



Center for Indian Cultural Education
Bal Vihar of St. Louis

To foster and preserve Indian cultural values amongst children of Asian Indian origin

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Our Vision

To foster and preserve Indian cultural values amongst children of Asian Indian origin.

Our Mission

To make Bal Vihar of St. Louis an exciting and encouraging educational environment for Asian Indian children through appropriate activities conducted by committed professional volunteers.

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Bal Vihar of St Louis is governed by all the policies and procedures listed in this document. However, Bal Vihar administration and management reserves the right to make any exceptions on a case by case basis if it is warranted.

1.0 Admissions policies

1.1 Registrations

The online registration at www.balvihar-stlouis.com is usually open from May 01 and closes end of July of each year. Due to capacity, each classroom size is limited to 35. Bal Vihar administration reserves the right to open additional classes or expand this class size.

Bal Vihar (BV) admissions are valid for school year. Students will be admitted after going through the formal registration process and after paying the designated fees and completing the disclaimer forms. Bal Vihar will admit students attending regular schools from grade Kindergarten through Grade 12. The grade at the beginning of the academic school year will be used for admission to the corresponding group at Bal Vihar.

- At the beginning of every academic year, Bal Vihar will publish a schedule of dates for admissions and will strictly adhere to those dates.
- Regular registration will close two weeks prior to the first session of the school year.
- Bal Vihar will accept inquiries or requests for additional admissions on a wait list till end of first session if the class capacity allows.
- After the first session of the year, Bal Vihar will notify the parents from this wait list if their student is admitted or not.
- If the student is admitted, the parents have one week to complete the registration and if they failed to complete the registration, waitlist option will expire.
- All admissions will close before the beginning of second session of Balvihar.

1.2 Waitlist process

- Bal Vihar administration will evaluate the waiting list and if the resources are available and additional admissions can be accommodated, we will be able to admit the students.
- Bal Vihar cannot guarantee admissions if the student is placed on a waiting list
- While we transition to this model, all existing students will be grandfathered and given the opportunity to register even if the class size exceeds 35

1.3 Fees

The fees' structure is determined by the executive committee every year. The administration will propose any changes to fees structure or additional offerings to the parents during the year for the following year. Based on the feedback, the changes will be implemented for the following school year. The changes will be communicated to all parents via email, updates on the web or other communications. Students in groups Y4 and Y5 are exempted from the fees and deposits. All payments are collected on line for registrations.

1.4 Refunds

Registered parents can withdraw their child(ren) before the registration closes. No refund will be made once the registration is closed at the conclusion of first session of the school year. The bank fees and or charges incurred by Bal Vihar will be deducted from the refunds.

1.5 Class allocation

Minimum age for admission to Bal Vihar is that the student must be enrolled at least Kindergarten at any regular school. New students will be assigned by their school grade as follows:

School Grade	Bal Vihar Group
Kindergarten	Group K
First Grade	Group 1
Second Grade	Group 2
Third Grade	Group 3
Fourth Grade	Group 4
Fifth Grade	Group 5
Sixth Grade	Group 6
Seventh Grade	Group 7
Eighth Grade	Youth Group 1 (Y1)
Ninth Grade	Youth Group 2 (Y2)
Tenth Grade	Youth Group 3 (Y3)
Eleventh Grade	Youth Group 4 (Y4)
Twelfth Grade	Youth Group 5 (Y5)

No new student will be assigned to Group Y4 or Group Y5 directly and if any new student that wants to join youth group must join Y3 irrespective of the grade in school or age and is not eligible for graduation from Bal Vihar. Thus, they are not allowed to be teaching volunteers as well.

1.6 Financial assistance

It is recognized that there may be a condition where parents may not be able to afford the school fee for their child(ren). Under this condition, the following may apply:

Bal Vihar will waive fees for up to three children in a school year on a first come first served basis. The request for such condition should be made in writing to the executive committee. This request should explain the reasons to waive the fee with proper supporting documents. These documents can be tax return or other relevant documents. This will allow the executive committee to make

appropriate decision. Upon acceptance of the waiver by the Bal Vihar school, the parent(s) is required to provide the following service to the Bal Vihar as follows:

A firm commitment of parent in offering 40 hours of voluntary service to the Bal Vihar. These service hours will be tracked by the administration to ensure that such service is provided. This requirement is in addition to the parent volunteer requirements. Failure to meet this requirement will be the cause for student to be discontinued from attending Bal Vihar. If the parent's financial condition improves during the school year, he or she will be required to pay the school fee without any penalty.

2.0 Education policies

2.1 Bal Vihar graduation

Bal Vihar will graduate its students at the conclusion of Group Y3 after attending youth group at least 2 years with Y3 being the mandatory year. The student must graduate from Bal Vihar to be eligible for Group Y4 and Group Y5.

At the end of group 7, students will participate in a bridging ceremony that will welcome them to the youth group.

A farewell ceremony will be held for Y5 students when they complete high school and graduate to college.

All other Bal Vihar students are automatically moved to the next group in the following school year.

2.2 Absenteeism

If a student is absent for more than 3 consecutive classes without reason or without informing the teacher then the teacher can refer the matter to the education directors who will get in touch with the parents of the student and ascertain the reason for being absent. If it is deemed necessary, the directors will make the final recommendation to the President of Bal Vihar that the student be asked to leave Bal Vihar. The case will be documented and the President will communicate the decision to the parents. No refund will be given for the fee for that school year.

3.0 School requirements

3.1 Late arrival

All students are expected to be in the school on the scheduled days by 15 minutes prior to the start of the schedule with Aarthi and Prayers at 10 am. The prayer room doors will be closed during the prayers and students shall remain outside till the prayers are completed.

3.2 Dress code

The general atmosphere of a school must be conducive to learning. Although the mode of dress for students is primarily the responsibility of the students and parents, we expect students to dress in a manner that will not disrupt the educational process of classroom learning, bhajans, and yoga.

All are expected to use common sense approach and adhere to common practices of modesty, cleanliness, neatness, and to dress in a respectful manner cognizant of the fact that Bal Vihar is a cultural school that includes teaching and learning of devotional songs and practicing yoga.

Clothing should be clean and free of any suggestive, obscene, or inappropriate writing or pictures. Clothing that promotes disruptive behavior, and or displays images, including but not limited to, drugs, alcohol, tobacco and/or its products, violence, sex or hate groups is prohibited and must be covered or removed.

3.3 Dropping off and picking up

It is the parent's responsibility to arrange for bringing and picking up the student(s) from school. While dropping the students, the parents should accompany the kids inside the building and should not drop-off in the parking lot. After the class dispersal the students must be picked up from the lobby and the students are not allowed to walk up to the parking lot without being accompanied by a parent.

If parent(s) arrange(s) for the student's pick-up from the classroom or the school, by a third party, written & dated communication must be sent to the student's classroom teacher and the logistics leader. If the student has to leave prior to end of the regular times, the class teacher and/or logistics leaders must be notified ahead of time. The students will be allowed to leave during the transition period and not during any class times.

3.4 Student responsibilities

No food or drinks allowed inside classrooms. Any disruption to school and or property will be brought to the attention of the parents as soon as possible. A repeat offense will result in the student being expelled from Bal Vihar and parents are responsible for all damages caused by the student.

All classrooms must be left in the same configuration and shape, as it was when the class starts. It is the students' responsibility to put things back.

No running inside the school is permitted. Stay within the classroom boundaries and the defined space for Bal Vihar. Wandering on the other side of the school is strictly prohibited. No skating shoes are allowed in school premises. Always practice safe habits.

Failure to adhere to student responsibilities is subjected to disciplinary actions by the administration to the extent of student being expelled from the institution.

3.5 Cancelled class

Bal Vihar may decide to cancel classes due to bad weather resulting in unsafe conditions or any other uncontrollable circumstances. Bal Vihar may decide to make up classes for these cancelled

classes and parents will be notified once the decision is made. This information will be notified to the parents in the regular communication channels.

4.0 Volunteer hours

Bal Vihar provides opportunities to be involved in many volunteer activities and participates in the President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) program and kids are encouraged to participate and earn hours. Bal Vihar awards service hours in at least two methods – teaching and community service.

4.1 Community service hours

Bal Vihar will publish the schedule of service events and students can sign up for those events. The community service hours will be provided to individual students upon completion of any volunteer activity after the activity is completed. The community hours awarded will be decided by the community projects coordinator/director taking into consideration of the students' attendance, participation, activities, contribution etc.

Some projects are complex and require a team effort with the leader doing more of the work while others are less complex projects and require only one person to coordinate. Participation hours are awarded to those who helped with the execution of the project based on the length and complexity of the event.

The hours include the extra time leaders and/or team members spend on designing flyers, emailing/communicating with the team, and driving time to complete the project, etc. Below are some examples of projects that we have completed. This guide will be adjusted depending on the projects selected for a particular year.

Project	Participant	On the team	Leader
Canstruction	8	20	25
School supply drive	1	2	3
Coat Drive	2	3	3
Sandwich making	3	3	5
Kare Kitchen	5	5	7
Class attendance	1		

4.2 Teaching service hours

To earn the teaching service hours, the student must be present for the duration of the class. Y4 students, must independently teach a minimum of two classes and Y5 must teach a minimum of four classes. For yoga/bhajan and art, Y4 students must lead a minimum of four classes total and Y5 students must lead a minimum of eight classes. 30 minutes of teaching a class will count as one class. Lesson plans for teaching to be shared by previous Wednesday of the class. Excused absences should be notified at least 24 hours in advance.

The teaching hours are granted per the following:

	Y4	Y5
Class room teaching	3	5
Bhajan	5	8
Yoga	5	8
Art	5	8

Minimum required number of classes to lead per student to be eligible for teaching service hours are as follows. Upon meeting the requirements for the teaching service hours, the students will be awarded the following service hours per class.

	Teaching Prep	Teaching	Class Assist
Class room teaching	2	1.5	1
Bhajan	$\frac{3}{4}$	1	$\frac{1}{2}$
Yoga	$\frac{3}{4}$	1	$\frac{1}{2}$
Art	$\frac{3}{4}$	1	$\frac{1}{2}$

Extra hours may be awarded at the discretion of the teachers based on additional teaching needs or extra work performed by the students. If parents are part of teaching staff or administration staff, they cannot award hours for their child.

4.3 PVSA service hours

This opportunity is open for Bal Vihar Youth (Y1 through Y5) for every school year starting from April 1 through the following March 31 (PVSA year). Please note that PVSA year is slightly different than Balvihar regular academic year. Schedule of the due dates for the submissions and meetings will be communicated through normal channels at the beginning of the school year.

Prior to submitting the PVSA application to Bal Vihar, some general rules apply.

For PVSA, interested students only participate with one organization. If you register with Bal Vihar PVSA, you are reporting all your volunteer service hours to Bal Vihar in a timely fashion. For volunteer hours completed outside Bal Vihar during PVSA year, applicant will collect formal and authentic proof of volunteering. This can be a certificate or an email/written approval from the supervisor of the organization that is granting the hours.

For volunteer hours completed within Bal Vihar during PVSA year, applicant will work with classroom teaching coordinator, community projects coordinator, and Bal Vihar event/education coordinator, and have the respective coordinators sign off on the corresponding volunteer hours.

Applicant will track all Bal Vihar and non-Bal Vihar volunteer hours using the template provided by Bal Vihar, all through the volunteering period mentioned above for the PVSA year. Accurate data (hours, supervisor name, email, phone number, etc) are a must.

4.3.1 Pre-requisites for applying

At least 75% attendance in classes is required for applying for PVSA through Bal Vihar. Volunteer for a minimum of at least two Bal Vihar service projects (Community Projects, Republic Day, CANstruction, etc) must be completed and email the PVSA coordinator pvsa@balvihar-stlouis.org. There will be two touchpoint meetings to guide applicants through the application process. Attendance to these meetings is strongly encouraged and is mandatory to attend both meetings.

4.3.2 Submitting application

To apply for the Bal Vihar PVSA Award applicant will use the form <https://forms.gle/pkTHAVwG4t22yxdP7> . Along with the form, applicant will attach and upload the tracking log and all formal and authentic proof of volunteering mentioned above. No forms and/or supporting documents will be accepted after the due date. There will be no exceptions to this.

4.3.3 Post submission application:

The volunteer hours completed at Bal Vihar will fall in three categories.

Classroom hours:

The PVSA team will forward the hours to the classroom teaching Coordinator for verification. PVSA team will sign off after verification. The classroom teaching coordinator will consult with the classroom teacher and certify the hours. In case of a youth and the classroom teacher not agreeing on the total number of hours, we will request classroom teaching coordinator and youth coordinator to resolve the issue. For Y1, Y2, Y3, classroom attendance does not constitute volunteer hours.

Community Service hours:

The PVSA team will forward the hours to the community projects Coordinator for verification. PVSA team will sign off after verification. In case of a youth and the community projects coordinator not agreeing on the total number of hours, we will request the community projects coordinator and youth coordinator to resolve the issue.

Bal Vihar event/logistics hours:

The PVSA team will forward the hours to the event/education coordinator for verification. PVSA team will sign off after verification. In case of a youth and the event/education coordinator not agreeing on the total number of hours, we will request the Events/Education coordinator and youth coordinator to resolve the issue.

The PVSA team will audit the hours completed outside Bal Vihar. At a minimum two of the supervisors will be called and hours will be verified. The details of the conversation will be captured

as minutes and stored with the applicant profile in google drive. All other documents submitted by the applicant will be saved in google drive.

When one of the PVSA team is related to the applicant, they will recuse themselves and one other member will do the review of the application.

4.3.4 Post verification of volunteer hours

Once all the volunteer hours on the tracking log are verified in the manner stated above by the PVSA team, the PVSA Coordinator and youth coordinator will apply for the awards and will announce the awards in May/June of the school year.

4.4 Recommendation letters

Students may request for recommendation letters from Bal Vihar. The request must be submitted in writing and allow 45 days to be completed. The recommendation letter request should be made to the executive committee or the president.

5.0 Volunteer policies

5.1 Volunteering requirements

During registration, every parent is required to sign up for a voluntary activity (ies) / assignment(s) during Bal Vihar school year. Every activity or choice for volunteering has a pre-set number of volunteers and it is assigned on first come first served basis. Bal Vihar events coordinator reserves the right to re-assign activity assignment on as-needed basis.

Voluntary activity requirement is per child and if more than one child is registered parents are required to volunteer for number of activities that equals the number of kids registered. The volunteer coordinator must be notified at least 2 weeks in advance of any changes.

Teachers, community projects organizers and administrative team members are classified as volunteers. At least 8 hours of volunteer work including participating event related or other meeting will be considered as the completion of the voluntary requirement. The event leads will provide the completion of the voluntary requirements for all the events. The education leaders will certify the volunteer completion for the teaching staff.

5.2 Volunteer deposit and refund

The parents has an option to opt-out of voluntary activity assignments by choosing the “Buy-out” option. Choosing this option will result in forfeiting the volunteer fee. Voluntary activities need to be completed in the same academic year and the parents who fail to do so will fore-go the deposit.

Upon satisfactory completion of the voluntary commitment, Bal Vihar will refund voluntary deposit to the parents.

6.0 Expense policies

As part of the normal operations, parents and volunteers may incur expenses to buy goods or services for Bal Vihar activities. Legitimate expenses incurred by parents or volunteers on behalf of Bal Vihar activities will be fully reimbursed when claims are made as described in the following section.

Prior to the start of the school, the administration meets and finalizes an annual budget for each event and activities including teaching requirements etc. Once the budgets are approved, the leaders of that area has the authority to manage that specific budget. If the expenses are forecast to exceed the budget, it will require prior approval from the executive committee before spending.

If any expense was not included in the budget, it must be authorized by the executive committee before spending.

6.1 Reimbursement policies

All expense reimbursement submissions must be made within 90 days of purchase. There is an exception for purchases made in November and December for which claims must be submitted before Jan 31 of the following year.

Claims must include the approved claim form along with original receipts. For purchases less than \$50, a scanned claim form along with a scanned receipt is acceptable. Claims not submitted within eligible date or submitted without proper documentation is not eligible for reimbursement.

If parent does not deposit the check provided by Bal Vihar within the time, it will be cancelled. Reimbursement checks will not be issued again.

7.0 Grievance policies

This grievance policy addresses issues that may be brought against a student, parent, teacher, volunteer or administration staff member.

To bring forth a grievance, a formal written complaint must be filed to the executive committee. It should address who the reporting individual and whom the grievance is against and must use the grievance form included here.

Within two weeks or as early as is reasonably possible after receiving the complaint, the executive committee will investigate and may call a meeting where all parties concerned are present. Every effort will be made to resolve the issues amicably.

In case a satisfactory resolution agreeable to all parties concerned is not reached, the issue will be turned over to the President for further deliberation.

Submit Grievance Online or download pdf version of grievance form.

7.1 GRIEVANCE FORM



Center for Indian Cultural Education Bal Vihar of St. Louis

GRIEVANCE FORM

Date Filed: _____

Person Filing Grievance: _____

Association with Bal Vihar: _____

(Teacher, parent, volunteer etc.)

Grievance For: _____

Nature of
Grievance: _____

Expected outcome:

-

To be filled by Bal Vihar Administration

Action Taken: _____

How was decision made: _____

Who communicated to person filing grievance: _____

8.0 Administrative policies

8.1 Solicitation from external organizations

Bal Vihar student or parent information will not be distributed or shared with any outside organization including emails. Bal Vihar will not utilize their data base for sending any commercial activities or other means that do not benefit Bal Vihar directly.

Collaboration opportunities with other organizations will be reviewed internally and communicated

8.2 Education aid Items

Bal Vihar educational aid items remain Bal Vihar property and should be treated with care. Parents/volunteers are expected to treat them as personal property. All items must be returned to Operations team at the end of school year. In case of its malfunction, the item should be quickly taken to the Operations team and get it fixed