

# *The Children's House*

**2010-2011 Parent Handbook**



5363 North Long Lake Road  
Traverse City, MI 49684

Phone 231-929-9325 Fax 231-929-9384

[www.TraverseChildrensHouse.org](http://www.TraverseChildrensHouse.org)

This *Parent Handbook* is not intended to create a contract.

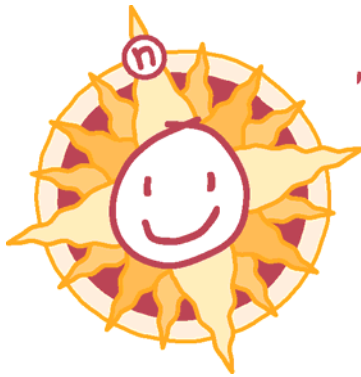
The school reserves the right to change at any time any of the policies described or privileges granted.

# Table of Contents

1) Welcome from the Head of School .....	5
2) Calendar and Events Schedule	
Holidays, Conferences, In-Service Days.....	6
Calendar Notes.....	7
3) Contact Information	
School Contact Information .....	10
Administration e-mail and extensions.....	10
Faculty e-mails and extensions.....	11
4) Faculty Information	
Training and Background Checks .....	13
Administration Roles .....	13
Faculty and Staff Roster .....	14
Administration Roster.....	18
5) School Overview	
School Mission.....	19
School History .....	20
Structure and Affiliation .....	21
Board of Directors .....	21
The Montessori Method .....	21
Montessori History .....	22
6) Parent Involvement	
Community Events .....	23
Fundraising and Events .....	23
Volunteer Guidelines .....	23
Parent Education .....	24
Observations	

Infant-Toddler .....	24
Primary & Elementary .....	24
<b>7) School Programs</b>	
Early care .....	24
Friend's Club .....	25
Summer Programs .....	25
Non-school day childcare .....	25
<b>8) Transitions / Classroom Placements</b>	
Infant .....	25
Toddler .....	26
Primary .....	26
New to class	
Extended day	
Elementary .....	26
Lower Elementary	
Upper Elementary	
<b>9) Admission Policies and Procedures</b>	
Process .....	26
Placement and considerations .....	26
<b>10) Tuition Policies</b>	
Tuition Policy Statement .....	27
Billing Policies .....	27
Tuition Assistance and Co-op Process .....	28
<b>11) Getting to and from School</b>	
Arrival .....	30
Dismissal .....	30
Attendance .....	30
<b>12) Communication between Home &amp; School</b>	

Office Hours .....	31
Communication from School .....	31
Website .....	31
Tuesday Note .....	31
E-mails .....	31
Conferences .....	31
Contacting Your Child’s Teacher .....	32
<b>I 3) School Closings (including snow days).....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>I 4) Classroom Life</b>	
Birthday Celebrations .....	32
Nutrition Policy .....	33
Infant-Toddler nutrition information .....	33
Clothing .....	34
What to Bring / What to Leave at Home .....	34
Holidays, Celebrations and Traditions .....	35
Student Conduct .....	35
Field Trips .....	36
<b>I 5) Health and Safety</b>	
Student Forms .....	37
Illness Policy .....	38
Nap/Rest Provisions .....	39
Transportation To and From School .....	40
Safety Drills .....	40



The  
Children's House  
*An Independent Montessori School*

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2010-2011 edition of the *Parent Handbook*. Please note that this *Handbook* is designed to provide you with all of the information you need to make the year a great success. Please review the contents carefully as it is important information for all parents to know.

The *Parent Handbook* is our tool for beginning communication with you. Although The Children's House is a small school, which is one of the reasons it is appealing to many, the number of students, families and educators in our community number in the hundreds. We believe ongoing communication is the key to ensuring an optimal experience for all, especially the children.

We welcome you and your children to another year, or your first, which will surely prove to be full of discovery, growth and fulfillment. I look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michele Shane". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michele Shane  
Head of School

## 2) CALENDAR AND EVENTS SCHEDULE

The school family calendar is posted on the school's website. A description of specific school events and activities is listed below.

### **HOLIDAYS, CONFERENCES, AND IN-SERVICES**

Students on year-round contracts are eligible to attend on the following days **when noted in bold**. School will be closed for other students. Drop-in availability indicated below (\*):

**September 7:**        Student Orientation- please refer to your child's schedule To determine their time of attendance.

**October 22:**        Campus Closed- All staff and faculty retreat

**October 25: Year-round Contract Day-** Faculty retreat  
\*childcare available by reservation

**November 11, 12: Year-Round Contract Day-** Parent/Teacher Conferences  
\*Daily childcare available by reservation  
\*Childcare for conference time only- no reservations necessary

**November 24-26:** Campus Closed- Thanksgiving Break

**December 17:**        Campus Closes for all students at 3:00 pm (immediately following the Holiday Sing)

**December 20- 31:** Campus Closed- Winter Break

**January 21:**        Campus Closed- Faculty and Staff Professional Day

**February 21:**        Campus Closed- President's Day

**March 10, 11: Year-Round Contract Day-** Parent/Teacher Conferences  
\*Daily childcare available by reservation  
\*Childcare for conference time only- no reservations necessary

**March 28-April 1: Year-Round Contract Day-** Spring Break  
\*Childcare available by reservation

- May 27:** Campus Closes for all students at 12:00 pm- Grandparent's Day
- May 30:** Campus Closed- Memorial Day
- June 10:** Campus Closes 1pm (immediately following all school picnic)

**\*Read the Tuesday Note and visit TCH website for updates and calendar changes.**

## **CALENDAR NOTES**

### **Staff and Faculty Return to School**

Faculty is on campus at least one week prior to the beginning of the school year and one week in the spring after school dismisses. The Montessori classroom is an enriched and complex prepared environment requiring a great deal of preparation and maintenance by the teachers. Consequently, it requires more preparation time than traditional classroom settings.

### **Individual Visits**

New Infant, Toddler and Primary Students are scheduled to visit their new classroom environments with a parent to become accustomed to the classroom and meet classroom staff.

### **Student Orientation Day**

Students attend school on a shortened schedule for a day of orientation with classmates and their teachers. Schedules vary by level.

### **Tears and Cheers**

These informal gatherings in the parent room during the first week of school are a great way to connect and reconnect with parents. Join us for coffee and treats to celebrate the beginning of the year. Tears and cheers are welcome!

### **School Year Begins**

Students begin their regular schedule. Early care and Friend's Club begin the Wednesday after Labor Day.

### **New Parent Orientation and Opening Parent Meeting**

Required for parents of new and returning students at all levels. Teachers will go over the upcoming year program, expectations and special events.

### **New Parent Coffee**

An opportunity for new parents to meet both current and new families. Members of the Administration team will be on-hand to answer any questions that you have regarding involvement and logistics of the school year. Current parent representatives will also be available to welcome you.

## **Classroom Community Socials - Fall for Primary and Elementary, Spring and Fall for Infant-Toddler**

Scheduled by individual classroom

### **“Good at Doing Things” – an evening with Steven Hughes, PhD**

In this highly visual, rapid-paced and entertaining talk, Dr. Hughes describes how Maria Montessori's brain-based approach to education provides an unparalleled foundation for the development of academic, social, and executive functions critical for advanced problem solving and lifetime success. He shows how Montessori education parallels what we now know about brain development and fosters the development of advanced cognitive functions, social cognition, and such higher-order competencies as empathy and leadership.

### **Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser**

This dinner is hosted by The Children’s House in the hopes of raising money to pay down principal on our building. This is a fun family event including a delicious dinner, entertainment for the kids and an opportunity to support the school.

### **Fall Festival**

A Children’s House fall family tradition for all ages. This event takes place at Timber Ridge which is a venue for celebrating the fall with a potluck, arts and crafts, hayride, mini golf and more!

### **Staff and Faculty Retreat**

This professional development day has included presentations by experts in a variety of fields, group co-operative games, visits from Montessori consultants, classroom preparation and curriculum development. These days are particularly important in the development and enhancement of staff and faculty culture.

### **Daffodil Day**

Daffodil Day occurs every November when we plant bulbs in memory of former parent Dr. Karen Gilhooly and former students Sierra Fetterolf, Anna Maas, and Rowan Sanford.

### **Parent Teacher Conferences**

Individual student conferences are scheduled in the fall and spring for all students, infant through upper elementary.

### **Holiday Art Market**

A gathering of local and regional artisans ranging from jewelry makers to gourmet chocolatiers join efforts to raise money for The Children’s House. 15% of all sales are donated back to the school. This is a two day event that takes place prior to Thanksgiving each year.



**Harvest Feasts**

Prior to Thanksgiving break, our classroom communities celebrate the harvest bounty by sharing gratitude and a meal together. Parent volunteers are welcome!

**All School Holiday Sing**

This is a time-honored tradition on the final day of school prior to winter break. Families and friends gather in the Barn to sing a variety of festive songs from many cultures celebrating this wonderful time of year.

**Faculty and Staff Professional Development**

Professional development and class preparation and records time for Faculty and Staff.

**Chinese New Year Dragon Dance**

Extended Day students culminate their study of the Chinese New Year by performing the traditional Dragon Dance in the Barn joined by the community of students. Parents are welcome to attend!

**Enrollment Meetings**

Informational meetings for parents of students moving to a new level in the 2011-2012 school year

**Annual Gala**

This is the biggest fundraiser of the year...typically raising over \$100,000. A strong team of parent volunteers round up local vendors, merchants, families and organizations to put on the party of the year. This evening includes fine dining, entertainment, special presentations and live and silent auctions.

**Elementary Cultural Fair**

The Elementary Cultural Fair provides the students an opportunity to present their interest-based research to our school community.

**Grandparents Day**

This is a heartwarming day when grandparents and special friends come to TCH to spend time in the classrooms. Visitors are treated to a musical performance, campus tours and time spent in the classroom with their grand children. This is one of the best "feel good" events of the year! Parent volunteers are welcome!

**Extended Day Farewell**

A celebration of the primary students who have completed the third year of their classroom cycle. Extended Day children are each highlighted with words from their guide followed by a DVD presentation of their life and time at The Children's House.

### **Field Day**

This is a great day of outdoor fun for all of the children in The Children's House community!

### **6<sup>th</sup> Year Farewell**

An evening of presentations from our 6<sup>th</sup> year graduates followed by a presentation of the "Cosmic Slideshow" created by the 6<sup>th</sup> year students during the year.

### **Dance of the Cosmos and Moving Up Ceremonies - last day of school**

This tradition at TCH has been in place since the school was founded over 26 years ago. The students shine in this celebration: a recognition of the importance of each of them in our community. Also recognized are the children who have completed the third year of their classroom cycle.

### **All Community Potluck Picnic**

A family picnic following the Dance of the Cosmos and Moving up Ceremonies. It is our final community event of the year held in the courtyard. It is a wonderful way to celebrate our community and end the school year.

### **Staff and Faculty "Wrap-Up" Week**

A week of reflection, review, clean-up and closure for the faculty and staff.

## **3) CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION**

The Children's House  
5363 N. Long Lake Road  
Traverse City, MI 49684  
(231) 929-9325 T  
(231) 929-9384 F  
e-mail: [learn@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:learn@traversechildrenshouse.org)  
web: [www.traversechildrenshouse.org](http://www.traversechildrenshouse.org)

### **ADMINISTRATION E-MAILS AND EXTENSIONS**

**Liz Ammond**, Web Support and Publications  
[liz@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:liz@traversechildrenshouse.org)  
ext. 13

**Colleen Christensen**, Director of Operations  
[colleen@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:colleen@traversechildrenshouse.org)  
ext. 15

**Beth Melcher**, Business Manager  
[beth@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:beth@traversechildrenshouse.org)  
ext. 11

**Lori Mucherino**, Business Assistant  
[lori@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:lori@traversechildrenshouse.org)  
ext. 17

**Missy Russell**, Advancement Director  
[missy@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:missy@traversechildrenshouse.org)  
ext. 35

**Michele Shane**, Head of School  
[michele@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:michele@traversechildrenshouse.org)  
ext. 12

### **FACULTY E-MAIL AND EXTENSION**

**Lyn Bahle**  
[lyn@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:lyn@traversechildrenshouse.org)  
ext. 31

**Jill Borre**  
[jill@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:jill@traversechildrenshouse.org)  
ext. 32

**Marcia Borell**  
[marcia@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:marcia@traversechildrenshouse.org)

**Alison Breithaupt**  
[alison@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:alison@traversechildrenshouse.org)  
ext. 36

**Melissa Cole**  
[melissa@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:melissa@traversechildrenshouse.org)  
ext. 34

**Nadine Elmgren**  
[nadine@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:nadine@traversechildrenshouse.org)  
ext. 33

**Amy Flaherty**  
[amy@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:amy@traversechildrenshouse.org)  
ext. 21

**Betsy Flitton**  
[betsy@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:betsy@traversechildrenshouse.org)  
ext. 27

**Jen Harris**  
[jen@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:jen@traversechildrenshouse.org)  
ext. 20

**Mike Kazmierski**  
[kazdesign@charter.net](mailto:kazdesign@charter.net)

**Steve Maas**

[steve@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:steve@traversechildrenshouse.org)

ext. 39

**Jean Marie Riccobono**

[riccokolar@aol.com](mailto:riccokolar@aol.com)

**Julie Shearer**

[julie@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:julie@traversechildrenshouse.org)

ext. 24

**Stephanie Slawnik**

[saslawnik@mac.com](mailto:saslawnik@mac.com)

**Catherine Turnbull**

[catherine@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:catherine@traversechildrenshouse.org)

ext. 31

**Marie Voss**

[marie@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:marie@traversechildrenshouse.org)

ext. 26

**Britny Wade**

[britny@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:britny@traversechildrenshouse.org)

ext. 25

**Kristina Weidenfeller**

[kristina@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:kristina@traversechildrenshouse.org)

ext. 19

**Michele Worden**

[wordenwood@msn.com](mailto:wordenwood@msn.com)

**Spanish**

TBD

## 4) FACULTY AND STAFF INFORMATION

### FACULTY TRAINING AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

The infant-toddler, primary and elementary guides are trained in Montessori pedagogy under the auspices of the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) or the American Montessori Society (AMS). The training is graduate level work and is, in most cases, received after completion of a bachelor's degree. Some Montessori training programs offer a master's degree in addition to the Montessori diploma. The guides hold Montessori diplomas in the specific age group for which they teach.

Infant-toddler: 0 to 3 years

Primary: 3 to 6 years

Elementary: 6 to 12 years

Each school employee has undergone criminal history background checks through the Michigan Department of State Police and the Department of Human Services. Individuals with criminal records are not employed by the school. School employees undergo a medical exam and a tuberculosis screening before working.

### SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF ROLES

#### **HEAD OF SCHOOL**

**Michele Shane**, Head of School, serves as the professional educational leader of the school and its executive director. She has complete responsibility for faculty, staff, and student selection, evaluation, and dismissal. The head articulates the mission of the school to its constituencies and is responsible for the professional quality and behavior of the faculty and administrative staff.

#### **OPERATIONS**

**Colleen Christensen**, Director of Operations, is responsible for the daily operations of the school. She manages the use of the building and grounds, rentals, and the work of assorted contractors. She acts as liaison to state health and safety inspectors. She coordinates volunteers and directs summer programs. She reports directly to the Head of School.

#### **BUSINESS OFFICE**

**Beth Melcher**, Business Manager, is responsible for cash management, accounting, purchasing, and human resources management. She works with the Finance Committee of the board and reports directly to the Head of School.

**Lori Mucherino**, Business Assistant handles purchasing, processes payments to accounts and accounts payable, manages student records, school files and databases and school technology systems. She reports to the Business Manager and Head of School.

## **ADVANCEMENT OFFICE**

**Missy Russell**, Advancement Director, is responsible for admission and re-enrollment of students, fund raising, and internal and external marketing. She is responsible for the school's annual report. She reports directly to the Head of School.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT**

**Liz Ammond**, Web and Publications Support, is responsible for school publications, school photography and managing the school website. She reports to the Head of School.

**Parents Lori Burns, Tracey Coe, Melissa Johnson, Tania Santos, and Blythe Skarshaug**, front desk receptionists are the first voices and first faces to greet visitors to the school. They support the work of the office and provide general clerical support for administration. They report to the director of operations.

## **CUSTODIAL**

**Art Kinney and Julie Schaar**, custodians, provide daily cleaning of the building. They report directly to the director of operations.

## **FACULTY AND STAFF ROSTER**

### **Infant Community**

Britny Wade, Guide

A.A. Northwestern Michigan College, Child Development  
AMS Montessori Infant-Toddler Certification, Meca Seton, Chicago  
AMS Primary Certification, Mich. Montessori Teachers Education Center

#### **The Children's House experience (2003- present):**

Infant-Toddler Classroom Support  
Infant-Toddler Classroom Guide  
Primary Classroom Guide

Esmé Bloomquist, Classroom Support

### **Toddler Community, South Room**

Betsy Flitton, Guide

Northwestern Michigan College, child development student  
AMS Infant-Toddler Certification, MECA-Seton, Chicago

#### **The Children's House experience (2001- present)**

Toddler Classroom Support  
Toddler Classroom Guide

Agnes Woynarowski, Classroom Support

**Note: Hiring of additional classroom support for the Infant Community and Toddler South is in process.**

**Toddler Community, North Room**

Marie Voss, Guide

Elgin Community College, child development student  
AMS Infant-Toddler Certification, MECA-Seton, Chicago

**The Children's House experience (2008- present)**

Toddler Classroom Support  
Toddler Classroom Guide

Maureen Montgomery, Classroom Support

Gloria Weaver, Classroom Support

**Toddler Friend's Club**

Agnes Woynarowski

**Primary (3-6 years), Northwest Room**

Alison Breithaupt, Guide

B.S. Western Michigan University, Family Studies  
AMI Montessori Primary Certification, Montessori Training Center of St.  
Louis, St. Louis, MO

**The Children's House experience (1996- present):**

Classroom Support  
Primary Guide

Rachel Anderson, Classroom Support

**Primary (3-6 years), Northeast and East Rooms – All Year Montessori**

Melissa Cole, Guide

B.S. Western Michigan University, Graphic Design  
AMI Montessori Primary Certification, Ohio Montessori Training Institute,  
Cleveland

**The Children's House experience (2004- present):**

Primary Classroom Support  
Primary Guide

Amy Flaherty, Guide

B.S. Eastern Michigan University, Elementary Education  
AMI Montessori Primary Certification, Montessori Training Center  
of St. Louis

**The Children's House experience (2009-present)**

Primary Classroom Guide

Courtney Kane, classroom support

**Primary (3-6 years), Southeast Room**

Jen Harris, Guide

B.A. Kalamazoo College, English and Art  
AMS Montessori Primary Certification, NEMTEC, Boston, MA

**The Children's House experience (2003- present):**

Primary Guide

Jenny Orwig, Classroom Support

**Primary (3-6 years), West Room**

Julie Shearer, Guide

B.S.W. Ferris State University, Social Work  
AMI Montessori Primary Certification, Ohio Montessori Training Institute,  
Cleveland

**The Children's House experience (2001- present):**

Primary Classroom Support

Primary Classroom Guide

Jodie Tasch, Classroom Support

**Lower Elementary (6-9 years), Northeast Room**

Jill Borre, Guide

B.S. Grand Valley State, Accounting  
B.A. Michigan State, Elementary Education  
AMS Montessori Elementary Certification, Center for Montessori Teacher  
Education, New York

**The Children's House experience (2004- present):**

Lower Elementary Guide

Nicole Egger, Classroom Support

**Lower Elementary (6-9 years), Southeast Room**

Nadine Elmgren, Guide

B.A. Marylhurst College, Portland, OR, Education  
AMI Montessori Primary Certification, Northwest Montessori Education  
Center, Portland OR  
AMS Montessori Elementary Certification, Ottawa, Canada

**The Children's House experience (1988- present):**

Primary Classroom Guide

Teacher Mentor

Elementary Classroom Guide

Karin Church, Classroom Support



### **Upper Elementary (9-12 years), Northwest Room**

Lyn Bahle, Guide

B.A. University of Michigan, Secondary Education  
AMS Montessori Elementary (6 to 12 years) Certification, Center for  
Montessori Teacher Education, Rochester Hills, MI  
AMS Montessori Administrator's Certification, Center for Montessori  
Teacher Education, New York

#### **The Children's House experience (present):**

Upper Elementary Guide

Catherine Turnbull, Classroom Support

B.A. University of New Hampshire, English  
MFA Sarah Lawrence College, Writing

### **Specialists**

Spanish – to be determined

Marcia Borell, Art

B.A. University of Wisconsin-EAU Claire, Comprehensive Art  
AMS Montessori Infant- Toddler Certification, Montessori Center for  
Teacher Education, Dayton, Ohio

#### **The Children's House experience (1989- present):**

Toddler Guide  
Art Specialist

Mike Kazmierski, Music

Bachelors of Environmental Design, University of Colorado

#### **The Children's House experience (summer 2009-present)**

Elementary summer music class  
Elementary summer photography class

Steve Maas, Physical Education

B.A. Spring Arbor University, Family Life Education  
AMS Primary Certification

#### **The Children's House experience (1992- present):**

Primary Guide  
Physical Education Specialist

Jeanmarie Riccobono, Music

Interlochen Arts Academy High School  
B.M. Eastman School of Music, Music  
M.M. Northwestern University, Music

**The Children's House experience (2000- present):**

Primary Classroom Support  
Lower Elementary Music Specialist  
Music on Mondays Coordinator

Stephanie Slawnik, Theater Director

Interlochen Arts Academy High School  
B.S. Michigan State University, Community Services  
Northwestern Michigan College, Child Development Certificate  
St. Nicolas Montessori Primary Certification, London

**The Children's House experience (summer 1998-present):**

Primary Classroom Guide  
Music Specialist

Kristina Weidenfeller, Lunch Program and Kitchen Classroom

B.A. Michigan State University, Special Education K-12  
M.A. Michigan State University, Curriculum and Testing

**The Children's House experience (summer 2009- present):**

Elementary summer yoga and nutrition class

Michele Worden, Della Terra Director

B.S. University of Michigan, Chemistry/B.S. Chemical Engineering  
M.B.A. U of Michigan, Ross School of Business  
Adv. Master Gardener since 2003

**ADMINISTRATION ROSTER**

Liz Ammond, Web and Publications Support

B.B.A. Western Michigan University, Finance

**The Children's House experience (2003-present):**

Web and Publications Support

Colleen Christensen, Director of Operations

B.S. Michigan State University, Family Studies and Community Services  
M.A Michigan State University, Child Development and Elem. Education  
AMI Montessori Primary Certification, Ohio Montessori Training Institute,  
Cleveland

**The Children's House experience (1984- present):**

Toddler and Primary Guide  
Head of school  
Director of Operations

Beth Melcher, Business Manager  
B.S. DePauw University, Indiana, English Literature  
MBA Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Business  
Administration

**The Children's House experience (2007- present):**  
Business Manager

Lori Mucherino, Business Assistant  
Suttons Bay High School

**The Children's House experience, (1995-present):**  
Primary Classroom Support  
Administrative Support  
Business Assistant

Missy Russell, Director of Advancement  
B.A. Michigan State University, Economics and Political Science

**The Children's House experience (2000- present):**  
Annual Fundraising Chair  
Advancement Director

Michele Shane, Head of School  
B.A. University of Washington, Psychology  
MEd Loyola College Baltimore, Maryland  
AMI Montessori Primary Certification, Montessori Institute Northwest,  
Portland, OR

**The Children's House experience (1998- present):**  
Primary Guide  
Head of School

## **CUSTODIANS**

Art Kinney  
Julie Schaar

## **5) SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

### **SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY AND MISSION:**

*The Children's House Mission Statement:*  
*We are a Montessori community dedicated to providing a learning environment  
that guides, nurtures and enriches the individual*

The Children's House is a Montessori school. Our philosophy is inspired by the philosophy and educational thoughts of Dr. Maria Montessori. Over one hundred years ago, she created the models for classroom environments including materials, organization and structure.

We believe that every human is born with the desire to learn. It is our intention to create an educational atmosphere that acknowledges and fosters that human tendency in every child. Within ordered and challenging environments, the child is encouraged to follow their interests and travel along the path of self-construction intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially.

It is our role, then, to observe the unfolding of this natural process of development and encourage and challenge each child to reach their fullest potential. It is our intention to foster not only a high standard of academic excellence but also provide an environment where every individual strives to cultivate their own self worth and reliance, nurture strong interpersonal relationships and respect themselves and the environment around them.

### **SCHOOL HISTORY**

The Suttons Bay Children's House was founded in 1984 by Gretchen Uhlinger, an AMI trained Montessori guide who was looking for a Montessori program for her two young daughters. That first year of operation, the school offered one toddler class for children 18 to 36 months with Colleen Christensen as the guide, one primary class for 3 to 6 year olds led by Gretchen, after school child care, and parenting classes in a renovated farm house in the village of Suttons Bay. In 1976 Marie Scott, a Montessori guide and parent of young children, founded The Montessori Children's Center in Traverse City. It was located in a house on Rose Street and soon after moved to The First Congregational Church on Center Road.

In 1988, The Montessori Children's Center in Traverse City united with The Suttons Bay Children's House under one non-profit corporation and continued to operate in both locations. While the Traverse City program grew, satellite programs were offered at the Unitarian Fellowship on Center Road and at Central Grade School. The Traverse City program moved to a new location on West Royal Drive in 1998. The Suttons Bay program left the farm house and moved to the Royal Drive building in the fall of 2001.

Today the School enrolls more than 200 children on an 8-acre rural campus on North Long Lake Road just west of Traverse City, Michigan. The new campus opened in the fall of 2002 and was architecturally designed to enhance the Montessori philosophy and teaching method. Programs are offered year-round for children between the ages of 3 months and 12 years, infant through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Before and after school child care is available to enrolled children.

## **SCHOOL STRUCTURE AND AFFILIATION**

The Children's House is a private, non-profit, non-sectarian school and childcare center, registered with the Michigan Department of Education and licensed by the State of Michigan Department of Human Services Child Care Licensing Division. The Children's House depends upon tuition, gifts and grants for all operations. Title XX payments through The Department of Human Services are accepted for families who qualify.

The Head of School is employed and supported by an elected Board of Directors. The Board's general powers include managing the property and affairs of the Corporation. The entire control of the Corporation and its affairs and property are vested in the Board of Directors. The Children's House teachers have completed AMI or AMS Montessori teacher training from reputable training centers.

The Children's House admits boys and girls aged 3 months to 12 years, of all races, colors, nationalities, and ethnic origins, to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities available to students at the School. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarships and other school-administered programs.

### **Board of Directors**

Joan Griner, Chairman  
Mike Anton  
Chris Butz  
Jennifer Lake  
Konrad Molter  
Lynne Moon  
Yvonne Roehler  
Michele Shane, Head of School  
Carmen Stevens

## **THE MONTESSORI METHOD**

The Children's House Montessori community is a campus where, from the front entrance throughout the hallways, classrooms, offices and outdoor environment, Montessori philosophy is embraced. It is our mission to meet the developmental needs of each individual by preparing an environment that is safe, nurturing, consistent, challenging and inspiring.

Within this campus-wide prepared environment, every child is encouraged to explore their interests to the fullest degree possible. The child is free from the constraints of arbitrary time limitations. He is free to learn without feeling the pressure of completing tasks that have predetermined expectations. He is not limited by the abilities of others. In this prepared environment he is encouraged to grow to his fullest potential and recognized for his own unique qualities and gifts.

The teacher, or guide, carefully observes each child's activity and interest and presents him with new activities and materials for learning. Trust between child and guide is established through the multi-year classroom setting which allows the guide time to understand the child's unique approach to learning. The special relationship between the child and adult in a Montessori classroom is conveyed by the words of a young child: "Help me do it myself."

The result is a classroom community where children understand the importance of their role within the group and learn to utilize the skills of others to solve problems and find answers. They feel safe, understood, useful, respected and truly gain an appreciation and love for the process of learning.

### **MONTESSORI HISTORY**

Maria Montessori, Italy's first woman physician and one of the greatest educators of the twentieth century, pioneered the work with children that we carry on today at The Children's House. She was born in Chiaravalle, Italy in 1870. Her first association with children began in 1898 with the mentally deficient at the University Psychiatric Clinic in Rome. Through intense study, observations and long days of working with these children, she discovered their problems were more emotional than medical. So, she designed special didactic learning materials to meet their needs and trained teachers to present them in a special way. Montessori's success was proclaimed miraculous. Many of these children went on to pass, or even excel at, conventional state examinations.

In 1904 she turned her attention to "normal" children. She opened her first school, *Casa de Bambini*, (House of Children) on January 6, 1907, in the San Lorenzo slums of Rome. Word of this "new education" began to spread and many more schools were opened in Italy and other countries.

In half a century, her work became known as the *Montessori Method*. In 1929 she founded the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) to continue her work. During the war years, it was regarded as a movement for world peace. Indeed, she saw the child as the most legitimate hope for a new world. Honorary doctorates, recognition and awards were bestowed on her from countries all over the world. By the time of her death in 1952, she had gained an international reputation as an educator and had been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize three times.

Montessori fervently believed that children have an inner force that gives them the power and drive to achieve their full potential. When children are given the proper measures of guidance and freedom, this inner force enables them to focus on what they need to know... and they learn with wonder, joy and confidence.

## **6) PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

### **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Meetings of a social, educational and informative nature are offered to families throughout the school year. A school calendar and regular newsletters list events planned for parents. Parents are always encouraged and welcomed to participate in the life of the school as observers and/or volunteers. Please see section 2 – Calendar Notes – for a description of these various events.

### **FUNDRAISING and EVENTS**

All independent schools rely on fundraising to fulfill budgetary requirements. While tuition typically covers 80-90% of operating costs, it is necessary to raise funds in order to keep tuition costs accessible. It is the expectation of The Children's House, that all families will participate in the Annual Fund drive as well as other fundraising events at the level at which they are able. There are many fundraising opportunities events held throughout each year and many ways in which you can participate:

- Golf Outing
- Annual Fund drive
- Fall Spaghetti Dinner
- The Karen Circle
- Holiday greens sale
- Holiday Art Market
- Annual Gala
- Endowment donations
- Grants

### **VOLUNTEERS**

The Children's House community relies on volunteers for our success. There are many opportunities to be involved and we strongly urge every parent to give of their time throughout the year. From work bees to gala support and everything in between, there are regular posts in the Tuesday Note that describe where there is need.

Parent volunteers are required to have a background clearance through the Michigan State Police and the Michigan Department of Human Services and sign a screening statement regarding past criminal activity. Parents who volunteer more than 4 hours a week on a regular basis must have a physical exam and TB test on file with the school. Parent drivers must sign a statement regarding compliance with vehicle safety and restraint systems requirements, including an agreement to not use a cell phone while transporting children from the school. The school volunteer coordinator provides directions and paperwork for all required screenings.

## **PARENT EDUCATION**

Throughout the year, there are many ways for parents to learn more about TCH and Montessori education. We strongly encourage all parents to participate in these opportunities as they are the best way to strengthen the partnership between parents and the school in creating the best education for the child. Along with bi-annual parent-teacher conferences, there are book discussion groups, parent coffees, speakers, visiting days and more.

## **OBSERVATION**

We welcome and encourage parents to visit their child's classroom. Please read the details below for guidelines regarding observation at each level. Observing is the best way for parents to witness, first hand, the Montessori method in action!

### **INFANT-TODDLER OBSERVATION**

The Infant-Toddler wing includes a one way observation booth where you can see the classroom without your child seeing you. Observing in this designated area offers the best experience for you and the classroom community. Please contact your child's guide with any questions and guidance regarding observations.

### **PRIMARY AND ELEMENTARY OBSERVATION**

We ask that you wait six weeks after the beginning of the school year before coming to observe in the classroom. This allows time for the children to become comfortable in their environments and with the routine of the day. You are always welcome to observe through the one way window located outside the classroom environments. After the initial six weeks of school, we invite you to come into the classroom for your observation if you choose.

It is best (although not required) to call ahead to schedule an observation in the classroom environment so we can assure that there is a place in the observer's chair for you during the desired time.

## **7) SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

### **EARLY CARE**

The Children's House opens at 7:30 am for early care. Infants should go directly to their classroom. Toddlers should go to the Toddler South room. Primary children should go to the Primary East room. At 8:00, Toddlers and Primary students join their own classrooms. Elementary students should go to the Elementary Great Hall for early care. For details about Early Care rates, please contact the Business Office.



### **FRIEND'S CLUB**

After school care (Friend's Club) at The Children's House begins at 3:20 and ends at 5:30 when the school closes. Children attending Friend's Club participate in a variety of activities including outdoor play, arts and crafts and games in the gym. Any enrolled child is eligible to join Friend's Club. If you would like to enroll your child for Friend's Club according to a regular schedule, please contact the admissions office. For drop-in Friends Club, please call the front desk.

### **SUMMER PROGRAMS**

Summer programs are offered for the entire 10 week summer break. The school is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Infant-toddler classes provide a continuation of the school year program. The staffing and environment are consistent. A 7 week minimum enrolment commitment is required.

Primary classes offer either a full time Montessori classroom or a theme based classroom offering weekly sessions.

Elementary students choose from a variety of theme based classes offered weekly. Students may enroll for the whole summer or choose specific weeks.

Academic review classes are offered for students who have completed Extended Day through 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

All summer classes are open to new students from the greater community. New infants and toddlers join in the summer are expected to continue in the fall program.

### **NON-SCHOOL DAY CHILD CARE**

Child care is available on some of the days when classes are closed. Refer to the school calendar for specific days. Students with year-round tuition agreements may attend school on the child care days at no additional charge. Students without a year-round tuition agreement may attend with an advanced reservation and will be charged an additional fee.

## **8) TRANSITIONS / CLASSROOM PLACEMENTS**

### **Infant Program**

The Infant Program is designed for the developmental needs of children 3 months to approximately 18 months old. Infants entering into this program must be able and willing to be bottle-fed. Guides in this environment will follow the infant's lead in terms of sleep and feeding.

### **Toddler Program**

The Toddler Program welcomes children approximately 18 months to 3 years old. Children entering this program will participate in activities that promote independence, concentration and sense of accomplishment. For this reason, children must walk independently, feed themselves solid foods, and have given up their morning nap.

### **Primary Program**

The Primary Program is a three year curricular cycle for children approximately 3 to 6 years old. Children moving into this program must display impulse control, take verbal direction, and be toilet trained (successful 80% of the time). The emphasis in this classroom centers around independent work, movement, grace and courtesy, healthy living and the introduction to basic reading, writing, cultural studies and mathematics.

Extended Day, the third year of the Primary Cycle, is generally known as Kindergarten in a traditional setting. During this year the child has additional privileges and responsibilities as they are the oldest members of their classroom community. Extended Day is the culminating year of their primary experience.

### **Elementary Program**

The Elementary Program is organized into two 3 year cycles. The first is **Lower-Elementary** which includes 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students. **Upper-Elementary** continues with 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. These programs are based upon a rigorous, research-based curriculum that centers on mathematics, social studies, science, English Language Arts and Personal Growth and Development. In addition, students have daily and weekly lessons in Physical Education, Visual Arts, Music Arts and Spanish. Kitchen Classroom and Della Terra (gardening and botany) are also experienced.

It is not customary for The Children's House to accept new students into the Elementary program unless they have previously learned in a Montessori environment, transferred from another independent school, or had a sibling or relative attend the school.

## **9) ADMISSIONS POLICIES and PROCEDURES**

The Children's House admits boys and girls ages 3 months to 12 years, of all races, colors, nationalities, and ethnic origins, to all rights, privileges, programs and activities available to students at the School. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color or national ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, tuition assistance and other school-administered programs.

The admission process at The Children's House begins with a tour of the school for prospective parents. During this tour, parents will have a chance to see the entire campus and observe classrooms. This visit is intended to give both parties time to determine if the partnership in education is the right one. Once a family decides to enroll, they must complete an application and return it to the Admissions Office with a \$50.00, non-refundable application fee. Families with children over four years of age must meet with the Head of School prior to being accepted. Upon acceptance, a tuition agreement will be issued and the student will be placed on a class list.

Classroom placements are based primarily on an equal distribution of gender and age. Families with siblings may have classroom/guide requests. Class placement is based on the discretion of the Head of School.

## **10) TUITION POLICIES**

A tuition agreement between the school and the parents (or responsible adult) is required before a student attends school. The agreement is signed by both parties and specifies the payment amount, payment schedule, and payment policies.

### **WITHDRAWALS / DISMISSALS**

Please reference your tuition agreement for the school's complete withdrawal/dismissal policy.

### **BILLING**

The student's account is charged based on the tuition agreement payment schedule and any additional monthly charges such as childcare, lunches, and special activities. Monthly statements are sent via email at the end of each month. The balance is due no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following month. Electronic funds transfers will process on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month (or the next business day thereafter) for families who elect a Plan 3 payment schedule on their tuition agreement.

### **A La Carte Childcare**

Year-round contract days (conferences, professional days, snow days and spring break) are also available to families with children on a school year-only contract. Families are able to:

- Purchase the a la carte childcare package (children are guaranteed a spot in the classroom for all ten childcare days and any/all snow days.) or
- Sign up by making reservations as the childcare dates and openings are announced through the Tuesday Note (attendance is limited and not available for snow days.)

Please contact the business office if you are interested in discussing your options.

### **ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER (ETFs)**

EFTs are required for families who elect a Plan 3 payment schedule on the tuition agreement. Month-end billing statements allow families to view the amount that will be charged/debited on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the following month.

*Please note: From time to time, families may elect to participate in the school's fundraising events. With the exception of the annual gala, these donations will also be paid by EFT for Plan 3 families with the amount debit/charged on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month after the purchase or pledge.*

### **LATE PAYMENT CHARGES**

A late payment charge of \$15.00 per month is assessed when the balance due is greater than \$25.00 and has not been received by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the month in which it is due. In the event a tuition payment becomes two months in arrears, the student will not be allowed to continue in the program and collection procedures will begin.

### **RETURNED CHECKS AND DECLINED CREDIT CARDS**

A charge of \$20.00 is assessed for all returned checks or electronic funds transfers because of insufficient funds or expired/changed credit card account numbers. Please be sure to notify the business office when your account number has changed or credit card expiration date has been updated to avoid this type of charge.

### **LATE PICKUP CHARGES**

A fee of \$15.00 is charged for every 15 minutes (or increment thereof) a child is at school beyond closing time (5:30 p.m.).

Questions regarding billing should be directed to the Business Assistant at 929-9325.

### **TUITION ASSISTANCE**

#### **Overview**

Tuition assistance is available to families of current and prospective Children's House students. The Children's House has provided tuition assistance to families since 1985. This assistance has helped provide a quality independent education to families who would not otherwise be able to consider such an education for their children. Tuition assistance ensures a diverse and enriched Children's House community.

#### **Criteria and priorities used throughout the award process**

1. Continue support for families currently receiving assistance with particular awards for students in their second and third years in-cycle.

2. Award school-year academic programming at Primary and Elementary levels.
3. Provide funds that enable families already enrolled in the school to stay with the school in the event of changing personal finances.
4. Consider all other requests

### **Award process**

The Children's House uses an [online system](#) to facilitate tuition assistance applications. This program is called "FAST – Financial Aid for Student Tuition." It is recommended and supported by ISM – Independent School Management. This online service analyzes financial statements provided by each family and provides need-based financial aid recommendations to the school. The administration makes final decisions about financial awards based on these recommendations.

Specific instructions, deadlines and applications will be available during the re-enrollment period through the school's website via the "Tuition Assistance" link at [www.traversechildrenshouse.org](http://www.traversechildrenshouse.org).

Tuition assistance award letters are mailed prior to the next school year's enrollment deadline.

### **Accepting the Award**

To accept an award and secure a spot in the class for the following school year, a family must submit the signed award letter, signed enrollment form and payment of the non-refundable enrollment deposit by the deadline indicated on the award letter. Awards that have not been accepted by the deadline will be returned to the tuition assistance fund pool and awarded to other applicants.

## **WORK COOPERATIVES**

### **Overview**

Each year, The Children's House makes available opportunities for adult members of the school's community to work in exchange for a tuition discount. Examples of past work cooperative positions include: front desk, car line assistance and garden maintenance.

### **Process**

A list of work cooperative opportunities and the co-op applications are available during the enrollment process at the [www.traversechildrenshouse.org](http://www.traversechildrenshouse.org). Availability of the applications and deadlines are coordinated with the tuition assistance program in early spring.

Work cooperatives are awarded based on the skill set of the applicant with some consideration made for financial need.

# 11) GETTING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

## ARRIVAL

We want your child's arrival at school to be pleasant! To that end we have established a drop-off procedure for you to follow. We believe this procedure minimizes the discomfort of separation that occurs now and then. We encourage all parents to utilize the carline. Please consult your child's teacher with any questions.

From 8:20 am- 8:40am daily, staff will be available for "carline". Please drive into the driveway and wait in the carline in front of the designated door to the program that your child attends. (For the first week of school, a sign hanging over each entrance will designate the proper door.) While you wait please take time to get together any items your child is taking to school. When it is your turn, a staff member will open the passenger door(s) and safely escort your child into the school. Please arrive during the 20 minutes designated for carline.

If your child is an extended day or elementary student, he may exit the car independently and enter the building through the elementary door. You may drive **slowly** in the left lane past the toddler and primary cars to approach the elementary door. Please wait until you have passed the curve in the driveway before you pull into the left lane. Your child should always exit the car on the curb side.

If you must arrive after carline ends please park your car in the lot and walk your child to the door of the classroom. A designated staff member will greet your child there as soon as they are able. Be sure, in all cases, that an adult from your child's classroom knows they have arrived with eye contact or a quick wave.

## DISMISSAL AT DAY'S END

Beginning at 3:20 and for the subsequent 20 minutes a staff member will escort your child to your car. Please pull into the carline and stay in line until the staff person directing traffic tells you to move ahead. You may not pull around other cars during this carline unless directed by staff. If you enter from Herkner Road, wait at the turn until directed by staff to pull into the line.

If you are picking your child up at any other time of day, please park in the lot and come into the building or onto the playground. For everyone's safety, do not take your child until you have made contact with a school employee.

## ATTENDANCE

A student's respect for school schedules and calendars develops in relation to the family's respect for the same. In response to family events, the school will excuse nine (9) missed or late days for students in extended day primary through upper elementary. Students shall be in the classroom at 8:30 a.m. each day they

are in attendance. Students should not depart before the school day ends. On occasion, if an early departure is necessary, please inform your child's teacher ahead of time to minimize disruption of the class upon their leaving.

## **12) COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL**

### **OFFICE HOURS**

The Children's House front desk is staffed Monday through Friday from 8:00 am-5:30 pm. Hours of administrative staff vary. For specific details of teacher and staff availability, please inquire.

### **COMMUNICATION FROM SCHOOL**

It is our intention to provide you with all necessary information to partner fully in your child's education. There are several means by which you can access information:

- **Tuesday Note-** this weekly newsletter is sent every Tuesday via email. It includes information on school events, volunteer opportunities, updates and links to valuable information.
- **Website-** [www.traversechildrenshouse.org](http://www.traversechildrenshouse.org)- The website is a comprehensive source of information about the school. It includes a parent tab where you will find Tuesday notes, annual all-school calendar, PDF forms etc.
- **Google Calendar-** available on TCH website. This is the most current source of information for school events and other important dates.
- **Home Folders (elementary)-** elementary students carry a home folder to and from school daily. An explanation will be offered to parents at the opening parent meetings.
- **Email-** email is an efficient method to communicate with your child's guide and the administration. We encourage all conversations about your child or questions or comments not of a logistical nature to occur by phone or in person. All faculty and administrative staff have email addresses (first name@traversechildrenshouse.org) and phone extensions with voicemail and check and respond to messages within a 24 hour period. For messages with time sensitivity, please call the front desk for messages to be delivered during the school day.
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences-** Conferences are held in November and March. They are an important (and required) opportunity for you to talk with your child's guide about your child's classroom experience and progress. Conference sign-up information is available 2-3 weeks prior to conference dates.

- **Meetings-** Teachers and administrative staff welcome the opportunity to talk with you! Please email or call to schedule a time to meet if you have questions, ideas, thoughts or concerns.

### **CONTACTING YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER**

Communication between the school and your family is of utmost importance to us. The teachers will discuss with you the best times and forms of communication throughout the school year. Out of respect for the child, it is our policy to **not** discuss him or her in their presence. If you need to get a message to the teacher regarding your child during class hours, please call the front desk and the receptionist will assist you. All classroom extensions also include voicemail which the teachers check regularly.

## **13) SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

If the Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS) are delayed, The Children's House opens at 9:00 am. If TCAPS is closed, The Children's House opens at 9:00 am for students on a year-round contract or those who have been registered in advance for "snow day child care". There is no drop-in care on snow days. If the Northwestern Michigan College campus is closed, The Children's House is closed.

School closures and delays are posted on [The Children's House web site](#) by 7:00 a.m. including a link to the TCAPS weather announcements. Delays and closures are also announced on most area radio and television stations.

## **14) CLASSROOM LIFE**

### **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

We celebrate birthdays with a unique community celebration. The birthday celebration in all of our classrooms helps the children understand their personal connection to the greater life cycle.

Your child's teacher will have [details](#) regarding how birthdays are celebrated and your part in the celebration as well as suggestions of birthday snacks that are festive and nutritious!

In consideration of all the children, please do not deliver holiday cards, party invitations and birthday gifts to other children at school. Additionally, please do not use the school as a pick-up spot for your child's parties as it is uncomfortable for the children who are not invited.



## **NUTRITION INFORMATION**

**School provided lunch: Mission Statement.** We are devoted to enhancing children's health and well being by providing a nutritious food service program. Our mission is to provide students with an appetizing, nutritious, culturally diverse meal. Because nutrition influences a child's development, health status and potential for learning, we will encourage healthy eating habits through meaningful activity with food in the classrooms.

### **Nutrition Policy**

We offer lunches that meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid by using the following standards:

1. Include a variety of foods
2. Include adequate foods from the grain, vegetable and fruit groups
3. Include foods low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol
4. Limit foods high in sugar content and sodium
5. Omit foods with minimal nutritional value. These foods include carbonated beverages, fruit drinks and aides, candies and chewing gum
6. Monitor student acceptance of meals on an ongoing basis

All school provided lunches ensure a balance between optimal nutrition and student acceptance. We are committed to the use of high-quality, local and organic ingredients whenever possible. The children are provided with a pleasant eating environment to include adequate time and space to eat school meals, positive supervision and role modeling at meal times. Special menus are offered to children enrolled in the infant-toddler program. School provided lunches do not contain nut products.

**Lunches packed and sent from home** should come to school in a standard lunch box or bag. It should include nutritious food and drink. Please do not send candy, sugary desserts or carbonated beverages or fruit drinks in lunches. Lunches **will not** be refrigerated.

**Milk** to drink with lunch may be purchased daily for .75.

**Nadine's lower elementary classroom is a peanut-free environment. Please refrain from sending any peanut products in your child's lunch or birthday snack if you are in Nadine's class.**

**For all other students, please clearly and boldly mark the outside of your child's lunchbox if it contains nut products.**

**We appreciate your diligence in this important matter.**

## **INFANT-TODDLER NUTRITION INFORMATION**

Children are permitted to eat on demand. Parents of children under 12 months of age are required to provide formula and food for their child. The school makes the following provisions to ensure the health and safety of your child:

- Formula is prepared at the child's home and placed in an assembled bottle unit being brought to the school.
- Formula, milk and perishable foods needing refrigeration are refrigerated.

Formula is not stored longer than 24 hours after opening. Foods are covered and labeled as to the contents, date of opening, and the specific child for whom its use is intended. Foods other than formula are used or discarded within a 36-hour period after opening.

- Each bottle and nipple supplied by a parent is used for a single feeding only and then returned to the parent.
- Formula and milk left in a bottle at the end of a feeding is discarded.

### **CHILDREN OVER 12 MONTHS OF AGE**

The school provides a nutritious snack in the morning and in the afternoon for all students.

**The school does not serve any foods with peanuts or peanut products.**

### **CLOTHING**

Families receive a supply list at the beginning of the year which includes clothing needed for school. Children in primary and elementary programs should have a pair of gym shoes (no black marking soles) to keep at school. All the children spend a portion of each day outdoors. Please send appropriate outdoor clothing to accommodate the weather extremes. All clothing should be clearly labeled with the child's name.

### **WHAT TO BRING/WHAT TO LEAVE AT HOME**

#### **Infant-Toddler through Primary**

Children in these classes like to share. We recognize this interest and see it as an opportunity to foster skills important to self-expression. Children are welcome to bring an object to share in their classroom. If your child chooses to do so, please help him/her choose objects that are of interest and benefit to the life of the group. Natural specimens, something from another culture, something the child has made, or an interesting book are popular items. Toys, money, candy, gum, cosmetics and similar items are not appropriate. Please communicate with your child's teacher about the appropriateness of an object if it is questionable before bringing it to school.

#### **Elementary**

Older children are more capable of planning their activities, including "show and tell." At our class meetings, we hear from children who have signed up to share something. As in the pre-school classrooms, we ask children to leave toys, money, cosmetics, or similar items at home. We also ask them to get permission from parents before bringing valuable items to share. Contact the teachers with any questions.

## **HOLIDAYS, CELEBRATIONS, AND TRADITIONS**

Celebrations and traditions are integral to the life of our Montessori school community. We believe that through celebration, we gain opportunities for community building, for honoring rites of passage, and for recognizing the beginnings and endings of our human experiences.

To enhance the cultural aspect of our curriculum, we make an effort to introduce the children to a variety of holiday traditions from many different ethnic and religious groups. Families are invited and encouraged to help us by sharing stories, traditions and activities from cultures throughout the world. We respect the diversity of religious holidays that families celebrate in their homes. We approach those holidays from a seasonal, factual and historical perspective and often enjoy a short celebration of food, song and artwork before related school vacations.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

### **The Children's House aims:**

- to balance freedom and responsibilities of the individual with the need for cooperation, order and goodwill within the group;
- to provide an environment where the child will experience encouragement, affirmation and community;
- to ensure the physical and psychological safety of every student;
- to enable each student to develop a high standard of moral integrity gained through growth in self-discipline;
- to aid the child in their process of developing into responsible adults;
- to maintain a high standard for student behavior that reflects positively on self, family, school and community;
- to nurture each student with respect and fairness.

### **The Children's House expects each student:**

- to treat others with dignity and respect;
- to treat him/herself with the same respect;
- to respect both the work and property of others, and to bring only necessary materials to school;
- to have consistent attendance and punctual arrival.

In the event that a student fails to respect the expectations above, the following notes describe the usual approach and procedures for working with the student. The school reserves the right to modify these procedures as it sees fit:

- In the event of **minor misbehavior**, the student and teacher discuss and work cooperatively to resolve the problem. At times, an individual's minor misbehavior may be considered by the classroom community because of its impact on the life of the class.

- **Chronic misbehavior** is reported and discussed with parents and the Head of School where strategies to aid the child in correcting the behavior are agreed upon.
- **Major misbehavior**, especially that involving injurious behavior, is further discussed with the Head of School. The head, parents, teacher and, where appropriate, the student, meet to resolve the issue

In the event of major or chronic misbehavior, a student may be excluded from school, suspended, or expelled.

The school expects full parental cooperation in all aspects of the student's life at The Children's House. All rules apply before, during and after school, and on all school outings.

### **Major Misbehavior**

**The school considers the following to be major misbehavior:**

- Interference with the rights of others, including physical abuse (such as punching, biting, kicking, or hitting), verbal abuse (such as teasing, taunts, threats or intimidation), and bullying (whether by physical aggression, social alienation, or verbal aggression and intimidation);
- damage to, abuse of, or stealing any school or personal property;
- use of obscene, profane, suggestive, or intimidating written or verbal language;
- repeated disruptive or uncooperative behavior.

The school is committed to working together with the student and the family on issues of conduct. At the same time, The Children's House reserves the right to dismiss any student at any time if, in its sole judgment, the student's continued presence at the school is detrimental to themselves, to others or to the community as a whole.

**The school DOES NOT engage in corporal punishment of any kind.**

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Students enrolled in extended day through elementary experience a variety of field trips throughout the year. They are transported in private cars driven by parent volunteers or on a school bus. Students less than 9 years of age, less than 40 pounds, and less than 4 feet 9 inches must ride in a manufactured certified booster seat when riding in private cars. Parent drivers must sign a statement regarding compliance with vehicle safety and restraint systems requirements, including an agreement to not use a cell phone while transporting children from the school. Volunteer drivers must comply with the back ground check and additional requirements described in the volunteer section of this handbook.

The teachers plan and participate in the field trips. Permission forms are signed

in the fall to cover all trips for the year. Notes describing the details of the trip are sent to parents approximately 2 weeks in advance.

### **Extended Day Trips**

These field trips occur monthly and include extended day students from all four classes.

### **Elementary Camping Trips**

Lower and upper elementary students participate in overnight camping trips in the fall and spring. Details are provided in advance to parents about the trips.

### **Swimming Lessons**

Lower elementary students take swimming lessons each year at the Traverse City Civic Center pool. They are transported by school bus and are accompanied by school employees. The lessons usually last 10 weeks.

### **Fees**

Most field trips, camping trips and lessons are covered by the student activity fee charged on the tuition agreement.

## **15) HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **STUDENT FORMS**

In addition to the **application form** (completed before a child is accepted into the program), the following forms are required to be on file at the school before a child attends school:

- **a child information card** (“white card”) –This card lists emergency contacts, people other than parents who are authorized to pick up the child, and permission to seek emergency medical treatment for the child while at school.
- **a health form signed by a physician for children younger than extended day or a statement of good health form signed by the parent for extended day through sixth year students**
- **an immunization record** – each child must conform to immunization standards or claim a medical or religious exemption

The following **forms** must be signed and on file at the school within the first week of your child’s attendance at school:

- **Nutrition Agreement** – This form indicates agreement by the parent to provide a lunch or purchase a school provide lunch if the child is at school over the lunch hour.
- **Photo and Website Release** – On this form, parents indicate any restrictions for use of their child’s photograph in school publications or other media.
- **Field Trip Permission** – Parents indicate permission for children to attend school sponsored field trips. Field trips are offered for children in extended

- day and the elementary program. Details about field trips are available in this handbook. (see table of contents)
- **Sunscreen Permission** – This form gives allows school personnel to apply sunscreen to children at school.
- **Pesticide Notification** – This form allows parents to request prior notification if pest management procedures involving pesticides are used at the school.
- **Parent Notification of Licensing Notebook** – This form notifies parents of the location of a notebook containing documents regarding the school's child care licensing status with the State of Michigan.

### **ILLNESS / HEALTH CONCERNS / MEDICATION**

If your children are not feeling well enough to participate fully in all school programs **please keep them at home**. If children should become ill at school, we do our best to make them comfortable until you can pick them up. Please come immediately after you are called in this event. (There is no refund or credit for illness).

### **ILLNESS POLICY**

**(developed in conjunction with Dr. Rebecca Hagerty)**

The symptoms which indicate that a child should stay home and/or receive medical treatment include any of the following:

- ✓ FEVER – any temperature over 100.4°; less if the child feels badly or acts “out-of-sorts”
- ✓ NOSE DRAINAGE – until thick yellow or green discharge disappears (clear drainage is OK)
- ✓ DIARRHEA – more than one episode in a two-hour period
- ✓ VOMITING for any reason
- ✓ RASH - undiagnosed
- ✓ SCABIES AND LICE
- ✓ ANY COMMUNICABLE DISEASE (pink eye, strep throat, chickenpox..)

If a child is ill, as judged by a staff member in charge, a parent or parent representative will be contacted and asked to come for the child immediately. The child will be isolated from other children until a parent arrives.

### **WHEN MAY A CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL?**

- ✓ When a fever is absent for 24 hours
- ✓ When the child has had antibiotics (for appropriate conditions determined by a physician) for 24 hours or more
- ✓ When a rash is diagnosed as non-contagious by a physician and a note is provided to document it
- ✓ When nasal drainage is clear
- ✓ When diarrhea has stopped for 24 hours
- ✓ When vomiting has stopped for 24 hours

- ✓ If rotavirus / norovirus are diagnosed, children may be contagious for up to 2 weeks after the illness. A note from a physician stating the child is no longer contagious is required before re-entry to school.
- ✓ Scabies and lice must be cleared and nits completely gone
- ✓ Cuts and wounds must be kept covered until healed. If a wound is actively draining pus, the child must stay home until he is diagnosed and treated by a physician and cleared to return.
- ✓ A child with chicken pox may return only when all lesions (rash spots) are completely crusted over and healed.

**Dr. Hagerty recommends the following two websites for information about children's illness:**

[www.aap.org/](http://www.aap.org/) American Academy of Pediatrics – Parenting Corner  
[www.kidshealth.org/parent](http://www.kidshealth.org/parent) Kids Health for Parents  
 Parents may contact Dr. Hagerty with related questions at  
[rhagerty@hagerty.com](mailto:rhagerty@hagerty.com).

### **ALLERGIES AND HEALTH CONCERNS**

Inform your child's teacher of any special health problems such as allergies or dietary restrictions. You will be asked to specify the condition and treatment in writing on the form provided.

### **MEDICATIONS**

We administer prescription medicines or non-prescription medicines only when accompanied by written permission from you. A [form](#) is provided to note specific instructions. Our staff cannot administer medicine at their own discretion or as *needed*. Medicine must come to the school in its original container with a label. Please do not send it in your child's lunch box, but hand it directly to the adult who greets your car. Medication is stored in the administrative office and administered from that location by school personnel. Students may not keep medication in their backpacks or cubbies.

### **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

In cases of medical emergency, the staff will call 911 and the child will be taken to the medical facility determined by the 911 staff. Emergency treatment forms signed by the parents will be taken as well. The parents will be notified and directed to the medical facility where the child is taken.

### **PROVISIONS FOR NAP AND REST**

It is our intent to provide a rest/nap for any children enrolled in the infant through primary classes past noon on any given day. We also acknowledge that many of you have told us that your child no longer requires a nap. The following guidelines specify our procedures for nap.

Children under 12 months of age are permitted to sleep on demand. They sleep in cribs. The toddler children **nap** from approximately 12:15 – 2:45. The toddler

staff supervises nap and all toddlers staying past lunch will nap at this time. Additionally, children under the age of three are offered opportunities to rest as needed. The room is darkened and children nap on small cots or mats with sheets provided by us. Children are welcome to bring their own blankets although extras are available at school. Cots and mats are sanitized after use, sheets and school blankets are laundered at school after use.

Primary children who nap do so in the primary nap room. The same nap guidelines described for toddlers apply to these children as well.

First or second year primary children who stay in the afternoon and do not nap will be cared for in the primary wing in their home classroom. During the afternoon session, they will have an opportunity for quiet rest time followed by organized activities and small groups.

Extended day children are offered a short quiet time after the lunch hour, usually spent listening to a story, poetry, or soothing music.

Please talk with your child's teacher about your child's nap or rest needs.

Note: The school provides a continuing record in the areas of food intake, sleeping patterns, bowel movements and developmental milestones for children under 12 months of age.

### **TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM SCHOOL**

We must have a written note advising us if someone not listed on the child's information card will pick up your child or if he or she will be leaving school with another child. We will not release your child without your written instructions or without confirming their identity through a photo ID. Anyone who drops off or picks up a child from the school must make contact with a staff member before leaving the building.

### **SAFETY DRILLS**

#### **Fire drills**

A minimum of six school-wide drills are conducted throughout the year. Each classroom practices the drill on its own before the first school wide drill in the fall. The drill is initiated by a fire alarm which can be heard throughout the entire building. Children exit directly out their classroom doors and proceed to the soccer field. The school alarm automatically notifies an alarm monitor which reports to the Traverse City fire department.

#### **Tornado drills**

Each classroom reviews procedures semi-annually for protection during tornado threats. Several tornado shelters are designated throughout the building and are posted on the wall in each classroom. A weather alert monitor is on stand-by in the office at all times.



**Crisis management plan and lock down drills**

A written crisis management plan outlines the school's procedures in the event of various situations that could potentially threaten the building or the students and employees. The plan is written in conjunction with the Department of Homeland Security, Grand Traverse Department of Emergency Services and Traverse City Area Public Schools. Parents may review a copy of the plan upon request.

Lock down drills are practiced twice a year with representatives from Homeland Security and Grand Traverse law enforcement. During the drill, the staff and students practice locking the entire building and classrooms and keeping out of sight. The drill is mandated by the State Governor.