

Welcome Parents,

As we begin this 2021–2022 school year, we celebrate being able to be together again in person. Last year provided ample opportunity to determine how to keep ourselves and each other safe, so we can focus on learning and growing during our time together. Katelin and I fully embrace the privilege and responsibility of being with your children each day and of guiding them as they develop into the amazing human beings they are meant to be.

ONGOING COMMUNICATION

Although some of what this year has to offer is set forth below, this list is not exhaustive. Please contact me should you have any questions at karin@traversechildrenshouse.org. I will do my best to respond to your inquiries within 24 hours. Should you need to contact your child or me during the school day, please call the front desk **(231) 929-9325** for assistance.

Clear and open communication among parents, children and teachers is vital for the success of our community. I will correspond regularly with you about your children's progress and invite you to meet should any concerns arise. To develop independence and accountability, however, I may ask your child to communicate information directly to you either by phone or in person. I will follow up with an email or call to ensure the necessary communication has taken place.

Classroom Highlights are another way for us to share a snapshot from our days in the classroom with you all at home. They will be emailed and then posted on our Classroom Page every other Friday.

SAFETY & WELLBEING

Your children's safety is of utmost importance to us. Although upper elementary children are granted many more freedoms than younger children, our primary concern is to always keep them safe, physically and emotionally. In this regard, please let us know either in person or in writing if someone other than you will be picking them up. If you need to pick them up during the school day, we can escort your child to the front desk and you can pick them up at the main entrance to the school.

Another important aspect of creating and maintaining an environment in which all children feel safe, emotionally, physically and intellectually, is the Anti-Bias Anti-Racism learning we will do together. Issues of equity and justice will be explored in many ways throughout the year, such as when they arise in our community, in read-aloud books, in current events, or in MMUN topics.

WORK

School is your children's work. We expect them to arrive on time and be well rested and prepared. Because their work is important, we ask that you make your best effort to schedule appointments before or after school. We also look forward to working with them on TCAPS "snow days"; so, unless it is unsafe, we expect them to come to work in accordance with the TCH inclement weather policy. Finally, because so much of your children's work is collaborative and group lessons are the norm, advance notice of vacations or other time away from school is greatly appreciated and allows us to plan accordingly. This year it is also required by our COVID-19 plan.

Our **work cycle begins at 8:20**. Please take this start time into consideration when planning your days. Early care is offered from 7:30–8:00, and the children have an opportunity to play outside or in the gym until 8:15. After a brief meeting, our work cycle begins with P.E.

With the possible exception of the 6th years' UN work, we do not anticipate sending homework home with your children. They have sufficient time to complete their responsibilities

during the workday. However, we do expect them to continue learning and engaging in “**work at home**”. It is essential for their development to contribute productively to your family’s daily activities, whether they walk the dog, care for a sibling, help prepare dinner or wash the dishes. Last, but certainly not least, we ask that you set aside ample time for **reading every night**.

Should events arise that require us to conduct school online, we have planned for such an occurrence and will continue to support your children’s learning remotely. After a day of transition and a parent information meeting, we will resume our days learning together, supported by Zoom and Google Classroom.

SPANISH, ART, MUSIC, DELLA TERRA, KITCHEN CLASSROOM, READING

Our children have an opportunity to enrich their learning experiences through their work with **Señora Melissa Waterstripe** for Spanish, **Alison Hoffman** for Art, **Angela Aleo** for Music, **DiAnn Service** for Della Terra and reading support, and **Brenda Lijewski and Todd Warnke** for Earth to Table and Kitchen Classroom. Your children will have several opportunities to spend portions of their work cycles in Kitchen Classroom and Della Terra throughout the school year. Formal instruction in Spanish, Music and Art will take place on a weekly basis.

THEATRE

It is a TCH tradition to provide a theatre workshop in the spring. This year may look a little different, and we will inform you of decisions we make regarding this important experience as soon as they are available. Rest assured, this art form will be fostered in our classroom throughout the entire year.

GOING OUT AND CLASS EXCURSIONS

One of the many aspects that make a Montessori education unique is the opportunity for your children to pursue their interests and deepen their understanding of a topic outside of the classroom. This is an extremely important component of their learning, and, although we may need to make health and safety adjustments, we welcome your participation as a resource (e.g., hosting a student visitor at work, sharing a hobby, presenting a specialty to the class, or giving an interview). As we navigate our current situation, we will make case-by-case decisions on how best to implement this important part of our curriculum.

SIXTH YEAR BUSINESS AND MMUN

Our 11th group of delegates will participate in Montessori Model United Nations this coming spring. Whether online or in-person, we will make this experience special for our delegates and support their ability to fund a portion of their adventure by establishing a small business.

Participation in MMUN is an emotional and intellectual commitment, so we will do our best to support your children in understanding real world issues and in developing solutions for the same. Your support is essential in helping them build their comfort level with their new knowledge and express their solutions with confidence.

HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

As your children enter their next stage of development, our goal is to prepare them as much as possible. We will provide a safe and comfortable forum in which to discuss how their bodies are changing as they approach puberty and the practical aspects of dealing with these changes and addressing related peer and societal pressures. **Carrie Ullery-Smith**, the Education Specialist of Planned Parenthood of West and Northern Michigan, masterfully facilitates these conversations with the support of a TCH representative.