

# Welcome to the Iris Community

Welcome to a new year! The fall is always a time of change as children move up from the young children's community to primary, reach important milestones, or finally become kindergarteners. This year is no exception, especially as we welcome several new families to our community. I ask that we keep communication open, honest, and frequent as we navigate this transition together.

This year, your child will reach new levels of independence, develop their ability to concentrate, refine their senses, and coordinate their movements. Please know that I feel honored to observe and support your child's developmental milestones.

This document includes important logistical details about our class. Many of you will notice that most of the guidelines in this letter have not changed from previous years.

## Observations

Observation is available after the first six weeks of school. You'll be invited to observe by the two-way window or from the observation chair inside our classroom. If invited to observe inside the classroom, we ask that you be a "fly on the wall" to get the most accurate picture of your child's day. Please consult me if you are unsure which type of observation makes the most sense for your child. I am always happy to discuss any questions from your observation after school. Reach out to Renee beforehand so we can ensure another family is not scheduled.

## Snack

Children at TCH enjoy a school-provided snack. Our school is very committed to healthy living and will provide fresh fruits, veggies, lean proteins, and whole grains as snack options, using local, organic ingredients whenever possible. As always, much of the preparation will be done by the children in the classroom. We will do specific tastings and culinary experiments outside normal, everyday snacks.

# Volunteering

Our classroom community works to affirm everyone's unique identity. We look forward to celebrating our similarities and differences by hearing from you, the experts! Please let our room parents, Katie Short and Claire Olio, know if you have traditions, hobbies, or interests to share.

We ask that each family sign up to bring flowers for our flower arranging work twice a year. There are also monthly slots to make and bring playdough for our art shelf. We will be sending out a sign-up in the coming weeks!

# Lunch

- The school lunch program is wonderful. I encourage you, without reservation, to check the calendar on the website and select your choices. You will not be disappointed.
- If you pack your child a lunch, we will supply cloth napkins, placemats, and plates. Children with home or school lunch will be offered a choice of water or milk to drink.
- Our refrigerator is very small, so we ask that you include an ice pack in their lunchbox if they have perishable food items. Please pack their warm food in a thermos as we are not able to heat food in our classroom.
- *Please save sweet treats for after school and avoid sending candy, chocolate, and other desserts in your child's lunch.*
- *We are a green school and appreciate your effort to avoid sending in yogurt or applesauce pouches and tubes that cannot be recycled. We will continue to invite children to put yogurt and applesauce in small bowls to practice using utensils at the table.*

# Personal Belongings

- Please label all of your child's personal belongings. This aids our efforts in helping them keep track of their things and minimizing "lost and found" items.
- If your child has something from home that they would like to share with their classmates, they are welcome to tell me in the morning and share the item when we gather as a group. Please limit items to these categories: something from nature, photographs, something they have

made, or something from a different culture. **Please encourage your child to keep toys at home.**

# Supplies

**Please supply your child with these items to leave at school:**

- One pair of indoor sneakers with non-marking soles that your child can put on *independently* (Please refrain from lights, bells, or whistles).
- Two full sets of seasonally appropriate outfits, each packed in a medium-sized wet bag.
- Rain gear (a suit or pants/jacket) and rain boots.
- One large wet bag for muddy/wet outdoor gear.
- Sunscreen if you prefer. We use a specific brand.

**Items that will travel back and forth daily:**

- Backpack (large enough to carry their lunch box and water bottle).
- Water bottle (to be washed and returned with fresh water daily).

# Birthday Celebration and Snack

Your child will be invited to have a special birthday celebration with their classmates during the school year. Summer birthdays will be celebrated on their half birthday. You will be invited to join us in the classroom for the special gathering this year. I will reach out to you before your child's birthday to choose a date and email you with the details.

Many children also enjoy bringing a snack to their celebration. You may send your child a low or no-sugar birthday snack to share with their class. Please save cookies, cupcakes, and other sugary snacks for their celebrations at home. I have many ideas for delicious, healthy birthday snacks. If you would like some suggestions, please ask. Teaching the children about healthy food choices is part of our curriculum. I appreciate your help in this effort.

# Drop off and Pickup

- If someone other than you will pick up your child, their name must be on the approved list of adult drivers on your child's account in our

database, or the child must have a signed note from a parent or guardian. We will check the ID of everyone we do not recognize. I appreciate your patience with this safety precaution.

- If you arrive at school after 8:40, wait at the front desk with your child. The front desk will call our classroom, and an adult from the classroom will walk your child to our classroom. Thank you for assisting in limiting classroom disruptions in the morning.
- If you need to pick your child up early for an appointment or any other reason, check in at the front desk and then come down to the classroom. Wait outside the door until an adult from the classroom comes to check in with you. We will walk your child to the door to greet you.
- If you know your child will be tardy, please email me beforehand so we can plan lunch.

## Teacher Availability

The support system we create for your child will be strongest when we are on the same page. The more we know, the better we can provide for your child's needs and interests. Please never hesitate to contact me. Kindly keep in mind the school's policy prohibits texting between teachers and parents.

School Phone: (231) 929 - 9325 (Extension 137)

Personal Phone: (864) 640-7660

Email: [Kristi@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:Kristi@traversechildrenshouse.org)

Office hours: Wednesdays (1:15- 2:45 PM)

## How to Contact Me:

- To relay an immediate message, please call the front desk.
- Email is a great option for quick, non-urgent messages or to set up a time to meet. I will check e-mails every morning until 8:00 AM as well as after school until 5:00 PM. I will respond to all email inquiries within 24 hours.
- Set up an in-person, Zoom, or phone meeting

Cheers to a new year!

**Kristi Johnson**