

Cooking and Culture

Participant Handbook



ESSENTIAL FOR:
Students



RESOURCE TYPE:
Student Materials



REVIEW:
Pre-Program

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BERRIDGE
SUMMER AND GAP YEAR ARTS PROGRAMS

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**COOKING AND CULTURE IS OPERATED AT LA VAQUERIE FARM IN PARTNERSHIP
WITH BERRIDGE PROGRAMS**

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WELCOME

A very warm welcome from all of us at Cooking and Culture and La Vaquerie Farm! We are excited to have you with us in France for what is sure to be the experience of a lifetime. This handbook contains all the information you will need to have a great program with us. We ask that both parents and participants read this handbook carefully and reach out with any questions you may have.

DIRECTOR

Andrea Mardon, Director, La Vaquerie Farm

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ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Participants must be between the age of 18 - 22 years of age on our gap year programs and 15-19 years of age on our summer programs
- Participants must be of good academic standing at any school they have attended and not have been subject to disciplinary action, suspension, dismissal or expulsion.
- Participants must be choosing willingly and freely to participate on the program and not be required/counselled to join the program by a parent, guardian, doctor, therapist or court mandate.
- Participants must have a good level of English language proficiency as all our programs are taught in English.
- Participants must be open-minded and tolerant of the views and opinions of others.
- Participants must be willing to follow the policies and procedures of the program.
- Participants must be able to travel independently from their home city to the designated airport of the program without assistance from our staff
- Participants must have the ability to work and create both independently and collaborate willingly within a group.
- Participants must be able to self-medicate without the aid of assistance.
- Participants must be prepared to participate in and engage fully with the program which includes attending all group excursions, outings, and workshops.
- Participants must be prepared for experiential learning in a variety of weather conditions including rain and cool weather.
- Participants must be willing and able to be independent of program staff, particularly on field trips where they will be encouraged to spend time exploring in small groups.
- Participants must be willing and able to contribute to the running of our community which may include helping in the kitchen, maintaining our household and other day-to-day community tasks.
- Participants must be willing to fully disclose all physical and mental health conditions on their registration forms.

- Participants must be in sound physical and mental condition to attend the program and must not require any ongoing medical, mental or therapeutic treatment from an on the ground health professional while on the program.
- Participants must be willing and able to ask for support and guidance when needed and be able to articulate and advocate for their own needs.
- Participants must not have completed in-patient treatment for substance abuse, suicidal attempts or ideations and/or serious mental health conditions within the last 12 months.

PARTICIPANT CODE OF CONDUCT

The Participant Code of Conduct holds participants on our programs to a high standard to protect our community, promote consideration and respect for individuals and support the aims of the program.

1. Participants must show courtesy and respect to everyone they encounter at all times. Participants must be respectful of other participants and staff, be conscious and accepting of differences and patient with the opinions and needs of others.
2. Participants must strive to create an environment that is inclusive for all groups—including but not limited to groups defined by race, class, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic background—in order to foster a diverse educational community with a wealth of perspectives and experiences.
3. Participants must uphold high standards of academic integrity. Participants should demonstrate a spirit of cooperation and refrain from all forms of dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, supplying false information, or forgery.
4. Participants must respect property associated with Berridge Programs. Participants will not borrow, use or disturb items belonging to other participants, staff, Berridge Programs or others without clear prior permission. Participants must show respect for and take reasonable care of our residence, other facilities and equipment and furnishings including keeping your room and belongings tidy. Participants must not engage in any unauthorized entry, use or occupation of facilities not for use by our participants. Participants and/or their parent/guardian may be held financially responsible for the repair or replacement of property damaged through intentional, reckless, or negligent behavior.
5. Participants must know and follow all policies and procedures listed in the Participant Handbook, as well as the policies presented by Berridge Programs staff and those in positions of authority.

Conduct leading to immediate dismissal from the program:

1. Participants must not commit acts of violence on persons or property or threaten to commit any acts of violence.

2. Participants must not engage in any form of sexual harassment in person or online. Sexual harassment is any unwelcome verbal or physical behavior towards another person. Some examples of sexual harassment include unwelcome or inappropriate touching, threatening or engaging in adverse action after someone refuses a sexual advance, making lewd or sexual comments about an individual's appearance, displaying pornographic images on computers, emails, mobile phones, etc, or making sexist remarks or derogatory comments.
3. Participants must not possess or distribute illegal drugs. This includes cannabis products. Participation in an incident involving drugs is cause for an immediate dismissal, even if the participant did not consume or intend to consume these substances. Possession, sale or use of illegal drugs are classified as criminal offences in France and may result in prosecution.
4. Participants must not use, take part in or facilitate discriminatory language of any kind, including, but not limited to, discrimination based on gender, gender identity, race, national origin, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, handicap, or intelligence.
5. Participants must not engage in any form of harassment or bullying in person or online. Harassment consists of conduct of any type (including, but not limited to, written, verbal, graphic or physical conduct) which has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's academic or work performance, or which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning, residential or working environment.
6. Participants are expected to respect one another's privacy both during and after the program. Photos, videos, or recordings of another participant should not be taken or shared without their permission. Private or sensitive information about another participant, including personal, health, or behavioral information, should not be shared with others or posted online without their consent.
7. **ALCOHOL POLICY GAP YEAR PROGRAMS:** Participants may not possess or consume alcohol in program residences at any time, except as part of a sanctioned program activity, such as a cider producer visit or organized wine tasting.
Possession or consumption of alcohol in a residence will result in immediate dismissal from the program without refund. The legal drinking age is 18 in France. Participants of legal drinking age may consume alcohol during independent time and on designated field trips, but are expected to do so responsibly. Alcohol use must never compromise a participant's safety or wellbeing, the safety or wellbeing of others, or their ability to participate fully in the program. Intoxication, unsafe or disruptive behavior related to alcohol, or alcohol use that requires intervention or assistance from staff will result in immediate dismissal without refund.

ALCOHOL POLICY SUMMER PROGRAMS: The Summer Program is alcohol-free for all participants, regardless of age or the legal drinking age in France.

Participants may not purchase, possess, consume, or distribute alcohol at any time during the program, whether on or off program property. Because the program includes participants under the age of 18, this policy applies equally to everyone.

Possession or consumption of alcohol, providing alcohol to another participant, or returning to the program under the influence of alcohol will result in immediate dismissal without refund. All costs associated with dismissal and travel home are the responsibility of the participant and/or parent or guardian.

8. Participants must not tamper with or misuse fire alarms, firefighting equipment or safety equipment.
9. Participants must not engage in romantic or sexual relationships with anyone on the program including other participants and/or faculty/staff members.
10. Participants must not sell, purchase, produce or possess for use any weapons, explosives, fireworks or incendiary devices, even if these items are considered decorative and/or not intended for use.
11. We are a strictly no smoking program. Participants must not possess cigarettes, tobacco, legalized cannabis products and/or smoke or vape these products anywhere in and around the residence or in conjunction with any program activity or field trip. Cigarettes, vaping devices, tobacco and legalized cannabis products found in residence or in possession will be confiscated and repeated incidents may result in dismissal.

RESERVED RIGHTS OF THE PROGRAM

1. The program reserves the right to enter or inspect any room when, at the discretion of the Director, it is deemed necessary for the security or maintenance of the residence or safety of the residents. This includes the right to inspect rooms for compliance with regulations regarding drug, alcohol, smoking, weapons and fire hazards.
2. The program reserves the right to inspect personal belongings including suitcases, backpacks, purses etc when, at the discretion of the Director, it is deemed necessary for the security or maintenance of the residence or safety of the residents. This includes the right to inspect belongings for compliance with regulations regarding drugs, alcohol, smoking, weapons and fire hazards.
3. The program reserves the right to take disciplinary action around participant behaviors deemed, at the discretion of the Director, as anti-social, unacceptable or dangerous either to the participant themselves or a member of the community. This may include the impositions of certain conditions for continuing residence or dismissal from the program at the discretion of the Director.
4. The program reserves the right to dismiss a participant whose physical or psychological health status demands, or comes to demand, more care than can be provided by the program. This includes, but is not limited to, threats or suggestions of self-harm, self-isolation, anxiety that affects your day-to-day functioning, living habits

or repeated actions that negatively impact the community, causing other participants distress in a manner that makes the program socially untenable for you and others.

DISMISSAL

Berridge Programs reserves the right to dismiss a participant for violation of program policies or when a participant's behavior, health, safety, level of participation, or support needs make continued participation unsafe, unreasonable, or beyond what the program can appropriately provide. Whenever possible, concerns will be addressed with the participant before dismissal; however, serious circumstances may require immediate action.

A dismissed participant will be required to leave the program at the earliest reasonable opportunity. The participant and, when appropriate, their parent/guardian will be informed of the decision and the reason for dismissal. Program staff will assist in coordinating departure arrangements as necessary.

All costs associated with dismissal, including transportation, accommodation, flight changes, and any required staff accompaniment, are the responsibility of the participant and/or parent/guardian. Program fees are non-refundable in the event of dismissal.

Information concerning a dismissal will be kept as private as reasonably possible but may be shared with staff or others when necessary for the safety, wellbeing, or operation of the program.

Voluntary Early Departure

Participants may choose to leave the program early at any time and are not required to disclose their reason for doing so. Participants who decide to leave should be prepared to depart within 24 hours or as soon as reasonably practicable.

The participant and/or parent/guardian is responsible for arranging and paying for transportation, accommodation, flight changes, and other costs associated with an early departure. If staff assistance or accompaniment is required, additional costs may apply.

Program fees are non-refundable when a participant voluntarily leaves the program before their scheduled departure date.

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION

Flights/Passports

Please book your flights at least 30 days before the program start date and submit your travel details and itinerary as soon as they are confirmed. Please also check your passport now to ensure it is valid for at least three months beyond your departure from France, as you may be denied entry otherwise.

Visas/Tourist Status

You will enter France as a tourist, not as a resident or student. Please do not describe yourself as a student to French customs, as this may create confusion and involve a different

visa process. U.S. and Canadian citizens do not need a visa for stays of up to 90 days within the Schengen Area and will receive entry permission upon arrival. Participants from other countries should check visa requirements with their airline or local French consulate. Please note that you must book a round-trip ticket, as airlines may refuse boarding without proof of departure within the 90-day Schengen travel limit.

Medical and Trip Insurance

All participants are strongly encouraged to have overseas medical insurance in place before arriving in France, including coverage for Emergency Medical Evacuation. Please check with your current insurance provider, as some policies include international coverage and others do not. We recommend traveling with a copy of your insurance information, coverage limits, and emergency contact numbers.

Families who need additional coverage may wish to explore providers such as [InsureMyTrip](#). We also strongly encourage participants to consider trip insurance covering tuition, flights, trip interruption, and medical emergencies. Berridge Programs cannot advise on insurance providers, coverage limits, or deductibles, and it is the responsibility of each family to secure coverage appropriate to their needs.

Medical/Dietary/Travel Forms

You will need to fill out these forms online 30 days before your program start date. Please be accurate and truthful on these forms as they will be instrumental in keeping you safe and well during your time with us. Students not disclosing physical and/or mental health conditions and/or prescription medications on their forms may be subject to dismissal from the program.

Money in France

You should arrange a minimum of two functional cards **in the participant's name** that provide access to both cash and credit. Credit cards may only function with a "chip and pin" system in Europe, not by swiping, so please know your pin numbers and keep them always separate from your cards. Having a payment method on your phone is helpful in the event that you forget your wallet. However, do not rely on this as your only method of payment.

IMPORTANT: Alert your bank that you are travelling in France and give them your dates. Many banks will disable cards being used in foreign places as a security measure.

Identification

Please bring with you another form of picture identification other than your passport. A driver's license, ID card or student card will suffice. You should not carry your passport on your person during field trips. (Losing your passport overseas is a huge inconvenience!) It is French law that everyone always carries a photo ID.

Do not bring:

- More than three hundred euros in cash (or more than you would be prepared to lose!)
- An American Express card as they are not widely accepted in France.
- Travellers Cheques
- Apple Pay/Pay with Phone is accepted in many places but not all. Do not rely on this completely.

Arrival Day

Delayed Flight: If your flight is delayed before your board, try to contact the Director to let us know when you might be arriving. If you are delayed in flight, do not worry, we track the

progress of every flight on which participants are traveling. A member of staff will meet you regardless of when you arrive, even if the rescheduled arrival is after the arrival day.

On arrival: We meet each participant as soon as they come out of the arrivals area at Charles de Gaulle Airport. A member of staff will be standing with your name on a sign so keep an eye out when you come out into arrivals. If you do not see us right away, stay where you are. Do not go wandering around the airport looking for us. Call one of the staff contact numbers if we have not found you right away to let us know where to meet you.

Pre-Departure Checklist

- ✓ Overseas medical insurance secured
- ✓ Online forms filled out
- ✓ Copy of ACTUAL flight itinerary sent to Director
- ✓ Check luggage weight allowances with airline and program allowances
- ✓ Have enough prescription medications to last 4 weeks
- ✓ Make a photocopy of your passport and give it to your parents
- ✓ Make sure your phone will have functional service in France including data
- ✓ Arrange credit card/access to cash that will work overseas
- ✓ Have another form of Photo ID other than passport
- ✓ Attend pre-departure zoom meeting

Have on your person and/or in your carry-on:

- Contact numbers for Berridge staff (Printed copy)
- Phone that has service in France (not just Wifi)
- Phone charger
- Printed copy of your plane ticket
- Wallet and at least 50 euros in cash
- Passport
- Another Photo ID
- Laptop (not recommended to put in your checked luggage)

Luggage Limits

GAP YEAR: Gap year participants are limited to ONE suitcase that weighs no more than 50lbs or LESS if you can not carry that yourself. You will be asked to lift and manage your luggage yourself. You will be travelling by train and any more luggage than this will be difficult to move. You may also bring a personal item, backpack, purse or similar.

SUMMER: Summer program participants are limited to ONE suitcase that is a carry-on or medium sized suitcase and weighs no more than 40lbs or LESS if you cannot carry that yourself. Do not bring the largest size of suitcase or multiple suitcases please. You will be travelling by van back to the farm and we have limited luggage space.

Packing List

Weather in Normandy, particularly in the Fall and Spring months, can feel cool. The summer is variable with some summers being very hot and others being cooler. Please note that we do not have air conditioning in the summer months so please come prepared for a variety of weather conditions

Water bottle with your name on it

- Warm clothing and at least one jacket

- Indoor house shoes/slippers
- Bathing suit/beach clothing in summer
- Dressy outfit for final dinner
- Toiletries
- Simple, white, US – France plug converters for phone chargers/laptops.
- Headphones
- ALL prescription medications for the duration of your stay
- Closed toed shoes for the kitchen
- Chef clothing if you have it and/or clothing you can get dirty
- Notebook, pens, pencils

Over the Counter Medications

We ask participants to bring a small supply of their preferred brands of over the counter medications as appropriate to their needs. This includes:

- Tylenol, Advil or similar painkillers
- Cold Meds
- Allergy Meds
- Lactaid pills or similar
- Stomach medications

Although we have an emergency supply, we prefer participants to have their own on hand.

We will supply:

- Bed sheets and towels
- Hair dryers/irons compatible with French sockets
- Kitchen clothing – Aprons, chef jackets

Do not bring:

- US hair dryers, curling irons, or straightening irons
- US clothes irons including travel irons
- Vaping devices, tobacco or any illegal or controlled substances
- Substantial amounts of cash (a general guideline is over 300 euros)

You will be able to buy in France (first shopping trip on day 3 of the program):

- Extra towel should you want one
- Large size toiletries (brands may differ from US)
- Snacks
- Foods for dietary requirements (student refrigerator is available)
- Feminine hygiene products
- Slippers, bathrobe, more warm clothing etc

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Pre-Departure Zoom

There will be a pre-departure meeting 2 weeks before the program start date and a full on the ground orientation the first day of the program. Parents are asked to attend the pre-departure zoom meeting. We will review the contents of this handbook in detail and field any questions you or your parents may have.

Program Structure

The program is led by Directors Andrea Mardon and Chris Gaggia. It features hands-on cooking sessions, food-focused excursions, demonstrations and reflective discussions and projects about our experience.

Students will prepare at least one meal daily, with some meals prepared for you to allow time for field trips and other enrichment.

Daily Schedule

8:30: Breakfast (Self serve in residence)

10:00: Morning Session (Classes, demos, shopping or lunch prep)

12:30: Lunch

2:00: Afternoon Session (Classes, demos, field trip)

4:30: Dinner prep or free time

7:00: Dinner

Community Care

A day a week is set aside for practical care for ourselves, our spaces and our home. This includes food shopping, laundry, cleaning and chores around the farm as well as down time!

Kitchen Orientation

A full kitchen orientation will be provided on arrival, covering kitchen procedures, equipment, food hygiene, and safe use of knives and heat. Participants are expected to follow all staff instructions and safety procedures, wear appropriate clothing and closed-toed shoes, and never use equipment they have not been shown how to operate.

Field Trips

There are a variety of field trips, cultural excursions and meals out. Parents, please note that field trips include unsupervised free time where participants are allowed to explore on their own. We ask all participants to bring a working cell phone so that we may be in touch with you on field trips and in the event of an emergency. All our staff attend the field trips and remain in contact with participants throughout the day.

Transportation Safety

Participants must follow staff instructions when traveling as part of the program and wear seatbelts whenever available. Participants may not ride with unauthorized drivers or arrange transportation with individuals unknown to program staff. During independent time, participants are responsible for using safe, legal transportation and following any check-in and travel procedures established by the program.

Swimming and Water Activities

Swimming may be permitted during Summer Programs with explicit parent/guardian permission. Whenever possible, swimming will take place at lifeguarded beaches; however, lifeguard supervision cannot be guaranteed. Participants must follow all staff instructions and any restrictions relating to weather, tides, water conditions, and designated swimming areas.

Swimming is not permitted during Fall or Spring programs due to seasonal weather and water conditions and the general absence of lifeguarded beaches.

Meals

Breakfast: Breakfast is serve-yourself continental style with a variety of cereals, breads/pastries, fruits, yoghurt, coffee/tea etc.

Lunch: Lunch will offer simple dishes such as soup, quiche, salads and sandwiches. When we are out at the French market, you will be free to get lunch on your own. We will plan some group lunches out as well.

Dinner: Dinner is usually a sit-down, two course meal prepared by our students. We will focus on French classics but also American and international dishes.

Between meals/snacks: Participants can purchase personal snacks and food on our weekly trips to our local supermarket and on field trips days.

Special Diets: We regret we cannot accommodate non-dairy, Keto, Kosher, Vegan diets or allergies where there can be no cross contamination of any kind (ie very serious nut allergies). Students who are Vegetarian are welcome, as long as you are willing to handle and prepare meat as part of the program curriculum. Please note that separate vegetarian meals will not be prepared but you are welcome to eat what you can and purchase your own food to support your diet. A refrigerator will be made available to students who want to purchase and store items that accommodate their particular diet.

Computers

You may bring your laptop to the program. You will need a simple US – France plug converter that can be bought inexpensively on Amazon. There is a printer and photocopier available for participant use.

Wi-Fi

The farm has high speed fibre optic Wi-Fi that is available for use during free time. Please note that we curate the use of cell phones and Wifi on the farm and students will be asked to leave their devices in their room and not bring it to group discussions, kitchen sessions and meal times.

Phones

For safety and security reasons, we require that each participant come to the program with a cell phone that has service in France **including data**. This may mean calling your current cell phone provider and arranging an overseas calling plan for your time in France. Some providers will charge \$50-\$100 per month for this and, although it is expensive, it is an essential part of our safety protocols that every participant has a working phone.

Please note that we do not recommend or assist participants in buying and setting up French mobile phones or SIM cards.

Participants are asked to always have a charged mobile phone on their person so that we can communicate with the participant. We ask that you not use your phone during class time or at any other time that requires their attention to be directed toward program activities.

RESIDENCE INFORMATION

Address

The program is located at the following address:

La Vaquerie Farm
17 le Lude
Saint-Jacques-de-Néhou
50580
FRANCE

Mail

We ask that mail be limited to LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT SEND PACKAGES OF ANY KIND INCLUDING FEDEX, DHL, AMAZON unless it is a medical necessity/emergency. Packages take a long time to reach us, often get lost and always carry extra duty charges which are burdensome to collect. We can post letters, but we do not facilitate the shipping or receiving of extra luggage, boxes, or packages for participants.

We ask students not to order any items online while they are here, including from Amazon, during their time with us unless it is an emergency or absolute necessity. We are in a remote area and packages often get lost resulting in administrative burdens for program staff.

Facilities

Le Vaquerie farm is a 400 year old farm in the French countryside. Participants live in their own designated accommodation that is joined to the accommodation of owners Chris and Andrea. The farm is 30 minutes from the city of Cherbourg (pop. 65,000). Our program is in an idyllic rural location which feels very isolated but is 20 minutes from the nearest doctor (who speaks English and knows us and our program) and 25 minutes from the nearest hospital.

Bedrooms/Bathrooms: Participants are roomed in doubles or triples with most rooms sharing a bathroom in the hallway. Bathrooms are single occupancy. Beds are a mixture of single and double beds and are assigned randomly. All linens are provided including sheets and towels.

Please note we do not have a gym or fitness facilities.

Housekeeping/Residential Duties

Participants are responsible for housekeeping and are expected to maintain cleanliness in their rooms. The Director will inspect bedrooms on a regular basis to ensure that rooms are free of trash, clutter and that nothing constitutes a fire hazard. There is a team rotation each day to help with meal preparation, setting the table, dish clean up and post-meal cleaning.

Please note that bedrooms do not lock. Participants are responsible for the safety and security of their personal belongings and are encouraged not to bring unnecessary valuables. Berridge Programs and La Vaquerie Farm are not responsible for personal property that is lost, stolen, or damaged during the program.

Laundry

There are washing machines at the residence but no dryers. This is not uncommon in European houses. Clothes must be line dried. We will provide more details during orientation. In the Fall and early Spring, trips to a laundromat can be facilitated if the weather does not allow line drying.

Room Assignments

Roommates are randomly assigned before the program starts. If you have a need for a particular facility (single room for medical reasons, close to a bathroom etc) please get in

touch to let us know before the program starts. Please note that for reasons of safety participants are not allowed to change rooms with other participants or sleep in any other bedroom or space on the grounds that is not their assigned bedroom. Mattresses, duvets, blankets, pillows, and décor from your bedroom should not be removed to any other space during the course of the program.

Quiet Hours

Quiet hours are 10PM on weekdays and 11PM on weekends. Participants are asked to be mindful of noise, music and talking loudly on their phones at all times.

Leaving the Grounds

SUMMER PROGRAM: Participants may leave the grounds during daylight hours to walk/exercise in the local area. We have a check-in and check-out procedure in place to leave the grounds which will be explained in orientation. We do not allow summer participants to leave the grounds independently by transport (ie/by bike or taxi) Bike rides will be coordinated with a member of staff accompanying. Participants are not allowed to leave the grounds after 9PM or overnight at any time during the program.

GAP YEAR PROGRAM: Participants on our gap year programs are free to leave campus during free days (usually Wednesdays and Sundays) either on foot, by bike or by taxi. There is a “bus on demand” service that is a bit limited but can be used to get to the local villages. A full orientation on leaving campus will be provided on arrival.

Guests

For reasons of safety and security, there are no unauthorized outside guests allowed within our program grounds at any time. There are no overnight guests allowed, including family members and friends. A list of accommodation nearby can be provided for visitors.

Program Orientation

A full orientation will be conducted in the first two days of the program. This includes:

- Fire Safety and Prevention
- Emergency Procedures
- Grounds and local area orientation
- French laws and customs
- Environmental safety (plants and animals)
- Kitchen Orientation
- Eco-initiatives (Waste, water, recycling)
- Tips for community living

A full copy of our Participant Orientation can be shared with any participant or parent on request.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Immunization Requirements

It is strongly recommended to have the Covid-19 vaccination and booster before you come to France. In addition, participants are advised to have all vaccinations listed on the online Medical Form including Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR), Meningitis and a recent Tetanus shot.

Self-Administration of Medication

Participants are responsible for the self-administration, secure storage, and appropriate use of all medications. All prescription and over-the-counter medications must be disclosed on health forms before arrival and may never be shared with others. We do not administer, supervise, store, or monitor medications and cannot be responsible for their use, misuse, loss, or failure to take them as directed. Undisclosed or misused medication may result in dismissal. If staff believe medication use or non-use poses a safety concern, we may contact parents/guardians, medical professionals, or emergency services, or require the participant to leave the program.

Physical Illness

In the case that a participant is experiencing routine illness, they should alert the Director prior to any academic or program activities affected by their illness. We have excellent clinics and hospitals no more than 20 minutes away from our program. Any participant who requires medical care will be accompanied to the doctor or hospital by a member of program staff.

Participants are encouraged to be proactive in preventing routine illness by practicing healthy habits, including, but not limited to, getting plenty of rest, physical exercise and eating healthy food. In the case of an emergency or concern for a participant's health, we may contact the participant's family without the participant's prior authorization. Berridge Programs is not responsible for any fees associated with medical appointments, treatment, or hospitalization.

Please note: If a participant requires medical treatment or hospitalization while in France, we will follow the recommendations and discharge instructions of the attending French medical professionals, including those relating to medications, follow-up care, and length of hospital stay. We cannot disregard or alter the treating physician's instructions based on conflicting advice obtained remotely from family members or medical professionals outside France. In the event of a serious medical issue requiring surgery or other significant intervention, every reasonable effort will be made to communicate with the participant's parent/guardian and coordinate with their medical providers when appropriate.

Participants who choose not to follow the recommendations of their treating medical professionals, or whose medical needs cannot reasonably and safely be supported within the program setting, may be required to leave the program and return home at their own expense.

Emergency Departure and Medical Repatriation

If illness or injury makes it necessary for a participant to leave the program early, we will assist the participant and their family in coordinating an appropriate departure based on the advice of the treating medical professionals. Depending on the circumstances, this may include changes to travel arrangements, additional accommodation, staff accompaniment, medical transport, or medical evacuation/repatriation.

All costs associated with an emergency or medically necessary departure are the responsibility of the participant and/or parent/guardian. Participants are strongly encouraged to carry insurance that provides appropriate coverage for medical treatment, trip interruption, medical evacuation, and repatriation. Program fees are non-refundable in the event that illness or injury prevents a participant from completing the program.

Mental Wellness

Participants and their families are encouraged to discuss and prepare for the potential challenges of attending a program that may be in an unfamiliar environment far from home. This preparation should include arranging for any necessary mental health support prior to the start of the program and indicating any ongoing care in the participant's medical forms. We do not have mental health professionals onsite but are prepared to handle emergency situations according to our mental health safety plans. We ask that participants be forthcoming about any mental health challenges both before and during the program.

Neurodiversity, Emotional Health & Support Needs

We encourage families to openly discuss any diagnoses, neurodivergence, emotional health concerns, learning differences, or support needs that may affect a participant's ability to function safely, independently, emotionally, and cooperatively within a residential group environment. Families are responsible for fully and accurately disclosing not only diagnoses and evaluations, but also the participant's actual day-to-day functioning, including any history of emotional dysregulation, suicidal statements, self-harm threats, shutdowns, refusal of participation, behavioral difficulties, or significant support needs.

We are not a therapeutic program, special education program, or clinical care provider. Review of evaluations or acceptance into the program does not constitute a representation that we are qualified to provide specialized therapeutic, behavioral, or disability-related support services. If, before or during the program, we determine that a participant's needs exceed the scope of our staffing, supervision model, training, resources, or program environment, the participant may be withdrawn or dismissed from the program without refund of fees.

Questions about the Handbook

We welcome questions and conversations about our policies, procedures and contents of this handbook or any other program materials. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to the Director or Andrea Mardon, Director at andrea@lavqueriefarm.com