



Hindu Temple
Of Rochester
Balvihar Handbook

ABOUT BALVIHAR

HTOR Balvihar is part of Hindu Temple of Rochester's classes that has been serving the children of the Asian Indian community since 2001. It was started by a few teachers who attended training in learning how to run a Balvihar. Those teachers were inspired by the Chinmaya Mission and had a vision. Even though those visionary teachers are no longer residing in Rochester, their vision is still being carried by volunteers who have joined Balvihar year after year. Many of the teachers are parents of children who attended or are currently attending Balvihar.

HTOR Balvihar and the Temple community feel strongly about passing on our rich cultural heritage; Balvihar is the perfect medium because it is a safe, nurturing environment where children see others like them and grow up with a healthy respect and appreciation for Hinduism.

Hundreds of children have attended HTOR Balvihar since 2001. Our enrolment has been steady and increasing and that is a testimony to HTOR Balvihar's success.

All tuition fees collected go to Our Temple.

HTOR BALVIHAR MISSION

- To teach our children the history and development of Hindu religion, beliefs and culture through Hindu texts.
- Celebrate major Hindu festivals and explain the significance behind the rituals.
- Provide a platform to parents to partner with their children to teach them and talk to them about their Hindu roots.

ADMISSION CRITERIA

To be eligible for admission to HTOR Balvihar, children must have completed 5 yrs. of age by December 1st of the enrolment year. All children under 8 yrs. of age will be assigned to beginner class irrespective of their ability and will be assessed by the respective teachers for eligibility to advance to the next level.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Balvihar is conducted every Sunday between 9.30 to 10.30 pm from September to May.

9:10-9:20	Kids can be dropped off
9:20	Doors closed for meditation
9:20-9:30	Meditation
9:30	Doors open for kids not attending mediation
9:30-9:45	Assembly
9:45-10:25	Individual classes
10:25-10:30	Closing Assembly
10:30	Kids need to be picked up

We strongly encourage all children to attend the meditation session.

CURRICULUM

Ganga	YEAR 1	Introduction to Gods and daily shlokas
Yamuna	YEAR 1 YEAR 2	Bala Bhagavatham Ramayana
Saraswati	YEAR 1 YEAR 2	Shivapuran, Jyotirlingas Mahabharata
Kaveri	YEAR 1 YEAR 2	Dashaavatars, Symbolism in Hinduism Devis
Godavari	YEAR 1 YEAR 2	Bhagavad Gita and Gita Dhyam Creation, Timeline, Sages

BALVIHAR LIBRARY INFO

9:10 - Teachers and Volunteers arrive

10:30 – 10:40 Library open for Balvihar students

Library Information:

- The library is for the benefit of all Balvihar students
- It consists of English books and magazines donated by students and community members or purchased by overdue books fine money
- There is no limit to how many books students may check out
- To check out books, provide your name and phone number and the stack of books to one of the volunteers sitting behind the tables
- Checked out books are due back at the next class
- Over due books/magazines are charged 0.25 cents/book or magazine/per week
- When returning books, place them in the return white plastic bins. **DO NOT place them on the tables or hand them to anyone.**

Enjoy the many books and we hope you take good care of them while in your possession.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

- Our Temple is a sacred space. Students are expected to respect the space and sanctity of the temple.
- No running or screaming in the temple premises.
- Acts of vandalism, destruction and theft of temple property will not be tolerated at any time. Violation of Balvihar will result in a conference with student's parent and teacher.
- If a student behaves inappropriately in class:
 - He/She will get a warning from the teacher and parents will be notified.
 - Serious violations will result in a conference with parents and respective teachers immediately.
 - If that behavior pattern continues it will lead to suspension of that student from Balvihar.
- No food / drink or cell phone use is allowed during the class.

ATTENDANCE

Students are required to attend class every Sunday. Attendance is marked in every class and is monitored by teachers. If a student is absent for three consecutive Sundays without notification, that student maybe asked to repeat that year's curriculum, resulting in an extra year in that particular group.

Ant student missing 10 classes in the year may also be asked to repeat the curriculum.

REFUND POLICY

If for any reason, a parent chooses to withdraw their child/children from Balvihar after two classes, they must submit a written request for a refund. Requests received before the third class of the year will receive 100% refund. After the third class, in case of extenuating circumstances, a prorated refund may be given depending on teachers' discretion.

No refund will be entertained after January 1st for any reason.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Parents with any questions, comments, concerns or suggestions may contact Balvihar teachers through email. For specific questions about your child, please contact your child/children's group teachers at following email address (please put the student's name and group name on the subject): balvihar_news@yahoo.com

EMAIL GUIDELINES

Please remember that all the Balvihar teachers are volunteers who spend a good number of hours getting ready for the classes and planning the activities. The teachers will try to respond to your email at their earliest convenience.

PARENTS ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All parents are required to review and commit to the responsibilities below:

- Make sure the student comes prepared to class with their Balvihar Folders and any other materials requested by respective group teachers.
- Make sure the students are well rested.
- Provide any updated contact /health information
- Make sure the students arrive on time for class.
- Make sure the student attends all classes; in case of absence communicate with the teacher about missed announcements.
- Materials taught in class can be reinforced at home. Practice the shlokas with the kids so they can memorize them.
- Be an active parent in the child's learning.
- Provide feedback to teachers on curriculum and material learned.
- Be a good role model and lead by example.
- Make sure any book checked out from Balvihar library is returned on time.
- Last but not least, please remember that teachers are volunteers with their own families to get to after Balvihar, so try to pick up children on time.

Balvihar Student Responsibilities

- Please come to Balvihar on time. Meditation begins at 9:20 am and the Assembly begins at 9:30. We strongly encourage all children to come to Meditation.
- Please place your footwear in the designated areas or cubbies.
- Indian attire is most welcome!! Good way to use all the Indian outfits sitting in the closet.
- Make sure you are ready for class: please visit the restroom and get a drink before the class.
- Place Balvihar materials in a bag and use it only for Balvihar. Don't forget to bring it to class every week.
- Try to sit in Padmasana while in Balvihar with your backs straight.
- Fold your hands in Namaskaram while chanting slokas during Assembly.
- Please raise your hand when you want share something in the class instead of calling out.
- Please remember that all the Balvihar teachers are volunteers; We spend a good number of hours getting ready for the classes and planning the activities. Attend all the classes and please ask us any questions you have about the material we cover.
- Practice the shlokas so you can memorize them. Balvihar shlokas and bhajans are online in the Hindu Temple website:
<http://www.hindutempleofrochester.com/balvihar---shlokas---bhajans>. Please listen to it regularly so you are familiar with them.
- Please keep us updated with your contact information.
- Please update us in case of any new allergies or changes to your health.

- Do not forget to tell your parents about any announcements we make in Balvihar.
- Display the Balvihar calendar where you can see it easily.
- Do check out the Balvihar Library. We have an amazing collection of books about our rich Indian heritages and the Indian subcontinent.
- Please do not run in the temple.
- No using of cell phones during Balvihar.
- Remember, our temple is a very special and sacred space; please be respectful and speak in a quiet voice.
- Don't forget to have FUN in Balvihar !!! We are so happy that you are part of the Balvihar family.