

# *The Children's House*

**2015-2016 Parent Handbook**



5363 North Long Lake Road  
Traverse City, MI 49685

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.

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## THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the 2015-2016 edition of the **Parent Handbook**. This handbook is designed to provide you with all of the information you need to make the upcoming year a great success.

Each year, we ask you to take time to review the contents carefully as content is updated each year. The information is important for all parents to know. A copy may also be found on our website for your reference throughout the year. [http://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/parent\\_handbook\\_201516.pdf](http://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/parent_handbook_201516.pdf)

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 look forward to a successful partnership with you this year in supporting your child's learning, development and individuality.

Sincerely,

Michele Shane  
Head of School

## 2) SCHOOL EVENTS AND DESCRIPTIONS

The school family calendar is posted on the school's website.

<http://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/calendar.asp>

### **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. Year-round students attend follow their regular schedules on the orientation day. New infants and toddlers attend for one hour on their first day.

### **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 schedules. Early care and Friend's Club begin the Wednesday after Labor Day. Students in year-round Montessori classrooms begin their regular schedules on the Tuesday after Labor Day.

### **Back to School Night**

Required for parents of new and returning students at all levels. Classroom guides will explain the upcoming year program, expectations and special events.

## **Montessori 101**

Montessori 101 is an informative and interactive class taught by head of school, Michele Shane. Montessori history and basic principles will be discussed. Come with questions and be ready to learn about what Montessori methodology is all about.

## **Classroom Community Socials**

### **Fall for Primary, Elementary, and Junior High, Spring and Fall for Infant-Toddler**

Scheduled by individual classrooms

## **Harvest Fall Festival**

This fall gathering of TCH community combines the annual Harvest Dinner and Fall Festival into one event at the school. It is our opportunity to share with families the highlights of our Earth to Table program! The harvest of our campus gardens is shared in a meal together while families also enjoy arts and crafts, games, and music.

## **Staff and Faculty Retreat**

This professional development day has included presentations by experts in a variety of fields, group cooperative 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.

## **Classrooms 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 Seasonal 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 for the upcoming school year

### **Annual Gala**

This is the biggest fundraiser of the year...typically raising about \$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 Research Fair**

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

### **Grandparent's Day**

This is a heartwarming day when grandparents and special friends of that generation 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.



## **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.

## **Field Day**

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

## **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 in 1984. 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 49685

(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 AND FACULTY CONTACT INFORMATION**

Contact information can be found using this link:

[http://traversechildrenshouse.org/our\\_community.asp](http://traversechildrenshouse.org/our_community.asp)

## **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

Junior High: 12 to 15 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 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**

**Lori Mucherino**, Office Manager handles purchasing, processes payments to accounts and accounts payable, manages student records, school files and databases and school technology systems. She reports to the Advancement Director 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.

**Liz Ammond**, Media Coordinator, is responsible for school publications, school photography and managing the school website. She reports to the Advancement Director.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT**

**Parents**, 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.

### **ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY AND STAFF INFORMATION**

A complete roster and information can be found using this link:

[http://traversechildrenshouse.org/our\\_community.asp](http://traversechildrenshouse.org/our_community.asp)

## **5) SCHOOL OVERVIEW**

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

*The Children's House Mission Statement:*

*The Children's House prepares a Montessori learning environment that supports and respects the development of each unique child and nurtures them to become independent, curious, confident, lifelong learners who strive to contribute to their communities and greater world.*

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 14 years, infant through 8<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. It is accredited by the Michigan Montessori Society (MMS). The Children's House depends upon tuition, gifts and grants for all operations.

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 14 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**

Frank Petty, Chairman

Carl Ferguson, Secretary

Kevin Manning

Eileen Mikulski

Jon Plummer

Susan Ruoff

Michele Shane, Head of School

Jessica Sullivan, Treasurer

## **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**

### **CHiPA**

CHiPA is the acronym for Children's House Parent Association. It is made up of volunteer room parents from each classroom. The core purpose of CHiPA is to organize manage volunteer efforts and engage new and current families into TCH community through event planning, outreach and effective/accurate communication.

The responsibilities of a room parent are to:

- Communicate to parents on behalf of their classroom teacher and/or the school
- Volunteer to help with events and school related efforts
- Reach out to new families to help them feel welcome
- Work with school planning committee on school sponsored events
- Assist in fundraising as needed.
- Attend CHiPA meetings

### **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:

- Annual Fund drive
- The Karen Circle
- Holiday Art Market
- Carnival
- 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 parent coffees, speakers, visiting days and more. More information can be found on the school website at [http://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/community\\_ed.asp](http://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/community_ed.asp).

### **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, ELEMENTARY AND JUNIOR HIGH 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 and Toddlers should go directly to their classroom. Primary children should go to the Primary Friend's Club Room. At 8:20, Primary students join their own classrooms. Elementary and Junior High 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 primary, elementary, or junior high student is eligible to join Friend's Club if space permits. If you would like to enroll your child for Friend's Club according to a regular schedule, please contact the admissions office. For primary and elementary drop-in Friend's Club, please register your child through orderlunches.com. Please call the business office for directions about using orderlunches.com for child care sign up.

### **SUMMER PROGRAMS**

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



Monday through Friday. The week prior to the school year and the week before the fall are closed while staff participate in training and classroom preparation.

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

Primary classes offer either a full time Montessori classroom or a Montessori 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.

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

### **PARENT – TEACHER CONFERENCE DAYS**

**New in 2015:** Classes continue as usual on these days. All students attend according to their regular schedules.

### **SPRING BREAK**

**New in 2016:** Care over spring break week is available by reservation for all students at no additional charge. Parents are asked to inform the school if their child will attend over spring break.

## **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.

## **Junior High – 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade**

Based on the principles of Maria Montessori, TCH Jr. High cultivates a love of learning. Themes of the curriculum include Humanities, Occupations, Self-Expression, Mathematics, Micro-Economy, and Foreign Language. Through hands-on work with academics and relating students to the roles and responsibilities of adulthood, TCH Jr. High schoolers develop a strong personal identity and responsibility through a developmentally tailored approach to the needs of young teenagers.

# **9) ADMISSIONS POLICIES and PROCEDURES**

The Children's House admits boys and girls ages 3 months to 14 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 non-refundable

application fee. This step secures the student's place in the applicant pool. Upon acceptance, the family will be notified in writing. (Families with children over the age of four must meet with the Head of School prior to being accepted.) This written confirmation will serve as a confirmation of admissions as well as schedule and must be signed and returned by the noted date along with a \$500 non-refundable enrollment deposit that will be applied to the student's tuition. If not returned by the date noted, the student's classroom placement will be surrendered. The final step in the admissions process will be the issuing of a tuition agreement.

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.

### **Program Schedule Guidelines**

**Infant/Toddler** – The Infant/Toddler programs require a three morning minimum schedule.

**Primary** – Students ages 2.9 – 4 years old may attend a minimum of three mornings. Once a student turns four, he/she must add two additional mornings to have a compliant five morning schedule. This change will happen the June, September or February after the student's birthday. A new tuition agreement will be issued at that time.

**AYM (All Year Montessori) Primary** – The AYM Primary classroom is intended for students who attend a minimum of five mornings a week on a year round basis. Families who opt to decrease the five day schedule once enrolled, may be asked to join another classroom.

The purpose of this guideline is for academic readiness as well as peer consistency in the classroom. Additional information on this policy may be obtained by contacting Missy Russell at [missy@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:missy@traversechildrenshouse.org).

## **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 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.

## **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.

## **CONTRACT CHANGES**

A \$25 fee will be charged for contract modifications.

## **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 \$20.00 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 tuition assistance committee 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

## CARLINE

We want your child's arrival to and departure from school to be pleasant! Everyone coming and going to school has the same purpose and we want to do everything possible to make it safe and efficient. To that end we have established drop-off and pick-up procedures for you to follow. We believe these procedures help to ensure a safe environment while minimizing the discomfort of separation that occurs now and then. We encourage all parents to utilize the carline and be patient and respectful of others. The speed limit through the school property is **10 miles per hour**. For the safety of all of our children, please exercise caution and courtesy by patiently waiting, driving slowly and using turn signals to indicate when you are pulling in and out of spaces. We appreciate your thought and care during these busy times of day. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask a TCH staff person.

### ARRIVAL – INFANT-TODDLER AND PRIMARY 8:20 am- 8:40 a.m. daily

- Once you drive into the driveway from Long Lake Road, wait in the single line of cars until you reach the orange “waiting cone” which is located next to the toddler playground.
- When you are the first car in line at the waiting cone, you may then drive to the area in front of your designated entrance. The entrances are marked with orange cones. Do not pass cars that are stopped at the waiting cone.
- Once you are first in line at the waiting cone, you may drive **slowly** in the left lane to one of the two designated areas. You may carefully and slowly pass cars that are parked at entrances before yours, but **do not pass anyone until you reach the waiting cone**.
- If you enter from Herkner Road, wait at the turn in the drive until you are next in line to pull ahead.
- When it is your turn at your designated area, stay in your car and a staff member will open the passenger door and safely escort your child into the school.
- Extended Day students may exit the car and walk down the sidewalk to the appropriate entrance on their own. Extended-day children may use the elementary entrance independently once they have received a lesson from their teacher on this procedure and once the parent is comfortable with the practice.
- Drivers should exit off Herkner road at this carline.

### ELEMENTARY ARRIVAL – 8:15-8:30 a.m. daily

- Once you drive into the driveway from Long Lake Road, wait in the single line of cars until you reach the curve at the bottom. You may then SLOWLY swoop around the Infant-Toddler and Primary cars and proceed to the elementary drop off area. Drive all the way down to the last cone leaving room behind for more cars. Your child may exit the car independently and enter the building through the west entrance. **Children should always exit the car on the curb side.**

## **JUNIOR HIGH – 7:55 a.m. daily**

- JH students may enter the building through the west entrance.

### **LATE ARRIVALS:**

- If you arrive after carline ends, park your car in the lot, walk in and check in at the front desk. Primary and elementary parents should then escort their children to the door of the classroom and wait outside the classroom door until the guide or assistant greets them. Infant-toddler parents should check in at the front desk and wait there until the guide or assistant from the classroom comes for their child.

**Note:** Extended day, elementary, and junior high students arriving after 8:30 a.m. are considered tardy. If they arrive after 8:30, they must use the main entrance and check in at the front desk prior to going to class.

### **MID-DAY DISMISSAL 12:30**

- Half-day infant-toddler and primary children are dismissed at 12:30 from the infant-toddler and primary entrances. Please pull up to your respective doors and wait in your car for staff to deliver your child to you. Parents are required to buckle their own children into car seats.

### **DISMISSAL AT DAY'S END 3:20-3:40**

- Pull into the line and stop at the waiting cone. A staff person directing traffic will tell you when to move ahead.
- Do not pull around other cars during this carline unless directed by staff.
- If you enter from Herkner Road, wait at the turn in the drive until directed by staff to pull into the line.
- When directed, pull up to your respective door and wait in your car for staff to deliver your child to you.
- Parents are required to buckle their own children into car seats.

### **Notes:**

- Infant-toddler and primary children must be accompanied by an adult when entering or leaving the building. They may not play on the sidewalk or front lawn while waiting for a parent to help them into the car.
- 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. The Children's House policy for absences and tardies is as follows:

## **Absence**

Extended day kindergarten through junior high students are allowed 10 total absences, at which time parents will receive a letter home requesting a meeting with the child's teacher and the Head of School to discuss the issue of attendance. Should four consecutive unexcused or unverified absences occur, parents will also receive a letter requesting a meeting.

Parents of children younger than kindergarten will be contacted should attendance become excessive.

Excused absences include one of the following and are reported within 24 hours of the absence:

1. Illness
2. Recovery from injury or accident
3. Medical appointment
4. Observed religious holiday
5. Death in the immediate family
6. Other prior-authorized absence discussed with child's teacher

Unexcused absences include absences for other reasons which parents report to the school.

Unverified absences are those in which the school is not notified.

If a student exceeds the above guidelines, a meeting with the child's guide and the Head of School will be called to discuss absences.

## **TARDIES**

Late arrivals are disruptive to the flow of the classroom community. Elementary students are considered tardy after 8:30. Arrivals past 8:40 will require the parent to stop at the front desk to check in prior to walking their child to class. Parents and children are asked to wait outside of the classroom door until guide or assistant is able to greet the child in person. Excessive tardies will require a meeting with the child's guide and the Head of School to discuss a plan for on time arrival.

# **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. and 8:00 am-4:00pm in the summer. 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:

- **Compass-** this weekly newsletter is sent every Friday 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.
- **Family 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.
- **Facebook** – “Like” The Children's House Facebook page for links to articles, events and photos.
- **Parent Information Notebooks** - Information notebooks for parents about TCH program specifics are available in the Parent Room. The notebooks include documents that describe school's Health Care Plan, health and safety practices, child care licensing, and curriculum. Questions about the information should be directed to Colleen Christensen.
- **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.
- **Social Media** - TCH aims to maintain a professional relationship with you and your children at all times. To this point, TCH employees may not engage with current TCH students on any social media platform including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

## **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 – WEATHER RELATED

If the Traverse City Area Public Schools (TCAPS) are delayed or closed, The Children's House opens at 9:00 am. If the Northwestern Michigan College campus is closed or delayed, The Children's House is closed. If NMC is not in session, The Children's House follows TCAPS closure schedule.

School closures and delays are posted on [The Children's House web site](#) by 7:00 a.m. including a link to the TCAPS and NMC 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 and snacks: 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 and snacks that meet the USDA 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.

School lunches may be ordered through [orderlunches.com](http://orderlunches.com). Contact the business office for directions on using this ordering system.

**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 unless requested.

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

**Some classrooms are nut-free environments. Speak with the guide to determine if your child's classroom is in this category. Please refrain from sending any nut products in your child's lunch or birthday snack if you are in a nut-free classroom.**

**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.**

## **SNACKS**

Snacks are served twice a day (morning and afternoon). The snack consists of one grain, one fruit/vegetable, and one protein from the following lists. In an effort to use foods as fresh as possible, choices are made according to the foods that are in season.

**Grains:** whole grain breads, granola, whole grain pretzels, whole grain tortillas, granola bars, oat cakes, corn chips, air popped popcorn

**Fruits / Vegetables:** any, bananas, apples, pears, berries, pineapple, mango, grapes, carrots, celery, peppers, broccoli, cauliflower

**Proteins:** bean dips, cream cheese spreads, yoghurt, cheese, eggs

## **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 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.

## **Junior High**

For junior high policies, see page 31.

## **Personal Electronics**

Cell phones, i-pods, and other forms of electronic communication and entertainment are not permitted during the school day. If a student must bring them for after school communication, the device must be turned off and kept in a backpack or locker (Junior High) during the school day and during before and after school programs. If the item is visible or heard while at school, the item will be taken to the Head of School until a parent retrieves it.

Cell phones, i-pods, and other forms of electronic communication and entertainment are not permitted on school outings. On longer trips, cell phones may be permitted for communication with parents only.

## **UPPER ELEMENTARY AND JUNIOR HIGH DRESS CODE**

- No hats in the classroom environments
- All undergarments must be covered
- Tops and dresses need to cover the midriff area of the body
- Pants should be worn at the waist
- Shorts must be of a reasonable length
- If students go swimming, girls must wear one-piece swimming suits
- Students must have a separate pair of indoor and outdoor shoes; both must be closed-toed

## **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.**

## **JUNIOR HIGH CONDUCT POLICIES**

### **Dress Code**

- See above: *Upper Elementary and Junior High Dress Code, page 29*

### **Use of Technology**

- See above: *Personal Electronics, page 29*

### **Academic Integrity**

- We are a community of scholars. We strive to do our individual best work and to encourage others to achieve their best as well. We value and expect honesty and integrity from all students, staff, and faculty. All student work must be his or her own; plagiarism will not be tolerated.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Students enrolled in extended day through junior high 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 required. Overnight trips require additional permission signatures. 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. Advanced notice about the trip is sent to parents and a signed permission form is required for each trip.

### **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. A signed permission form is required for overnight 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 last approximately 8 weeks.

### **Elementary and Junior High Going Out**

Elementary students independently plan times when they go out and explore the community around them, known as "Going-Out". The children develop responsibility and independence as well as glean new knowledge about a subject of specific interest to them by participating in these experiences. Parents are notified a day prior to the Going Out and must sign a permission form.

### **Fees**

Most field trips, camping trips, and lessons are covered by the student activity fee charged on the tuition agreement. The sixth year trip to MMUN and the Junior High spring trip may require additional charges to the families.

## **15) HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **STUDENT FORMS**

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

The items below need to be completed through **TCH On-Line** which is accessed via a link on TCH home page. <http://traversechildrenshouse.org/>



- **Household information** – including basic contact information, emergency contact, related medical information, people other than parents who are authorized to pick up the child
- **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. Please notify the school if you would like to receive these notices and we will attach the form to your family profile on TCH On-Line.
- **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.
- **Junior High Tool Use Waiver**
- **Statement of Good Health** – This form is used for students from five years old through eighth grade.

A **health form** signed by a physician for children younger than five years old must be completed before the child’s first day of school. The form is mailed to the family and can also be found at:  
<http://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/forms.asp>

A complete **immunization record** is required for each student. (See policy below.)

## IMMUNIZATION POLICY

Written with the consultation of Dr. Robert Sprunk, pediatrician, Grand Traverse Children’s Clinic and Dr. Joan Griner, dermatologist, Associates in Dermatology of Traverse City

### Rationale:

- The protection of the children’s good health and safety is among the top priorities of TCH mission.
- TCH is a school community that includes children as young as three months old. It is a community that promotes interaction between children of all ages for a multitude of reasons.
- School practices and policies ensure that safeguards are in place for the multiage interactions.

- With the advice of respected physicians in the Grand Traverse area, TCH bases its immunization policy on best practice as opposed to simply meeting state standards.

Policy:

- TCH has a goal of 95% fully immunized students.
- Beginning January 1, 2015, new students (including siblings of current students) must have proof of up-to-date immunizations.
- Waivers for new students will be limited to approved medical waivers.
- Current students with waivers classified as religious or other will be grandfathered in and allowed to re-enroll. However, TCH reserves the right to discontinue this practice of grandfathering.
- Students who are grandfathered in are required to have their waivers certified by the Health Department before school begins.
- TCH reserves the right to decline admission or re-enrollment to any child who is not fully immunized.
- TCH reserves the right, during outbreaks of illness, to exclude from the school any child who has not been fully immunized. In such cases there will be no refund or adjustment of tuition.
- Enrolled children are required to keep their immunizations up-to-date in order to remain at the school.
- In addition to the above, each child at TCH must be in compliance with the requirements of state law and regulation concerning immunizations.
- All employees of TCH are required to be fully immunized.
- Waivers for employees will be limited to approved medical waivers.
- TCH reserves the right to decline employment to, or terminate the employment of, any person who is not fully immunized.
- For children “fully immunized” means, at a minimum, that the child has received the immunizations required by state law and regulation for attendance at public schools. In addition, TCH may add immunizations required for “full immunization” in consultation with the school’s physician advisers.
- For employees “fully immunized” means that the employee has been immunized against all diseases for which any child at TCH is required to be immunized, but excluding vaccinations which are not recommended for adults by the Center for Disease Control.

**EARTH TO TABLE PROGRAM**

Purpose: To encourage The Children’s House community to move, grow and eat well

Components: Physical Education, Della Terra, Kitchen Classroom

**Physical Education**

Every student should be provided with the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to participate in physical activities that assist in maintaining physical fitness and promote a healthy lifestyle.

TCH's comprehensive physical activity program includes: physical education, recess, and after-school physical activity programs.

During physical education, students practice motor skills needed to perform a variety of physical activities. Students develop knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity.

### Goals

- Students will participate in daily developmentally appropriate physical education class totaling a minimum of 150 minutes per week
- Students will be provided with a minimum 30 minutes unstructured recess time to engage in physical activity
- Information for opportunities for extra-curricular physical activities are provided to families throughout the year
- TCH does not withhold physical activity as a form of punishment

### Della Terra

Children's House students are provided with the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to practice good nutrition and environmental stewardship in their everyday life. Della Terra is a practical outdoor laboratory where lessons in applied math, science, and horticulture are used to actively engage the student in learning and reinforce lessons from the classroom.

All students have the opportunity to work in the TCH campus gardens and/or greenhouse through the Della Terra program.

The Della Terra program includes: weekly instruction in school greenhouse and production gardens and "Farmer of the Month" program

During Della Terra, students perform a variety of tasks including (but not limited to) garden planning, seed starting, seed sowing, planting bulbs, transplanting, weeding, making/spreading compost and organic fertilizer, and harvesting crops.

### Goals

- Student participation in Della Terra for 450-900 minutes per year
- Bi-annual campus work-bees will provide additional opportunities for students to participate in gardening activities and campus beautification.
- Introduce topics such as organic agricultural practices, invasive species identification and weed eradication, soil science, composting and vermiculture, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), beneficial insects, and special topics
- Nutrition will be taught actively through hands-on participation “in the field” and through the “Farmer of the Month” program.
- Students will also be encouraged to engage in planning new garden projects as time and budget permit

### **Kitchen Classroom and Nutrition Education**

Kitchen Classroom provides TCH students with experiences that promote the acquisition of general food preparation skills, familiarity with a variety of whole foods, making healthy choices for their bodies and their environment as well as an understanding of the social and cultural component of preparing, serving, and sharing food.

Kitchen Classroom includes an extended day program, an elementary program, lunch and snack program, as well as collaborative projects with Della Terra and Physical Education.

Students prepare, sample and share food with the school community. Students learn safe food practices, nutrition, and cooking skills.

### **Goals**

- Students will participate in a minimum of 800 minutes of Kitchen Classroom annually with additional special project and open ended kitchen opportunities
- Students will learn the technical skills required to prepare a variety of food including vocabulary and measurement required to successfully read and produce a recipe
- Students will gain familiarity with whole foods (fruits, vegetables, grains) and their health benefits through touching, tasting, preparing and sharing meals and snacks
- Students will learn how to plan for a well balanced meal that keeps their body and environment healthy
- Students will learn the role food plays in culture by exploring foods from other cultures as well as sharing the food they have prepared with members of their own community
- When appropriate, nutrition education will be integrated into other subject areas of the curriculum including but not limited to Physical Education and cultural studies

## **Snacks and Lunch**

TCH School provided snacks and lunch will aim for the highest nutritional standards possible incorporating home made, whole, locally grown food as available.

Minimum time allowance (eating time for each student after being served the meal) for student consumption of meals will be ten minutes for snack and twenty minutes for lunch.

TCH will not serve nut or nut products in any of the foods that it serves to students.

## **Celebrations**

TCH requires parents to bring healthy, nut-free, and low or no sugar foods for birthday and holiday celebrations. A list of healthy recipe ideas is available in the wellness section of the school's website.

## **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**

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.

**Parents are required to report a communicable disease to the school as soon as it is diagnosed. The school is required to report all communicable diseases to the Grand Traverse Health Department.**

## **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.

## **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.

## **SUNSCREEN**

Please apply sunscreen to your children in the morning before they come to school. With your permission, TCH staff will re-apply sunscreen to the children before they go outdoors to play mid-day and after school. Many of you have provided your own preferred brands of sunscreen for us to use on your children. If you provide your own brand, please boldly label it with your child's name. TCH has a supply of 30 SPF on hand to use on your child if you do not provide your own. Please know that we are careful about sun exposure for your children and have provided shade cloths and shade trees on the playgrounds for relief from the sun. We recommend that you send protective clothing for your child to wear outdoors (e.g., hats, UV sun protective clothing).

## **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 mats with sheets provided by us. Children are welcome to bring their own blankets although extras are available at school. Nap 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 30 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.

### **GUN POLICY**

Guns are prohibited in the school or on school premises.

### **PEST MANAGEMENT**

As part of the Montessori Children's House pest management system, it may be necessary to occasionally apply a pesticide. You have the right to be informed prior to any pesticide application made to the school grounds and buildings.

Advance notice of applications will be posted at the entrance to the school and posted on the school's web site. You are also entitled to receive notification by first-class mail three days prior to the application. If you would like advance notification by mail, please use this link for the necessary form [http://traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/pest\\_management\\_form.pdf](http://traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/pest_management_form.pdf)

which should be completed and submitted to the business office.

In the case of an emergency, pesticides may be applied without prior notice. Those parents who request notification will be notified of the emergency application after it occurs.

You may contact Colleen Christensen with questions regarding this topic.