Guidance, Discipline and Conflict Resolution

The goal of Wholesome Generation is to help a child become self-reliant and internalize rules of behavior. Preschool and older children are encouraged to take appropriate responsibility for their own behavior and to generate ideas for solving social conflict problems (e.g., how to share a toy/tools). Any discipline will be constructive in nature and include techniques such as:

- Using limits that are fair, consistent and appropriate for the child's developmental level.
- Providing children with reasons for limits.
- Giving positively worded directions.
- Modeling and redirecting children towards acceptable behavior.
- Helping children to constructively express their feelings and any possible frustrations to resolve conflict.
- Arranging the classroom environment in a way that promotes desirable behavior.
- Brief, supervised separation or time away from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

The following techniques are prohibited by Texas child care licensing and under NO circumstances will be used on your child:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed;
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time.

Staff members who punish children in a prohibited manner, or who do not first apply proactive, rather than reactive, techniques will jeopardize their employment at Wholesome Generation. A staff member found using any of the above listed "Prohibited Punishments" will be dismissed immediately. Any infractions of this discipline policy reported by parents/guardians, or other staff members, will be investigated.

If a child does not respond to positive guidance and redirection, and is posing an emotional problem for him/her self or others, or is a physical threat to others, the following steps are taken:

1. The child receives communication that further repeating the behavior will result in his/her separation from the group. Alternatives are suggested to the child.
2. If the child repeats the action, she/he is removed from the group to a private place within sight of a teacher. The teacher tells the child s/he will return to discuss the situation when the child has calmed down.
3. In a few minutes (not more than one minute per age) the teacher returns the child to discuss what happened, why it was unacceptable, and what the child must do to control his/her behavior. Positive reinforcement and positive language will be used at all times.
4. The child is invited to return to the group when he/she is ready. If the child needs or wants more time alone s/he may take it. Children under the age of 4 will not be removed from the group.
5. When the child returns to the group, the teacher welcomes him/her back into the group and tries to make the transition as smooth as possible. Positive language will be used.

Parents will be notified if any behavioral issues of concern and the staff at Wholesome Generation will work with the parent to resolve any behavior issues outside normal child development. Should the child's behavior cause a continued threat to him/herself and/or others, or pose a pattern to disturb the classroom dynamics repeatedly, the ED/Center Director will recommend a behavioral assessment be conducted to determine if additional intervention is needed.

We ask parents to practice non-violent and gentle parenting while on our schoolhouse premises. Spanking, hitting, or yelling (by a parent) at any child are prohibited and will result in immediate dismissal from our community.

Meals and Snacks

Wholesome Generation encourages healthy snacks and meals for all our students. We provide all meals and snacks for your child, therefore, please do not send and foods such as candy, sodas or other unhealthy choices with your child.

Most importantly: do not send any snacks containing NUTS to the Schoolhouse, as we are an allergy-friendly environment.

Our Mealtimes are: A healthy snack at 9:30/10am, Lunch at 12:00pm and a nourishing afternoon snack at 3pm.

You don't need to provide a statement from your child's physician to indicate special dietary needs related to sugar/gluten/wheat intolerances, however, we must have a note on file stating ALL food allergies and food sensitivities. Please communicate your needs, and we'll work with you.

NOTE: We can not guarantee a nut-free zone but we have separate prep areas (outside of our WG Schoolhouse) for meals and all meals/snack will be supervised to reduce exposure for children with allergies. We are currently sugar-/wheat-/gluten-free.

Allergy Policy

Minimum standard rules for child care centers and homes (chapters 744, 746 & 747) identify the food allergy emergency plan as an individualized plan prepared by the child's health care professional, which must include a list of each food the child is allergic to, possible symptoms if exposed to food on the list and steps to take if the child has an allergic reaction.

WG has an Allergy Safety Form that is part of the Enrollment Package, and that must be filled out upon participating in our program. Some health care professionals may have their own templates for child allergy plans and WG will be able to accept them in addition. WG posts all children's allergies in the classrooms where your child may spend time, and all areas where food might be prepared.

Medication Administration

Wholesome Generation does **NOT** administer medication site, with the exception of first aid care (benadryl) or epi pens for food allergies/allergic reactions as specified in the child's medical note.

Outdoor Policy

Outdoor play + learning is important to all domains of development, particularly physical gross motor development. Children will be provided with at least four hours a day of outdoor time, weather permitting. There is a Scandinavian saying that says *that there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes.*

Please dress your child appropriately for outdoor play during the warm + cold weather seasons. It is

extremely important for us to keep your child comfortable and safe to assure that she/he has the better learning experience everyday at WG. Texas weather could get extremely hot during the summer months, and present many temperature changes during the fall and winter. Our staff will do their best to accommodate each child needs during any temperature changes. WG staff will always provide the children with the choices of clothing that seems appropriate for the weather and use different positive strategies to encourage them but WG's staff will not be able to use force or negative consequences to achieve this goal.

WHAT TO WEAR IN THE SUMMER

- Comfortable and play-friendly bottoms, light t-shirts, sturdy closed toe shoes that will allow safe climbing and outdoor play (boots or sandals with high heels, loose shoes such as cros, and flip flops may cause falls and broken ankles). Please send items that you don't mind getting wet and muddy.
- Make sure to pack 3 full sets of extra clothes (add some extra sets if toilet training).

WHAT TO WEAR IN THE FALL/WINTER

- First top layer - long sleeve t-shirt and a thermal undershirt when needed.
- Second top layer - fleece Jacket
- Waterproof coat or jacket and hat and gloves when required by the weather.
- Waterproof shoes or boots.

Should the weather prevent us from taking the children outdoors, we will provide alternate indoor movement activities in our multi-purpose room. Outdoor play restrictions for a child must be in writing and accompanied by a doctor's medical statement noting the reason for the restriction.

Field Days / Farm Days

We are soon starting to offer more regular scheduled Field-Days away from our School, and we ask families to sign the "Field Day Form" so we can take school-age children (Kindergarten/1st Grade) to designated locations (with parent involvement).

Parent Involvement

Parents are an integral part of Wholesome Generation. We feel that parents are partners in their child's development and parental involvement is an integral part of our program. Therefore, we require that all families volunteer a minimum of **20 hours** per school year.

This volunteer assignment could be helping with our Garden, assisting with special projects at the Schoolhouse, or working on special projects at home. We will not generally ask our parents to volunteer in the classroom but if parents have a certain skill, we will definitely welcome this. A annual Volunteer skill survey form will be provided and must be used when documenting volunteer hours. Additional activities not listed can be discussed with the Director.

WG offers a Parent Potluck at least once per quarter. These typically happen when we schedule our Parent-Teacher meetings or celebrate schoolhouse events. At those events we encourage families to attend, having the opportunity to meet with the teachers to discuss their child's progress and passions

and see improvements and changes at the Schoolhouse. Some volunteers or interns may work only in the middle of the day, and so you'll have the opportunity to meet and get to know each other.

We also encourage parents to join their child for a snack or lunch, when the time is convenient for them. We ask that you limit those visits (as classroom visits) to once or twice/month and coordinate with your child's Teacher (24 hr notice, notice must be confirmed).

Other possibilities for involvement may include sharing a cultural background and/or language, reading a story or singing with the children, or simply spending time during free play. Please contact your Child's Lead Teacher if any of these activities are of interest to you. Parents are permitted to access our Wholesome Generation Schoolhouse at any time when the child is in attendance.

Parent Teacher Meetings

The Lead Teachers at Wholesome Generation offer parents an opportunity to attend a parent/teacher conference with their child (Dates on our Event Calendar on the Website). They either post a sign up sheet with times available, or the teachers will verbally ask the parents what would be a convenient time for them. In addition, Conferences notices are also sent via email. If the parents are unable to schedule a time, the teacher will send home a packet of materials that she and the child have worked on throughout the year (or until this day). This documentation will be kept in each child's file.

It is also important to note that a parent may schedule a meeting at any time with their child's Lead Teacher. Likewise, a teacher may schedule a meeting with parents if she has concerns or challenges with a child. The staff strives to keep open communication with all parents.

Personal Items from Home

Your child will be provided with a place to keep personal belongings. Due to the nature of our programs (physical exercise, gardening, culinary), we ask that parents provide at all times:

- **Three complete changes of clothing** (one more pair of shoes) labeled with his/her name and placed in a reusable (canvas) bag. Clothing should be comfortable and suitable for indoor and outdoor activities. Active play is messy play for children, so please do not send clothing you wish to keep clean, such as white pants or shirts. Tennis shoes make climbing easier and safer. No boots or open-toed sandals, and NO cros please, as they do not allow for a safe play on our playgrounds. ***All clothing and personal items must be labeled with child's name for identification.*** This includes bags, coats, sweaters, etc.
- For the summer, and our gardening activities, we ask that parents bring organic (deet-free, chemical free) sun lotion (NO sprays!) + bug repellent.
- We also need a water bottle (insulated).
- For nap/rest time, WG requires the following: Your child must have a rolling nap/rest mat (a crib sheet/King size pillow case (your teacher will inform you of the best items to bring), or larger blankets with pillows that will be stored at the schoolhouse Mo-Thu and sent home on every

Friday for cleaning; please do not bring personal items such as stuffed animals). WG will store the mats in a large zip-lock.

- Families are asked to provide a family photo(s), in order to help each child develop self-identify and self-esteem. We will use the photo(s) on your child's cubby, and/or decorate the room at your child's eye level and to identify his/her personal space.

Please do NOT allow your child to bring any of the following:

- Small toys (legos);
- jewelry of any kind;
- candy or gum; NO outside foods at all (unless approved by our Chef Lene);
- drinks (except water in water bottle);
- Personal electronic games or devices (Kindle/Tablet/even "fake" phones);
- No phones please!

Please watch for any small articles, which may your child bring home in his/her pocket. For example, small cubes, cylinders, beads, etc., accidentally placed in their pockets. We strive in providing high quality materials for your child and these items may be difficult to replace.

Please note: Wholesome Generation is not responsible for misplaced or missing items such as shoes, water bottles, clothing, personal toys. We will do our best to help keep all in your child's cubby, however, due to the heavy traffic of families in our schoolhouse, our Teachers or Staff can't be held responsible for items that are misplaced.

Records of Children + Important Communication

[illness, incident reports, etc.]

Records of Children

All Children's records are accessible to caregivers during hours of operation for use in an emergency. Parents have the right to access their own child's record during a parent conference with the caregiver or child-care center Director. **All records will be updated every August and January (every six months) and filed electronically.** Parents have access to their child's records and our minimum standards at all times (located electronically or in our front office).

Communication at Wholesome Generation

Our Classrooms will list important information for families on our communications board, and we will update (immediately) about outbreak of illness, incident/accident report(s), or other issues that may occur, via email format. We will communicate any important changes of policies via email as soon as we have this information available.

Release of Children

Our utmost concern is the safety of your child. Therefore, if you are unable to pick up your child, we will only release your child to those for which you have authorized on your enrollment form. Any person picking up your child besides the parent(s) will be required to show a picture ID (for copy) and

sign your child out before your child will be released. The ID number will be recorded on the attendance sheet and will be kept on file for a minimum of 6 months. Children will not be permitted to leave with ANYONE except those persons listed on the enrollment form. Any change in authorized pick-ups must be in writing.

Supervision of Children when arriving | picking up Children

Our main concern and basic commitment at the center is the safety of each child. We ask that parents (and Teachers) VERY closely supervise the children in the Schoolhouse, and on the street (when parking). It is recommended that children exit from cars have to be offered a hand to hold by a parent. When departing from the school, please resist having the children run to the car while the parent still signs them out or run after their friends/other staff. Staff and Teachers can safely park across the Street. We require that all parents drop off and pick up their child from their child's classroom.

Background Checks and Screening of Employees + Volunteers

Wholesome Generation requires a Background check (and Fingerprint Check) upon hire from all staff and volunteers who provide care for children at the School. Background Checks are updated every two years, and all relevant documentation will be filed and updated electronically. Staff will receive an email one month prior to the new filing (renewal) of their Background check from Center Director.

Employee + Volunteer Orientation + Staff Training

Wholesome Generation provides Training to all Employees and Volunteers [hours vary depending on Position and Responsibilities of Staff]. ALL Staff must attend our semester Orientations (if Camp Duties are provided) or at a minimum our annual training [all training will be tracked + updated electronically]. WG will provide the required pre-service training (if needed) to new Employees. [Our School Orientation will be held in a group setting [with Mentors and Specialists present, if needed], at the School-site. Orientation may be a combination of online training (via workforce or other sites), or in person (CPR/Culinary/etc.).

All NEW Employees will receive additional training on the following:

Food Allergy Policy; Evacuation/Emergencies; Culinary/Gardening if applicable; Neglect and Abuse (*prevention, recognition, and reporting*); Child Health and Wellness; Safety; Cultural Diversity; Planning developmentally appropriate learning activities; Creative Curriculum [*Teaching Strategies*], Edible/Upper Grade Curriculum, and Reggio Emilia Inspired Training.

- Monthly Training will include a fire-drill and locating (and operating) our Fire Extinguisher(s).
- Caregivers' trainings and information of completion of all training modules will be filed electronically and updated by the Executive Director.
- A monthly e-reminder will be sent to all staff to keep current on upcoming training. Information is located in each Employee file and can be reviewed by Employees and our Team of Directors.

Professional Development

★ Orientation to Wholesome Generation

In order to acquaint staff with the basic center policies, employees will be provided with an orientation to WG that will include the following at minimum:

- a. An overview of the minimum standards of Child Care Licensing;
- b. Operational policies found in this handbook, including but not limited to child guidance and discipline, and the release of children;
- c. An overview of symptoms of child abuse, neglect, and sexual abuse and the responsibility for reporting these;
- d. The procedures to follow in handling emergencies, including, but not limited to, fire, explosion, tornado, toxic fumes, volatile persons, and severe injury or illness of a child or adult; and
- e. The use and location of fire extinguishers and first-aid equipment.

★ Annual Training

Continued professional development is important to our employees work with children. WG believes that the more staff learns, the better prepared they are to provide a high quality learning experience for children. WG will provide training on-site to attend. However, it is each staff members responsibility to search local community trainings to help fulfill your annual training requirements. WG will pay regular hourly rates to attend up to 16 clock hours of training. The 16 clock hours of annual training are exclusive of orientation, pre-service training requirements, CPR and first aid, and high school child-care work-study classes. Training must adhere to the following guidelines:

1. At least **six clock hours of annual training** must be in one or more of the following topics:
 - a. Child growth and development;
 - b. Guidance and discipline;
 - c. Age-appropriate curriculum; and
 - d. Teacher-child interaction.
2. The **remaining clock hours of annual training** must be in one or more of the following topics:
 - a. Care of children with sensory needs;
 - b. Adult and child health;
 - c. Safety;
 - d. Risk management;
 - e. Identification and care of ill children;
 - f. Cultural diversity for children and families;
 - g. Professional development (*for example, effective communication, time and stress management*);
 - h. Preventing the spread of communicable diseases;
 - i. Topics relevant to the particular age group the caregiver is assigned;
 - j. Planning developmentally appropriate learning activities; and
 - k. Minimum standards and how they apply to the caregiver.

Any training over 16 clock hours must be approved by the Center Director. A two-week notice to attend training must be given. Payment for any training over the 16 annual hours will be at the Center Director's discretion and subject to available funding.

Sick Children | Physical Health and Well-Being

Under no circumstances may a parent bring a sick child to the Schoolhouse, if the child shows any signs of illness (see SYMPTOMS REQUIRING REMOVAL OF CHILD FROM CARE BELOW), or is unable to participate in the normal routine and regular Schoolhouse program. Sick children will expose all children and staff members who they come in contact with. These people can in turn expose the other children. Sick children want care from their parents in the comfort of their own homes. If other children become ill due to exposure to your sick child, either because he/she was returned to the Schoolhouse before full recovery or because he/she was not picked up promptly upon notice of becoming ill, other parents will be unnecessarily inconvenienced. Because this is disruptive to other children and their families, your cooperation on this issue is extremely important.

Every effort is taken to reduce the spread of illness by encouraging hand washing and other sanitary practices.

If a child is unable to participate in the normal activities of the Schoolhouse (including being able to play outside due to respiratory distress following outdoor time), then the child MUST stay at home. Wholesome Generation will spend at least one to two hours outdoors daily.

Children will be visually screened when they arrive in the morning at the Schoolhouse. In the event a child becomes ill and needs to be picked up, the parent(s) will be called and are expected to come pick the child up within one hour (60 minutes). If the parent(s) cannot be reached, or have not arrived within an hour, the emergency contact person will be called and asked to pick-up the child.

For the benefit of our staff and other children in our care, a sick child will not be permitted to return to care for 24 - 48 hours after condition has returned to normal. **The child may return 24 - 48 hours (depending upon the illness) after they have received the first dose of prescribed medication or homeopathic remedies.** If a child receives an antibiotic for an ear infection, he/she may return to the Schoolhouse immediately if he/she has been free of other symptoms mentioned for at least 24-48 hours. Please mention if your child has received any type of medication over the last 24 - 48 hours.

If you aren't sure about whether or not to bring your child to the Schoolhouse, please call your on Center Director to discuss. Allergy related symptoms, and non-communicable illnesses do not require exclusion IF you have a note from your doctor.

Symptoms requiring removal of child from the Schoolhouse:

- **Fever:** Fever is defined as having a temperature of 100°F or higher taken under the arm, 101°F taken orally, or 102°F taken rectally. For children 4 months or younger, the lower rectal temperature of 101°F is considered a fever threshold; (a child needs to be fever free for a minimum of 24 hours before returning to the Schoolhouse, that means the child is fever free without the aid of fever reducing substance.)
- Fever AND/OR sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, irritability, or confusion. This includes if a child tells us that their throat hurts, and although we always examine, we are unable

to do a full medical screen due to qualifications, and have to ask you to pick up your child if the child is not willing to participate due to fatigue/symptoms (this includes complaining of pain, if verbal). We just don't have a designated "sick care" space or additional staff to supervise your child while the other children are unsupervised and not cared for. [Note: we will always discuss this on the phone prior to parents having to pick-up.]

- **Diarrhea:** runny, watery, bloody stools, or 2 or more loose stools within last 4 hours
- **Vomiting:** 2 or more times in a 24 hour period. [Note: please do not bring your child if they have vomited in the night.]
- Breathing trouble, sore throat, swollen glands, loss of voice, rattling in chest (respiratory distress such as labored breathing), hacking or continuous coughing.
- Runny nose (other than clear), draining eyes or ears.
- Frequent scratching of body or scalp, lice, rash, or any other spots that resemble childhood diseases, including ringworm.
- Child is irritable, continuously crying, or requires more attention than we can provide without hurting the health, safety or well-being of the other children in our care.
- **Pink-Eye:** Pink eye (conjunctivitis) generally remains contagious as long as your child is experiencing tearing and matted eyes. Signs and symptoms of pink eye usually improve within three to seven days. Bacterial conjunctivitis generally is not contagious after the child receives the eye drops, however, because the child still has crusted/red or teary eyes and a runny nose, we require for your child to stay at home until the eye is fully cleared up. When redness, tearing and matted eyes are no longer present, it's appropriate for a child to return to the Schoolhouse.

Just a note: Many times our Schoolhouse may get blamed for the illness of a child, meaning that we have "allowed" sick children to come here. Parents may not stop to think that when sick children are brought to our Schoolhouse, our entire staff is also at risk of exposure.

How would you feel if another parent brought their sick child and exposed your child?

We STRESS this again -- if you are not sure whether or not it is okay to bring your child, please call ahead to ask us. We may require a doctor's decision as to whether or not the child is contagious. We appreciate your cooperation in this matter.

Vision and Hearing Policy

The Vision and Hearing Screening Program, Texas Health and Safety Code requires that all children enrolled for the first time in any public, private, parochial, or denominational school or in a Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) licensed child-care center and licensed child care home in Texas, or who meet certain grade criteria (specified below), must be screened or have a professional examination for possible vision and hearing problems.

The requirements for **VISION AND HEARING SCREENING** apply each year for children enrolled in any licensed child-care center and licensed child care home or school program at the ages or grades listed below:

WHO MUST BE SCREENED	WHEN SCREENING MUST BE DONE
4-years-old by September 1st Kindergartners Any other first-time entrants (4 years* through 12th grade)	Within 120 days of admission
1st-, 3rd-, 5th-and 7th graders	Anytime within the school year (preferably within first semester)

Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect

Texas law mandates that if a staff member has cause to believe that a child has been abused or neglected or may be abused or neglected, that person must report the abuse no later than the 48th hour after the hour the professional first suspects that the child has been or may be abused or neglected to law enforcement officials. For this reason, please notify staff when you drop off your child of any accidents or injuries that occurred at home.

How to report Abuse and Neglect | Contact Licensing

You may call the Texas Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400 to report abuse or neglect. The hotline is answered by DFPS Intake Specialists (who are all degreed professionals) 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You will be asked to provide your name and contact information. You will be asked to explain your concerns. The Intake Specialist might ask additional questions to determine if the situation that you describe meets the Texas Family Code's definitions of abuse or neglect.

You may report your allegations to the Texas Abuse Hotline through the Internet at:

<http://www.txabusehotline.org>

This secure website provides a way to explain your concerns in writing. You must provide your name and a valid e-mail address. Your identity remains confidential and will not be provided directly to the accused person by any DFPS employee. Once an Intake Specialist processes your report, you will receive a confirmation email with a Call Identification Number. The e-mail will also tell you whether or not your report was forwarded to a local DFPS office for further investigation.

You may contact DFPS Licensing via this website or number:

https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Contact_Us/

Phone Contacts LICENSING OFFICE

State Office	512-834-3426
Report abuse or neglect <i>External Link</i>	1-800-252-5400
	<i>from across the United States</i>

Texas Youth Hotline	1-800-989-6884
Texas Adoption Resource Exchange (TARE)	1-800-233-3405
Foster Care or Adoption	1-800-233-3405
Office of Consumer Affairs	1-800-720-7777
	<i>submit questions or complaints</i>

Address

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

701 W. 51st Street
 Austin, Texas 78751 [[map](#)]
 P.O. Box 149030
 Austin, Texas 78714-9030

Termination of Services

Termination of a child will only be made with staff recommendation, appropriate documentation, and/or outside consultation (if applicable), which would result in action to be in the best interest of the child. Wholesome Generation may terminate enrollment for the following reasons:

- The parent/guardian fails to follow correct admission requirements especially as they relate to submission of required forms and departure procedures.
- Retention of the child would be detrimental to the health and safety of the other children in the Schoolhouse, the Schoolhouse staff, or to the child him/herself due to exceptional needs for special treatment. It is noted here that the staff at Wholesome Generation will make reasonable attempts to alleviate the situation before recommending termination.
- Damage of property, unwillingness to participate in class/lessons, or disrespect to our Teachers/Director.
- The parent/guardian fails to pay fees according to policy or disrespects our ED, Director Team or Staff/other Students and Parents.
- Parent habitually brings a sick child to the Schoolhouse.
- Parent continuously drops off child(ren) late to school.
- Failure to receive parental support and help when a child is suspected of having a learning or behavior problem. This includes failure to attend parent conferences and to follow through with medical and/or educational specialists, or releasing information for sensory youth in need of OT/therapy services. IF WG determines that a specialized instructor/aide is needed for 1:1 support, parents are responsible for payment of the professional (either via insurance or direct compensation), as WG is a small nonprofit and not specialized (special needs) learning center.
- Annual fees such as classroom fees or deposit fees and registration fees are non-refundable regardless of participation in our program. This applies to families enrolling, and then leaving for reasons of moving, etc.

In the case of a Schoolhouse termination, a two-week, written, dated notice will be given to the parent/guardian. All outstanding tuition must be made according to contract until the ending date (end of school-year). This policy does not apply if termination is due to non-payment, abuse to the Schoolhouse policies on illness, and/or continual late payments.

Weather and Emergency Procedures

Wholesome Generation follows the Austin Independent School District (AISD) decisions regarding bad weather and emergency closures, as well as the Leander Independent School District (LISD) closures and other sources. In cases of bad weather and emergency closures, WG will follow guidance of AISD / LISD regarding closures and delayed openings, however, we will call closures by **6pm the day prior** to a potential weather related closure day, to avoid parents driving to and from school in unsafe conditions. We have set up a phone-tree and you will be notified via text and email by our Director/Staff.

If the children must be relocated due to an emergency situation, or local emergency personnel require shelter-in-place, we will attempt telephonic notification to parents, as well as text and email. You will be provided with all of our Schoolhouse phone numbers and emergency cell phone numbers at Orientation (TBD).

Safety, Sanitation and Fire Guidelines

Our WG Schoolhouse will have annual sanitation inspections. After an initial health inspection, WG must renew our sanitation inspection every 12 months (by a qualified local sanitation official). Our schoolhouse premises will be cleaned daily or weekly (as appropriate) and all cleaning/sanitation will be monitored online and tracked by our Center Director, who signs off on all sanitation inspections, cleaning schedules, and training.

Our WG staff, or volunteers will be trained during Orientation and will help us keep our spaces beautiful and clean. Reports of our daily, weekly or monthly/annual cleanings will be tracked via check-list and updated by our Center Director.

Cleaning protocols are included in each of our Classrooms, as part of the Staff training and include duties such as cleaning, repairing, and maintaining our equipment and materials, to protect the health of our children (*included but not limited to hand washing, sanitation solutions, etc*). Inspections by the Director will be facilitated daily, weekly, or monthly.

Pest Control, Playground Equipment and other outdoor facilities and grounds will be maintained by our Contractors, and the checklist to monitor if each task has been completed, will be logged by our Center Director. Routine Playground and ALL Grounds inspections are scheduled daily by our Center Director and logged electronically (to monitor equipment quality and grounds maintenance).

Important Schoolhouse Guidelines

We hope that all can enjoy our beautiful Schoolhouse spaces for years to come. Here some rules that will help keep all our indoor and outdoor spaces beautiful and healthy:

- NO climbing on Trees (any)
- Please ask children to not leave their classroom spaces (unless attended by staff/parent).
- NO Shoes inside policy
 - *We have a no-shoe policy at the Schoolhouse, however, all children and adults MUST USE SHOES all times when outdoors.*
- NO outside foods

- *Please coordinate with us to bring snacks or birthday surprises.*
- Please show your love and respect for our space(s).
 - *We work hard to deliver beautiful and enriching spaces and hope guests and families will help us keep our grounds free of trash and our spaces clean.*

Failure to comply with our Schoolhouse rules may result in parents having to reimburse us for any damage, or contaminated food, and/or may result in other actions.

ABOUT OUR FOOD

In September of 2015, Wholesome Generation in Austin, Texas, launched a community program with the goal of rethinking kindergarten & school food systems based on *six Foundational principles*:

fresh, local, organic, seasonal, non-GMO, and zero waste.

A holistic approach unites a diverse community working toward a common goal – nourishing our children, while educating both students and families about the importance of healthy food choices, scratch-cooking, nutrition fundamentals, gardening practices, and overall health and wellness.

Since it's launch, our community and outreach program has set out to break the cycle of pre-packaged, heat and serve, overly processed food. Wholesome Generation has established a framework for systemic change, with scratch cooked meals, hands-on gardening, nutrition and edible education at the core. With wisdom and skills, these students are establishing themselves as informed, inspired, and mobilized global citizens.

We hope that this handbook has answered all your questions. Should you need any other information, or feel we failed to mention something important in our Handbook, please bring it to the attention of the Executive Director immediately.

We will update our handbook annually and provide every staff member and family with a new copy at this time.

Thank you for choosing and supporting Wholesome Generation, and let's make this an amazing learning experience for everyone!

Sincerely,
Wholesome Generation Campus Administration

NEW Requirements Regarding Gang-Free Zones

For Child Care Centers

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This new statute requires that information about gang-free zones be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed child care centers. The following is a tip sheet to assist in complying with the new law. This information may be posted at your child care operation or copies may be provided to parents.

What is a gang-free zone?

A gang-free zone is a designated area around a specific location where prohibited gang related activity is subject to increased penalty under Texas law. The specific locations include day care centers. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of your child care center. For more information about what constitutes a gang-free zone, please consult sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code.

How do parents know where the gang-free zone ends?

The area that falls within a gang-free zone can vary depending on the type of location. The local municipal or county engineer may produce and update maps for the purposes of prosecution. Parents may contact their local municipality or court house for information about obtaining a copy of a map if they choose to do so.

What is the purpose of gang-free zones?

Similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, the purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing tougher penalties.

What does this mean for my daycare center?

A child care center must inform parents or guardians of children attending the center about the new gang-free zone designation. This means parents or guardians need to be informed that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of your center is a violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

When do I have to comply with the new requirements?

The law is already in effect, so providers should begin sharing information regarding gang-free zones immediately. Licensing staff will offer technical assistance to facilitate compliance until rules are proposed and adopted, which is estimated to occur in March 2010. In the meantime, providers should update their operational policies and procedures to include providing the information mandated by this law to the parents or guardians of the children in care.

WHOLESOME GENERATION | OPERATIONAL + PARENT HANDBOOK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

I have received and read the *WHOLESOME GENERATION* Operational and Parent Handbook Procedures. I agree to follow these policies and understand that the Handbook may be modified, amended, or eliminated to be replaced by a new manual and Handbook. Parents will receive a notice in writing (email) and updated Handbook to sign, at least annually.

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date

Parent or Guardian Signature

Date