



BVS Dhamma School Guiding Document

Version 1.0

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Buddhist Vihara Society in BC

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Version Control

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1.0 Introduction

BVS was established as a recognized charitable organization and started its formal operations in 1990. Aims of the society are stated in the constitution as;

- To study and practice Buddhism specifically of “Theravada” tradition.
- To promote the study and practice of teachings of the Buddha through lectures, study groups, publications, retreats and religious ceremonies.
- To establish and maintain a Buddhist temple for furtherance of (1) and (2)

The BVS Dhamma school operates in accordance with the provisions outlined in the BVS constitution. This procedural document sets out the key guidelines to be followed in the operation and management of the BVS Dhamma School.

The objective of the BVS Dhamma School Guiding Document is to provide a clear framework that supports the spiritual, ethical, and educational development of students, ensures a safe and nurturing learning environment, and outlines the responsibilities of teachers, parents, and other stakeholders in fostering the holistic growth and well-being of children in accordance with Buddhist values.

2.0 Mission and Core Values

Our mission

To cultivate in our students the wisdom, compassion, and ethical conduct rooted in the Buddha’s teachings, nurturing their intellectual, emotional, and spiritual growth so they may become responsible and compassionate individuals, wherever in the world they may live.

Our core values.

1. Explore the teachings of the Buddha.
2. Teach children how to apply these teachings to their daily lives.
3. Develop qualities such as Metta (loving-kindness), Karuna (compassion), Mudita (joy), and Upekkha (equanimity).
4. Incorporate Dana (generosity), Sila (morality), and Bhavana (meditation) into their lives.
5. To introduce the Sinhala language and Sri Lankan culture.

3.0 Applicability of the Document

This document outlines the fundamental guidelines for the operation of the BVS Dhamma School and is intended for all relevant parties, including but not limited to teachers, students, parents, the Education Subcommittee, and other stakeholders.

4.0 Parental Involvement and Support

We recognize that for students to thrive at the BVS Dhamma School, they need the combined support of both parents and teachers. We strongly believe that a close partnership with parents significantly enhances a child's educational experience and development.

To help us achieve the objectives of the Dhamma School, we kindly request the parents to support the child's learning by ensuring that they:

- Attend Dhamma School regularly every week.
- Arrive on time.
- Attend the Puja every week.
- Complete all assigned homework (where applicable)
- Actively participate in school activities and events

Continued involvement and encouragement of the parents, play a vital role in child's success and growth in the Dhamma School environment.

5.0 Dhamma School Program and Terms

Our Dhamma School operates parallel to the local school calendar. Please refer the BVS website via www.bvs.org for exact dates and events applicable to the respective year.

- **When:** Every Sunday from 12:30 pm to 3:10 pm
- **Typical Dhamma School Day:**
 - Ø 12:15 pm 12:30 pm - puja arrangement by the volunteering class and seating arrangements. (as per the roster)

- Ø 12.30 pm – 12:45 pm - Offering of medicinal drinks and puja by Ven Monk followed by guided meditation and a dhamma talk given by a student (as per the roster)
- Ø 12:45 pm – 12:50 pm - announcements pertaining to dhamma school followed by Daham Pasal song.
- Ø 12:50 pm Kids are dismissed to commence classes. Tables and chairs placed for classes.
- Ø 1:00 pm – 2:45 pm - Dhamma classes commence.
- Ø Snack times (Refer to Appendix C for suggested menus)
 - o 1:45 pm – 2:00 pm (Pre-k & K)
 - o 1:45 pm – 2:00 pm (G 1-4 and 9)
 - o 2:00 pm – 2:15 pm (G5-10)
 - o 2:15 pm – 2:30 pm – (G 11 – volunteers)
- Ø 2:45 pm – 3:00 pm Sinhala review (Pre-K to Grade 6)
- Ø 3:00 pm - Pre-K and K are dismissed.
- Ø 3:05 pm – 3: 10 pm - Once tables and chairs are put away grades 1 to 11 assemble at the main hall for Chakmanawaka gatha and to conclude dhamma school.

6.0 Student Registration

- Ø All new students must be registered using the following link which is provided on the BVS website: <https://www.bvs.org/dhamma-school-registration>
- Ø Child registrations must be completed by filling out all applicable sections of the online registration form.
- Ø Registration will be kept open from September till December of the respective academic year.
- Ø Registration is processed on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Ø The total number of students enrolled at the BVS Dhamma School for the respective academic year will be determined by the Principal and the Education Sub-Committee prior to the beginning of the academic year, taking into consideration the available resources, space, average attendance from previous year/s, and other relevant factors.
- Ø Registration will be closed once the decided capacity is reached, OR by end of December of the respective academic year.
- Ø Subsequent registrants will be placed on a waitlist to be enrolled once spots open up and/or at the beginning of the next academic year.

- Ø Any enrollment from the waitlist in between the academic year will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the subcommittee and the class teacher.
- Ø If a student is going to be absent for 3 or more consecutive weeks, this must be informed in writing to the class teacher or by sending an email to bvsdhammaschool@bvs.org.
- Ø Students absent for 3 or more consecutive weeks without informing, will be excluded from the BVS Dhamma School, as space is limited and students on the waiting list need to be accommodated.
- Ø Students who lose their spot due to being absent for 3 or more consecutive classes without prior notification, must re-register and join the waitlist if they wish to continue their studies at the BVS Dhamma School.
- Ø At the end of the academic year, students who have attended less than 10 days will not be permitted to continue at the BVS Dhamma School. To resume their studies, they must re-register and join the waitlist, with enrollment subject to availability.

7.0 Classes Offered and Teaching Material

BVS Dhamma School offers a broad and balanced curriculum designed to help children of all ages understand the life and teachings of the Buddha. We currently use the *Buddhist Way of Life* book series from Kindergarten to Grade 11. Teachers follow the established curriculum outline and supplement it as needed, under the guidance of the principal. While we currently have a limited number of textbooks, our goal is to ensure that each student has their own copy.

Regular classes are offered from Pre-K to Grade 10. In Grade 11, students engage in various volunteer activities, including substitute teaching for lower grades, maintaining class attendance records, serving as Master of Ceremonies for events, and participating in Dhamma discussions. They also join the BVS Youth Group, which offers opportunities to participate in approved volunteer initiatives. Upon graduation, students will receive a letter documenting their volunteer hours, which can be used to support applications to post-secondary institutions.

The students also have access to pre-printed stansas booklet and is available to all. Parents are encouraged to take a copy to use at home so that the child is aware of the stansas. Further, it's a good practice to set aside time at home to pay homage to the Buddha, Dhamma and Sanga.

8.0 Teachers and Volunteer Staff

Our school benefits from a dedicated team of experienced volunteers, closely mentored by the principal. We also have teachers with Dharmacharya certification from Sri Lanka, adding significant expertise. All classes are taught in English by qualified teachers or experienced volunteers, and a reliable pool of substitute teachers ensures continuity. We encourage recent graduates to volunteer, fostering the next generation of educators.

The principal of the dhamma school will also aid the teachers by teaching a class from time to time, thus creating a bond with children and the sangha.

Current list of teachers: Please refer to the BVS Dhamma School web page.

8.1 Recommended criteria to become a volunteer teacher of the BVS Dhamma School:

It is recommended to follow the following criteria when recruiting teachers to the BVS Dhamma School

- A team player
- Good command of the English language.
- People with Dharmacharya certification from Sri Lanka
- People with teaching experience
- on the recommendation of another monk where the individual has taught at a dhamma school
- It is recommended that new recruits serve as substitute teachers for a few months before taking on the role of a main teacher.

8.2 Grade 11 Student leaders (Prefects)

Under the guidance of the class teacher, students in grade 11 will take on an active role in the day-to-day operations of the Dhamma school, some of the duties include but not limited to;

- Dhamma discussions with the teacher
- Assisting the assigned class in preparation for the puja
- Ensuring the hall is ready and the sound system is in operation.
- Carrying out any announcements for the day
- Ensuring class attendance for all the grades are taken and documented on the google sheet.

- Assist class teachers in teaching on a rotational basis among the class, (introduction to teaching)
- Coordinate events at the Dhamma school.
 - Emceeing the Winter assembly
 - Develop a Presentation about Sri Lankan independence, National Heroes etc. in the month of Feb,
 - Preparation of a flyer for the food bank drive and collection of food
 - Playing a lead role during the field trip to ensure classes are in order.
 - Avurudu celebrations
 - Vesak lantern preparation in May
 - Prize giving ceremony (please refer to Appendix B for more details)
 - Managing the entire program
 - Developing the e magazine
 - Certificate preparation
 - Other duties as assigned.

8.3 BVS Youth group

Students who graduate at the end of the academic year will be invited to join a youth group guided by Venerable Dr. Mirissee Dhammika Thero. The purpose of this group is to create a supportive platform via WhatsApp or in person, through which youth can reach out to the Venerable Thero at any time to discuss Dhamma or seek guidance on personal matters. This initiative aims to offer meaningful, practical advice to help them navigate day-to-day life in alignment with Buddhist principles.

9.0 Assessments

BVS Dhamma School teachers continuously assess students' learning and progress throughout the year. In addition, all students will sit for an annual end-of-year exam as part of the Dhamma School's overall assessment process. These exams serve as a valuable opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding and apply their knowledge of the Dhamma.

10. Extra-Curricular Activities

Dhamma School students actively participate in a variety of events and functions organized by both the Dhamma School and the BVS throughout the academic year. These include cultural and religious events such as the Sri Lankan New Year,

Independence Day Celebration, Vesak programs, Bakthi Gee programs, and special Sil programs, among others. A summary of these events is provided in the table below, with specific dates to be updated in the Dhamma School calendar.

Month	Event	Event details
Jan	Winter assembly	Presentations by students.
Feb	Sri Lanka Independence	Cultural (2 Sundays in the month of February. A volunteer class will conduct a presentation)
End Feb	Food bank drive	Education Subcommittee to assist.
March	Field trip	Engagement to align with Buddhist principles and values
April	Dhamma school Avurudu celebration	Cultural
May	BC Vesak day – Devotional Songs	Cultural
May	Preparation of Vesak Lanterns	2pm to 4:30 pm at Dhamma School
May	Dhamma school Vesak Sil program	Spiritual
June	Annual Prize giving	Awards Ceremony
June	Dhamma sermon for youth	G 7 to 11 students (Ages 13 to 22)
June	Workshop for teachers	Conducted by Mirisse Dhammika Thero

11.0 School Rules, Guidelines, and Responsibilities

The following guidelines and expectations of the Dhamma school are introduced to maintain consistency and a positive conducive learning environment.

11.1 Responsibilities of Students:

- Respect and follow instructions of the Venerable Monks and teaching staff.
- Behave in a responsible, polite, and courteous manner at all times.
- Engage in the learning and attempt tasks assigned to the best of their ability, including homework.

11.2 Responsibilities of Parents:

The BVS Dhamma School is a volunteer-run institution operating under the guidance and supervision of the Venerable Monks and the Buddhist Vihara Society. Its continued success depends heavily on the support and volunteer contributions of parents. We kindly encourage all parents to actively participate and volunteer in various activities and events organized by the BVS Dhamma School and volunteering to keep the temple premises clean.

- Parents must ensure children attend school regularly and be punctual. It is the parent's responsibility to inform the Dhamma School of any planned or unplanned absences. Please inform your class teacher or send an email to bvsdhammaschool@bvs.org.
- All parents are encouraged to attend the Puja which is held prior to the commencement of Dhamma School.
- Consecutive uninformed absences exceeding 3 weeks will lead to the child being excluded from the Dhamma School as we have a limited intake of students and others need to be admitted from the waiting list.
- New students must enroll by registering prior to September to ensure a spot. We follow a first come first serve basis for new enrollment.
- One of the key objectives of our Dhamma school is to give the child a connection to the Buddhist way of life; social values, beliefs and customs that are linked to Buddhism. As a parent, we hope that you would assist us to achieve this objective by ensuring your child attends the Dhamma School every Sunday.
- Ensure that your child is suitably dressed.
 - o Boys: Jathika Anduma (White) and Girls: Lama Sariya (white) for special events
 - o Boys and girls to wear white/light coloured attire for regular dhamma school days.
- Parents must attend Parent\Teacher meetings and any other relevant meetings.
- Parents of children with medical conditions must promptly inform Dhamma school about the child's medical condition/s.
- Parents must keep the Dhamma school informed about any changes to their child/children's health.
- Children should be picked up on time after Dhamma School.

12.0 Codes of Conduct

12.1 Code of conduct for parents:

We are privileged to have a parent community that is both supportive and engaged. Our parents understand that the education of children is a collaborative endeavor involving not only teachers, but also the families and the wider Dhamma School community. Within this partnership, we recognize the vital role that strong, respectful relationships play in preparing children with the skills and values essential for adult life.

Considering this, we continue to warmly welcome and encourage active parental involvement in all aspects of school life. Parents serve as the most influential role models for their children. Therefore, the Dhamma School holds high expectations for the conduct of parents when on school premises, participating in school events, or communicating with staff, and requests that all interactions reflect courtesy, respect, and the shared values of our community.

Any violations of the code of conduct should be reported to the Principal, Education Subcommittee and to the BVS Board, in that order. Appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the BVS Constitution in response to such violations.

12.2 Code of Conduct for Teachers, the Education Subcommittee and Other Administrative Stakeholders

Teachers, members of the Education Subcommittee, and other administrative stakeholders are expected to uphold the highest standards of professional conduct. Their behavior should foster a strong sense of unity, inspire confidence and trust within the community, and always reflect positively on BVS Dhamma School. Any actions that may bring the school into disrepute are to be strictly avoided.

Core Principles:

- The wellbeing of students must always be regarded as the highest priority.
- Be responsible for your own actions and behavior and must avoid any conduct that could reasonably be perceived as inappropriate or raise questions about the intentions or motivations.
- Conduct in a manner that is open, transparent, and accountable.

- Any incident that may cause concern should be promptly discussed with, or referred to, the Principal, the Education Subcommittee, or the BVS Board in that order, for guidance or resolution.
- Students must be treated fairly, equitably, and with respect, without any form of discrimination.
- A respectful, sensitive, and inclusive attitude must be maintained toward the diverse backgrounds and experiences of students. Staff should identify and respond appropriately to any barriers to learning and seek further advice or support where necessary.
- All personal information relating to staff, students, and parents must be treated as strictly confidential and handled with discretion and care.
- In the event that a teacher is unable to attend a scheduled class, they must notify their designated substitute or a member of the Education Subcommittee at least two days in advance, to allow adequate time for necessary preparation.

Any violations of the code of conduct should be reported to the Principal, Education Subcommittee and to the BVS Board, in that order. Appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the BVS Constitution in response to such violations.

13.0 Safeguarding Dhamma School Students

Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all students is a collective responsibility shared by everyone involved in the Dhamma School. At BVS Dhamma School, the creation and maintenance of a secure and supportive learning environment is our highest priority. We are committed to providing a safe and nurturing setting for all students. Accordingly, all teachers, members of the Education Subcommittee, and other stakeholders must ensure that they do not, directly or indirectly, pose any physical or psychological risk or harm to the safety and well-being of the children under our care at any time.

BVS has an established fire safety protocol in place. Fire drills are conducted at least once a year to ensure that all students are familiar with emergency procedures and can respond confidently and appropriately in the event of an emergency.

14.0 Communication Between BVS Dhamma School and Parents

To ensure that there is clear communication between Dhamma school and home it is extremely important that parents notify the subcommittee through the respective class teacher of any changes to their contact details. We also use social media, direct Message services like WhatsApp and email as our preferred mode of communication. In addition, if a parent requires any information, they are encouraged to contact the respective class teacher, Dhamma School principal or a member of the Education Subcommittee.

15.0 Education Subcommittee

As per the BVS constitution, The Education Subcommittee is appointed by the BVS board as per the by-laws and its sole purpose is to ensure the smooth operation of the dhamma school. As per the BVS constitution, the sub-committees will be mandated in different functional areas such as, administrative, spiritual, planning, operational, maintenance and other as the board determines.

15.1 Education Subcommittee Terms of Reference (TOR), as per the BVS Constitution.

- (a) Prepare an annual education program and submit it to the board for approval.
- (b) Conduct Sunday school programs.
- (c) Organize any other education programs for children up to the age of 18.
- (d) Identify ways and-means of improving current and future education programs to suit children's needs and provide recommendations for consideration of the board.
- (e) Prepare and maintain a list of school children who attended Sunday School.
- (f) Develop a plan to keep children engaged in temple activities after graduation.
- (g) Any other items requested by the Board from time to time.

Following are some of the specific tasks which are allocated but not limited to the Education Subcommittee; in line with the ToR;

- Ensuring snack availability for the students.
- Ensuring the temple premises are cleaned at the end of each dhamma school day.
- Ensuring stationary and other important resources are available for the teachers so the teachers can teach with minimal disturbance.
- Ensure the BVS Dhamma school webpage on the BVS website is updated with information of the class teachers, events calendar etc.

- Keep the BVS dhamma school calendar updated to ensure that it does not interfere with regular temple activities.
- Budgets and funds
 - ❖ The education subcommittee must present the annual budget of the BVS Dhamma school to the BVS Board, by December each year.
 - ❖ Within that budget, the education subcommittee must submit a forecasted cost to the BVS Board, at least 1 month prior to any event, so that the funds can be approved and released by the BVS board.
 - ❖ Once the event is concluded the Education Sub-Committee must submit the actual cost of the event together with any receipts to the BVS Board for reimbursements.

16.0 Review of the document

The BVS Dhamma School Guiding Document is subject to annual review, or review as and when required, to reflect evolving educational needs, community feedback, and spiritual insights.

17.0 Disclaimer

This BVS Dhamma School Guiding Document has been respectfully prepared by the BVS Education Sub-Committee, in consultation with the Venerable Monks and the BVS Dhamma School teaching faculty. This document is intended to serve as a framework for the conduct, curriculum, and administration of Dhamma education within the BVS community.

While every effort has been made to ensure that the teachings and guidelines presented herein align with the principles of Theravāda Buddhism and the values upheld by the BVS Dhamma School, this document is not a substitute for direct guidance from Venerable Monks, qualified monastic teachers or spiritual advisors. Interpretations and applications may vary depending on context, and readers are encouraged to seek clarification when needed.

Participation in the BVS Dhamma School is entirely at the discretion of each student's parent or legal guardian. By enrolling their child, parents/ legal guardians acknowledge and accept full responsibility for their decision. Even though every precaution has been taken to ensure the safety of the children, in the event if any unforeseen incident occur during BVS Dhamma school activities, whether on or off the premises, the BVS, Venerable Monks, volunteers, and affiliated members shall not be held liable for any accidents, injuries, or losses resulting from such incidents.

In the event of any dispute, ambiguity, or conflict arising from the interpretation or application of this BVS Dhamma School Guiding Document, the BVS Constitution shall take precedence and supersede this document.

18.0 Conclusion

The BVS Dhamma School plays a vital role in nurturing the spiritual, moral, and cultural development of our children by grounding them in the timeless teachings of the Buddha. This guiding document serves as a framework to ensure the effective operation of the BVS Dhamma school while upholding the values and expectations of our community.

We are deeply grateful to the Venerable Monks, teachers, parents, and volunteers whose dedication and support make the Dhamma School a thriving place of learning and growth. Together, we strive to foster an environment where children can learn the Dhamma, live mindfully, and become compassionate, responsible individuals both within our local community and wherever life takes them.

Let us continue to work together in unity and mutual respect, upholding the principles of the Dhamma for the benefit of our children and future generations.

Appendices

Appendix A: Outline of the Dhamma school Auvrudu program

- Avurudu programme will be conducted to highlight the cultural and spiritual importance of the Sri Lankan New Year.

Appendix B: Outline of the Dhamma school prize giving program

Prior to the event

- o Determine and finalize the date of the prize giving.
- o Book the venue by December for the following year event.
- o Send out a reminder by March to all the teachers and by April set the agenda for the program.
- o the program template is saved in the BVS google drive, please use this template to adjust the performance blocks accordingly. (Example - A song is given 5 min, and a drama is allocated 10 min.)
- o Once the program is finalized email it to the teachers' group for approval. Upon finalizing this, a special program summary to be developed and emailed to the greater community of the BVS dhamma school.
- o Grade 11 students will take a lead role in running the prize giving.
- o Grade 11 students will oversee developing the annual Samadi e magazine, all articles must be sent in the month of April. All documents must be reviewed by the teachers to ensure that the material is not directly copied from the internet. Once reviewed the material to be sent to the Grade 11 student group electronically. No paper submissions will be accepted, and late submissions will not be accepted.
- o Class pictures to be taken after the annual Vesak sill program and these pictures to be incorporated to the magazine. Please contact the education committee to schedule this.
- o Grade 11 students will be overseeing development of the certificates, these certificate templates are saved in the google drive and to be updated as per the current register.
- o A4 envelopes will be provided to the parents 3 weeks prior to the prize giving, parents who are willing to give a gift to their child will hand these envelopes back to the subcommittee one week prior to the event. These

prizes and the certificate will be organized according to the class roster. This is done to ensure efficient distribution at the time of the event.

- o The subcommittee will ensure that graduating class awards and best attendance gifts are purchased at a timely manner.
- Best attendance is presented to the student/s who has attended the BVS Dhamma School, the most number of days during the academic year in each class. This is determined by reviewing all the class attendance sheets.

Day of the event

- Arrive prior to the start of the event.
- Arrange the prizes and certificates on stage to ensure smooth transition when handing them out.
- Lineup the students as per the class register and in order prior to entering the stage.
- Prior to the event assign Grade 11 students to key activities such as welcome note, introduction of keynote speakers, land acknowledgment, introduction of performances and other items as required.

Appendix C: Suggested snack menus

Important Note:

Please be advised that the snack provided at BVS Dhamma School is not intended to replace lunch. Parents are strongly encouraged to ensure their children have eaten before arriving at Dhamma School. Snack volunteers are kindly requested to adhere to **Menu Option 1** whenever possible.

Menu option 1

- Soft Buns (Available at ALING MARY'S Bakery in Surrey)
- Jam or butter
- Fruit
- Butter cake or Cookie or Mini Cup cake
- Water, Juice, Chocolate Milk

Menu option 2

- Kiribath and Katta sambol
- Fruit
- Butter cake or Cookie or Mini Cup cake
- Water, Juice, Chocolate Milk

Menu option 3

- 2 sandwiches (Tuna or Egg)
- Fruit
- Butter cake or Cookie or Mini Cup cake
- Water, Juice, Chocolate Milk