



THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE

## 2021-2022 Family 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 Family Handbook is not intended to create a contract.*

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

# Table of Contents

- 1. Welcome from the Head of School, p. 4**
- 2. School Events and Descriptions, p. 5**
- 3. Contact Information, p. 6**
  - School Contact Information
  - Administration and Faculty
- 4. Faculty and Staff Information, p. 7**
  - Training and Background Checks
  - Administration Roles
- 5. School Overview, p. 9**
  - School Philosophy and Mission
  - School History
  - Structure and Affiliation
  - Board of Directors
  - The Montessori Method
  - Montessori History
- 6. Family Involvement, p. 11**
  - CHiPA
  - Room Parents
  - Community Events
  - Fundraising and Events
  - Volunteer Guidelines
  - Parent Education
  - Observations
- 7. Transitions and Classroom Placements, p. 12**
  - Nido
  - Young Children's Community (YCC)
  - Primary
  - Kindergarten
  - New to Class
  - Elementary
  - Lower Elementary
  - Upper Elementary
  - Junior High
- 8. Additional Programs, p. 13**
  - Early Care
  - Friend's Club
  - Summer Programs
  - Typical Daily Routines
  - Spring Break Childcare Week
- 9. Admission Policies and Procedures, p. 14**
  - Process
  - Class Placement

Non-Discrimination Policy  
Required Minimum Student Schedule

**10. Tuition Policies, p. 15**

Billing Policies  
Tuition Assistance and Co-op Process  
Withdrawals and Dismissals

**11. Getting to and from School, p. 17**

Arrivals and Dismissals (including carline instructions)  
Attendance

**12. Communication between Home & School, p. 19**

Office Hours  
Communication from School  
    Website, Google Family Calendar  
    Compass  
    Home Folders (elementary)  
    E-mails  
    Conferences  
    Social Media  
    Licensing Notebook  
Contacting Your Child's Teacher

**13. School Closings (due to weather), p. 20**

**14. Classroom Life, p. 20**

Birthday Celebrations  
Nutrition Information  
Clothing  
Dress Code  
What to Bring / What to Leave at Home  
Personal Electronics  
Holidays, Celebrations, and Traditions  
Student Conduct and Discipline Policy  
Field Trips

**15. Health and Safety, p. 24**

Student Forms  
Immunization Policy  
Wellness Policy and *Earth to Table* Program  
Illness Information  
    Illness Policy  
    Allergies and Health Concerns  
    Medications  
    Sunscreen  
    Medical Emergencies  
Nap/Rest Provisions  
Transportation To and From School  
Safety Drills and Gun Policy  
Direct Links to School Forms, Policies, and Procedures



## THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE

Dear Families,

Our Family Handbook is designed to provide you with all of the information you need for a successful 2021-2022 school year at The Children's House. In order for our partnership with you to work best, we ask that you take the time to read the handbook thoroughly. You can also find the handbook on our website: <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/policies.asp>

This year, we are continuing many of the protocols we put in place last year during the COVID-19 pandemic. You can refer to our protocols on our COVID-19 webpage: <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/covid.asp>

Throughout the year, we expect things to change and evolve based on current conditions of the pandemic in our region. Please keep up to date by reading the weekly Compass and checking our Family Calendar for the most up to date information on school events. <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/familycalendar.asp>

Our communication with you is key to a successful year for the children, you, and the school. Please reach out to us if you have any questions along the way.

Sincerely,

Michele Shane  
Head of School

## 2. SCHOOL EVENTS AND DESCRIPTIONS

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

<https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/familycalendar.asp>

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

Faculty is on campus at least one week prior to the beginning of the school year. The Montessori classroom is an enriched and complex prepared environment requiring a great deal of preparation and maintenance by the teachers. Campus is closed this week each year in order for guides to have ample time to prepare.

### **Student Orientation Day**

On the first Tuesday after Labor Day, students attend school on a shortened schedule for a day of orientation with classmates and their teachers. Children in the Nido and YCC attend on this day according to their regular schedules because of the year-round nature of these programs.

### **Tears and Cheers**

This informal gathering in the community room during the first day of school is a great way to connect and reconnect with parents and guardians. Join us for coffee and treats to celebrate the beginning of the year. Tears and cheers are welcome!

### **School Year Begins**

All students begin their regular schedules, including early care and Friend's Club, on the first Wednesday after Labor Day.

### **Back to School Night**

Required for all TCH parents and guardians to connect as a community. Classroom guides will explain the upcoming year program, expectations, and special events.

### **Classroom Picnics**

These are held in the fall and provide an opportunity to socialize with the other families in their child's classroom.

### **Fall Harvest Festival**

This fall gathering 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.

### **Conferences**

Individual conferences with your child's guide are scheduled in the fall and spring for students in the Young Children's Community through Junior High.

### **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 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.

### **Montessori Up Close**

A series of parent education opportunities including round table discussions, special guest speakers, presentations by our faculty, and meetings for parents and guardians of students moving to a new level in the upcoming school year.

### **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 grandchildren. This is one of the best "feel good" events of the year! Volunteers are needed!

### **Moving Up Night**

A celebration of students moving from one *Plane of Development* up to the next.

### **8<sup>th</sup> Year Graduation**

A ceremony recognizing the accomplishments of our 8<sup>th</sup> year graduates.

### **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 / 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.

### **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**

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

<https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/about.asp>

## **4. FACULTY AND STAFF INFORMATION**

### **FACULTY TRAINING AND BACKGROUND CHECKS**

The Nido, Young Children's Community, Primary, Elementary, and Junior High 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.

Nido and Young Children's Community (YCC): 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 State Police Department (MSP) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Individuals with criminal records are not employed by the school.

A staff member shall not be present in the center if he or she has been convicted of any of the following:

- A listed offense, as defined in section 2 of the sex offenders registration act, 1994 PA 295, MCL 28.722.
- Child abuse or child neglect.
- A felony involving harm or threatened harm to an individual within the 10 years immediately preceding the date of hire.

Background screenings are completed in the following manner:

- MSP and FBI background check using live scan fingerprinting to screen for the following:
  - a review of the licensing database of individuals with previous disciplinary action within a child care center, group child care home, family child care home, or an adult foster care facility;
  - a search of the individual through the national and state sex offender registries;
  - a search of the individual through all state criminal registries or repositories for any states of residence in the past five years;
  - a request that the Department of State Police perform a criminal history check on the individual; and
  - a search of the child abuse and neglect registry for Michigan and any states of residence for the past five years.

All staff must have a tuberculosis test (negative) on file at the school. Employees must be "fully immunized" which 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.

Training for staff on school policies and procedures occurs in the fall, one week prior to the beginning of the school year and again in the summer, one week prior to the summer program. Staff joining the school mid-year

receive training from the Director of Operations, Director of Finance, and a senior staff member. Teachers and the Head of School meet weekly throughout the year to review procedures, handle new and old business, and schedule events. Monthly philosophical and informational meetings are held with the entire faculty.

Faculty members are offered 3 professional days per school year to use for professional development. All classroom personnel complete 16 clock hours of training each year in the field of child development, education, and related subjects. Nido and YCC staff receive training in *Safe Sleep and Shaken Baby Syndrome*.

Infant/Child/Adult CPR, AED, epi-pen, and first aid training are provided every two years during the fall training week for all classroom guides, the program director, and most classroom personnel. Blood borne pathogen training is completed within 6 months of initial hire.

## **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**

**Kim Gallagher**, Director of Operations, is responsible for the daily operations of the school including human resources management. 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.

**Martin Miklos**, Office Manager, supports human resources, licensing requirements, school-wide logistics, student files and attendance, purchasing, and scheduling. He reports to the Director of Operations.

**Parents**, who work as 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.

### **BUSINESS OFFICE**

**Sheri Novak**, Director of Finance, is responsible for accounting, financial reporting, budgeting, payroll and benefits, cash management, tuition agreements, invoicing, and payment scheduling. She works with the Finance Committee of the board and reports directly to the Head of School.

### **ADVANCEMENT OFFICE**

**Renee Hintz**, Director of Advancement, is responsible for admission and re-enrollment of students, fundraising, and internal and external communication including the school's annual report. She is the point person for CHiPA and Room Parents and reports directly to the Head of School.

**Jenny Terfehr**, Media Coordinator, is responsible for school photography, the Compass weekly parent e-newsletter, and managing the school's social media. She reports to the Director of Advancement.

## 5. SCHOOL OVERVIEW

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

*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 250 children on an 8-acre rural campus on North Long Lake Road just west of Traverse City, Michigan. The current 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. The start of the 2021-22 school year, The Children's House opened a second campus downtown Traverse City to meet the needs of the growing Junior High program.

### **SCHOOL STRUCTURE AND AFFILIATION**

The Children's House is a private, nonprofit, non-sectarian school and childcare center, registered with the Michigan Department of Education and licensed by the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. It is accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS) and by Michigan Montessori Society (MMS). The Children's House relies on 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 AML or AMS Montessori teacher training from reputable training centers.

#### **Board of Directors**

Dan Besselsen, Chair  
Cortney Danbrook, Vice Chair  
Polly Carlton, Treasurer  
Peter Starkel, Secretary  
Mark Bishop  
Julie Boss

Jessie Houghton  
Durkhanai Jan  
David King  
Misha Neidorfler  
Carolyn Purcell

### **THE MONTESSORI METHOD**

The Children's House school community is a campus where, from the front entrance and 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. In this environment, children are free from the constraints of arbitrary time limitations. They are free to learn without feeling the pressure of completing tasks that have predetermined expectations. They are not limited by the abilities of others. They are encouraged to grow to their fullest potential and recognized for their own unique qualities and gifts.

The teacher (guide), carefully observes each child's activity and interest and presents them 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 each 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 female 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 at the University Psychiatric Clinic in Rome. Through intense study, observations, and long days of working with children, she discovered their psychiatric 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 children without psychiatric issues. 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. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

### **CHiPA**

CHiPA is the acronym for Children's House Parent Association. The core purpose of CHiPA is to organize volunteer efforts and engage new and current families into the school community through event planning, outreach, and effective communication. CHiPA meetings are on the first Monday of each month, September through May.

### **Room Parents**

Room Parents are ambassadors of the school. As part of the school leadership team, room parents support the school by participating in the community-building activities that happen throughout the year. The responsibilities of a room parent are to:

- Communicate to families 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 monthly CHiPA meetings

### **COMMUNITY EVENTS**

Meetings of a social, educational, and informative nature are offered to families throughout the school year. A school calendar and weekly newsletter, called the Compass, lists events planned for TCH families. Parents and guardians are always encouraged and welcomed to participate in the life of the school as observers and/or volunteers.

### **FUNDRAISING**

All independent schools rely on fundraising to meet budgetary requirements. While tuition typically covers nearly 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 and staff will support our Bright Futures Fund each year at a level at which they are able. Additionally, there are other fundraising opportunities held throughout each year including:

- Bright Futures Fund
- The Karen Circle
- Shop Your Community Day and Horizon Books Day
- Endowment and Planned Giving
- Grants

## **VOLUNTEERS**

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

Unsupervised parent and guardian volunteers are required to have a background clearance which includes fingerprinting through the Michigan State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (as stated in section 4 – staff background checks) and sign a screening statement regarding past criminal activity. People who volunteer more than 4 hours a week on a regular basis must have a TB test on file with the school. Volunteer drivers must sign a statement regarding compliance with vehicle safety and restraint system requirements, including an agreement to not use a cell phone while transporting children from the school. Their Motor Vehicle record must not have more than 4 points or a D.U. I. in the past 5 years. The school volunteer coordinator provides directions and paperwork for all required screenings.

## **PARENT EDUCATION “Montessori Up Close”**

Throughout the year, there are many ways for parents and guardians to learn more about Montessori education and parenting. We strongly encourage all parents and guardians to participate in these opportunities as they are the best way to strengthen the partnership between the family and the school in creating the best education for the child. Along with fall and spring conferences with teachers, there are speakers, classroom visiting days and more. Information about Montessori Up Close is posted in the Compass.

## **OBSERVATION**

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

### **Nido and YCC Observation**

The Nido and YCC classrooms each have a one-way window where you can see the classroom without your child seeing you. Observing in these designated area offers the best experience for you and the classroom community. Please contact your child's guide with any questions.

### **Primary, Elementary, and Junior High Observation**

We ask that you wait six weeks after the beginning of the school year before coming to observe. 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 to call ahead to schedule an observation in the classroom environment.

## **7. TRANSITIONS / CLASSROOM PLACEMENTS**

### **NIDO**

The Nido is designed for the developmental needs of children 3 months to approximately 16 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.

### **YOUNG CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY**

The YCC welcomes children approximately 16 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 curricular cycle for 3 to 6 year old children. 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.

Kindergarten is the capstone year of the Primary cycle. During this year, the child has additional privileges and responsibilities as they are the oldest members of their classroom community.

## **NEW TO CLASS**

Children who are new to a Nido, YCC, or Primary classroom, receive a home visit from their guide. Accompanied by their parent or guardian, new students also have an individual classroom visit to become familiarized with the environment and meet support staff.

## **ELEMENTARY PROGRAM**

The Elementary Program is organized into two 3-year cycles. **Lower-Elementary** includes 1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students and **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, and Spanish. Kitchen Classroom and Della Terra (gardening and botany) are also experienced.

## **JUNIOR HIGH (7th and 8th grades)**

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

# **8. ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS**

## **EARLY CARE**

The Children's House opens at 7:30 a.m. for early care. For Early Care rates, please contact the Business Office. Parents and guardians walk their children in to school to these locations:

- Nido: starts in their classroom
- Young Children's Community: starts in the YCC South classroom
- Primary: starts in the Primary East classroom
  - At 8:15 a.m., Primary students join their own classrooms.
- Elementary: starts in the Barn. These children do not need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

## **FRIEND'S CLUB**

After school care (Friend's Club) at The Children's House begins at 3:20 p.m. and ends at 5:30 p.m. 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 advancement office. For primary and elementary drop-in Friend's Club, please register your child through <https://childrenshouse.boonli.com/login>. Please call the business office with questions about child care sign up.

## **SUMMER PROGRAMS**

Programs are offered for 10-weeks during summer break. The school is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The week after the school year ends and the week before the school year starts in the fall are closed while staff participate in training and classroom preparation.

During the summer, the Nido and Young Children's Community provide a continuation of the school year program. The staffing and environment are consistent. A seven-week minimum enrollment commitment is required for this age group. New infants and toddlers who join in the summer are expected to continue in the fall program.

Primary classes offer summer Montessori classrooms with flexible scheduling. The summer Primary class is open to current students, alumni, or children who have been enrolled in a Montessori program at another school.

Lower Elementary students choose from a variety of theme-based classes offered weekly. Students may enroll for the whole summer or choose specific weeks. Upper Elementary students participate in excursions to local parks Monday through Thursday with on-campus activities on Fridays. Elementary summer classes are open to students from the greater community.

## **TYPICAL DAILY ROUTINES**

For typical schedules, please see the documents for Young Children's Community, Primary, Elementary, and Junior High linked on this page: <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/policies.asp>.

## **SPRING BREAK CHILDCARE WEEK**

Care over spring break week is available by reservation only at no additional charge. Parents are asked to inform the school if their child will attend over spring break by March 1.

# **9. ADMISSION POLICIES and PROCEDURES**

## **ADMISSION PROCESS**

The admission process at The Children's House begins with a tour of the school for prospective families. During this tour, parents and guardians 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 online application with a \$50 non-refundable application fee. This step secures the student's place in the applicant pool. Acceptance is based on a family's commitment to Montessori education for their child, space available, and the child's likely long-term attendance at The Children's House. 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.) The letter of intent to enroll serves as a confirmation of admissions as well as schedule. To enroll, families sign and return the letter, provide proof of up-to-date immunizations, and make a \$500 non-refundable enrollment deposit that will be applied to the student's tuition. If not returned by the due date noted on the acceptance letter, the student's classroom placement will be surrendered. Issuing and signing a tuition agreement is the final step in the process.

## **CLASS PLACEMENT**

Classroom placements are based primarily on a balance of gender and age. For details, please consult the class placement process: [https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/class\\_placement\\_process\\_1.pdf](https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/class_placement_process_1.pdf)

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The Children's House does not discriminate in admissions or placement based on gender, race, religion, national or ethnic origin (or any other legally-protected status).

## **REQUIRED MINIMUM STUDENT SCHEDULE**

The Children's House requires a minimum schedule for each program. The purpose of this policy is for academic readiness as well as peer consistency in the classroom. Additional information on this policy may be obtained by contacting Renee Hintz at [renee@traversechildrenshouse.org](mailto:renee@traversechildrenshouse.org).

- **Nido** requires a three-morning minimum schedule.
- **YCC** requires a minimum schedule of Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- **Primary** requires a minimum schedule of Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- **Kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade** requires a Monday through Friday school day schedule.

## 10. TUITION POLICIES

A tuition agreement between the school and the parents or guardians (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.

### **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 billing statements are sent via email at the beginning of each month. The balance is due no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> of that month. Electronic funds transfers will process on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month (or the next business day thereafter). The school-year tuition payment schedule is July through April, with three payment plan options:

- Plan 1: Full payment (less enrollment deposit) due by July 10.
- Plan 2: 50% payment due by July 10 and 50% payment (less enrollment deposit) due by December 10.
- Plan 3: Ten equal payments via electronic funds transfers, July through April, with April's payment reduced by the enrollment deposit.

### **Electronic Funds Transfers (ETFs)**

EFTs are required for families who elect a Plan 3 payment schedule on the tuition agreement. Billing statements allow families to view the amount that will be charged/debited on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. *Please note: From time to time, families may elect to participate in the school's fundraising efforts. These donations may also be paid by EFT for Plan 3 families with the amount debit/charged on the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month after notification of the gift.*

### **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**

A charge of \$20.00 is assessed for all returned checks or electronic funds transfers because of insufficient funds or expired account numbers. Please be sure to notify the business office when your account number has changed 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 Director of Finance at 231-929-9325.

## **TUITION ASSISTANCE**

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. Our desire is that families who are committed to the philosophy and values of The Children's House are able to attend. Because of that, we offer a personalized approach to tuition based on your family's income and expenses, determined through a financial application process administered by FAST. Parents requesting tuition assistance consideration are asked to complete a confidential application.

### **Criteria and priorities used throughout the tuition assistance process:**

- Continue support for families currently receiving assistance for students in their second and third years in-cycle.
- Offer school-year academic programming at Primary, Elementary, and Junior High levels.
- Provide assistance for families already enrolled in the school to stay with the school in the event of changing personal finances.
- Give priority to families who demonstrate TCH community engagement, understands the importance of annual giving, and are committed to the mission.

### **Tuition assistance process**

The Children's House uses an online system to facilitate tuition assistance applications. This program is called "FAST – Financial Aid for Student Tuition." This online service analyzes financial statements provided by each family and provides recommendations to the school. The tuition assistance committee makes final decisions based on these recommendations.

Specific instructions, deadlines, and applications are available during the re-enrollment period through the school's website via the "Tuition Assistance" page at:

[https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/tuition\\_assist.asp](https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/tuition_assist.asp).

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

### **Accepting tuition assistance**

To accept tuition assistance and secure a spot in the class for the following school year, a family must sign and submit the tuition assistance letter and tuition agreement, and submit payment of the non-refundable enrollment deposit by the deadline indicated on the letter. Tuition assistance not accepted by the deadline will be considered forfeited.

## **WORK COOPERATIVES**

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. Work cooperative positions include: front desk, car line assistance, graphic design, video production, and garden maintenance. Work cooperatives are awarded based on the skill set of the applicant with some consideration made for financial need.

## **WITHDRAWALS/DISSMISSALS**

### **Notice of Program Withdrawal**

**Kindergarten, Elementary, or Junior High Programs:** Families are required to notify TCH, in writing, on or before June 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year if their child will not be attending TCH for the upcoming academic year.

If timely notice is not received, parents and guardians shall be liable for full tuition according to the terms of their tuition agreement. In no event shall the non-refundable deposit be returned.

**Nido, YCC, or Primary Program:** Families are required to notify TCH, in writing, on or before June 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year if their child will not be attending TCH during the first semester of the upcoming academic year. Parents or guardians shall notify TCH, in writing, on or before November 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year if their child will not be attending TCH during the second semester of the academic year. In either case, if timely notice is not received, parents or guardians shall be liable for full tuition according to the terms of the tuition agreement. In no event shall the non-refundable deposit be returned.

Parents and guardians shall not have the option to withdraw their child from TCH without financial obligation for a tuition agreement with an effective date later than June 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year in question.

### **Post-Deadline Contract Release Request**

In the event that a family decides to withdraw after June 1<sup>st</sup> and requests to be released from their contract, the request must be submitted in writing to the Board of Directors. The Board will discuss the unique circumstances of the request at the next scheduled board meeting and will call for a vote on a decision. A decision letter is sent to the family.

### **Notice of Student Dismissal**

Dismissal of a student, whether as a result of accident, sickness, disciplinary action (see discipline policy for examples), or any other reason, has a financial and operational impact on TCH. Parents and guardians will not under any such circumstances be relieved or excused from the terms of their tuition agreement.

TCH reserves the right to dismiss students for disciplinary reasons. TCH shall not use this right to discriminate against parents and guardians or their children on the basis of gender, race, religion, national or ethnic origin (or any other legally-protected status).

## **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 adults to utilize the carline and be patient and respectful of others. The speed limit through the school property is **8 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**

#### **Nido, YCC, and Primary 8:20 am – 8:40 a.m. daily**

- Once you enter the driveway from N. 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.
- Kindergarten students may exit the car and walk down the sidewalk to the appropriate entrance on their own. Kindergarteners may use the elementary entrance independently once they have received a lesson from their teacher on this procedure and once the parent or guardian is comfortable with the practice.
- Drivers should exit off Herkner road at this carline.

#### **Elementary 8:00 – 8:15 a.m. daily**

- Once you enter the driveway from N. 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 Nido, YCC, 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 7:45 – 8:00 a.m. daily**

- JH students may enter the building through the Park St. entrance.
- JH students may take the shuttle from TCH to the Park St. campus at 7:45 a.m.

#### **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 and guardians should then escort their children to the door of the classroom and wait outside the classroom door until the guide or assistant greets them. Parents and guardians of infants or toddlers should check in at the front desk and wait there until the guide or assistant from the classroom comes for the child.

**Note:** Kindergarten students arriving after 8:30 a.m. are considered tardy. Elementary students arriving after 8:20 a.m. are considered tardy. Junior High students are considered tardy after 8:00 a.m. If students arrive late, 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 Nido, Young Children’s Community, and Primary children are dismissed at 12:30 from their respective entrances. Please pull up to your designated door and wait in your car for staff to bring your child to you. The driver is 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.
- The driver is required to buckle their own children into car seats.

**Notes:**

- Nido, YCC, and Primary students not yet in Kindergarten must be accompanied by an adult when entering or leaving the building. They may not play on the sidewalk or front lawn while waiting to be picked up.
- 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:

**Absences**

Consistency of attendance is vital to the effective functioning of the classroom community and your child's progress. Kindergarten through Junior High students are allowed 10 total absences, at which time parents or guardians will receive a letter home requesting a meeting with the child's teacher and the Head of School to discuss the issue of attendance. Please report absences prior to or the day of the absence to enable us to keep track of reasons for absences.

**Tardies**

Late arrivals are disruptive to the flow of the classroom community. Elementary students are considered tardy after 8:20. Arrivals past 8:40 will require the parent or guardian to stop at the front desk to check in prior to walking their child to class. Children are asked to wait outside of the classroom door until guide or assistant is able to greet them 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 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. during the school year and from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. 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. <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/compass.asp>
- **Website:** The website is a comprehensive source of information about the school. The Parent Portal has pertinent information including the family calendar, teacher pages, school forms, family directory, spirit wear, lunch and childcare ordering, and more. <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org>
- **Family Google Calendar:** This is the most current source of information for school events and other important dates. [https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/school\\_calendar.asp](https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/school_calendar.asp)
- **Home Folders:** Elementary students carry a home folder to and from school daily. An explanation will be offered to parents and guardians at the opening Back to School meetings.

- **Email and Phone:** 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 and phone extensions with voicemail. You can expect a response to a message within a 24-hour period. For messages with time sensitivity, please call the front desk for messages to be delivered during the school day.
- **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 and Instagram:** “Like” and “Follow” The Children’s House on social media for links to articles, events, and photos. <https://www.facebook.com/TraverseChildrensHouse/>;  
<https://www.instagram.com/thechildrenshousegt/>
  - **Social Media Policy:** 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, Instagram, or Snapchat.
- **Licensing Notebook:** Information about TCH program specifics are available in the Community Room. The notebook includes documents that describe the school’s Health Care Plan, health and safety practices, child care licensing, and curriculum. Questions about the information should be directed to the Director of Operations.
- **Meetings:** Teachers and administrative staff welcome the opportunity to talk with you. Please email or call to schedule a time to meet if you have questions, ideas, thoughts, or concerns.

## CONTACTING YOUR CHILD’S TEACHER

Communication between the school and your family is of utmost importance to us. The teachers will discuss with you the best times and forms of communication throughout the school year. Out of respect for the child, it is our policy to **not** discuss them 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)

### INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

TCH Administration determines school delays and closings with the assistance of our outdoor services provider, Chris Danbrook. Parents and guardians will receive an email by 7:00 a.m. (or earlier if possible) and text via the Remind app notifying them of the delay or closure. The information will also be posted on the school’s website by 7:00 a.m. Please note that TCH will **not** automatically follow the closure policies of TCAPS or NMC.

<https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/policies.asp>

## 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. 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**

We are devoted to enhancing children's health and well-being by offering a nutritious food service program. Our mission is to prepare an appetizing, nutritious, culturally diverse meal for lunch. 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. The school does not serve any foods with nuts or nut products.

School lunch ordering, program information, and monthly menus may be found online:

<https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/boonli.asp>.

Our nutrition policy may be downloaded from our website:

[https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/nutrition\\_policy17\\_ph.pdf](https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/nutrition_policy17_ph.pdf)

## **CLOTHING**

Families receive a supply list at the beginning of the year which includes clothing needed for school. Children in Primary, Elementary, and Junior High 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.

## **DRESS CODE**

The Children's House has created a policy around appearance in an effort to maintain individuality, self-expression, safety and equality on campus and at school events. The dress code is intended to be gender-inclusive, and to offer guidelines to minimize clothing based distractions.

We expect students and faculty members to dress and groom themselves in a manner that shows respect for oneself, for others, and for the process of learning. Standards for dress are based on the need for comfort and self-expression balanced with functionality, and standards for the school environment. Members of The Children's House community dress in clean clothing free of excessive rips and tears. Clothing, including footwear, is appropriate for all school activities, and does not interfere with a person's ability to participate appropriately.

- Clothing should be such that it does not need consistent or excessive attention to keep it in place.
- All articles of clothing must cover undergarments and provide appropriate coverage for all school activities keeping in mind the need to move freely, both inside and outside.
- All clothing must cover mid-section and back.
- Clothing and accessories must not have offensive images or messages, must not promote illegal drugs, marijuana, alcohol, tobacco, weapons or violence.
- Clothing must not degrade any group or community, or present a hazard to self or others.
- Bare or stocking/sock feet are not permitted. Appropriate athletic shoes for the gym are required.
- Eyes and ears must be visible while indoors in the classroom, hallways, specials rooms and in the gym

TCH students can expect that violations of the dress code will be handled in a respectful, private and non-shameful manner. Students who observe what they perceive to be inappropriate dress should talk privately with a staff member in order to express their concerns. When appropriate, students will be encouraged to discuss concerns directly with their peers. Students may be asked by a staff member to change at the time if necessary, or asked to keep particular clothing in question to wear outside of school in the future. Ongoing issues will be addressed individually on a case by case basis. All TCH employees make every effort to consistently implement all policies and procedures fairly.

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

### **YCC 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 and Junior High**

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 or guardians before bringing valuable items to share. Contact the teachers with any questions.

### **Personal Electronics**

Cell phones, iPods, 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 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 or guardian retrieves it. Cell phones, iPods, and other forms of electronic communication and entertainment are not permitted on school outings.

Regarding the use of smart watches and Fitbits during the school day: the priority in our classrooms is enabling students to fully engage in lessons, practice work, and interact with one another. Student use of these devices is permitted up until they become a distraction to your child or the children around them. This will be at the discretion of the child's teacher. If these distractions occur, your child will be asked to put their device in their backpack.

## **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 these holidays from a seasonal, factual, and historical perspective and often enjoy a short celebration of food, song, and artwork.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE POLICY**

### **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 themselves 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.

The student conduct and discipline policy may be downloaded from our website:

[https://www.traversechildrenhouse.org/downloads/discipline\\_policy17.pdf](https://www.traversechildrenhouse.org/downloads/discipline_policy17.pdf)

**FIELD TRIPS**

Students enrolled in Kindergarten through Junior High experience a variety of field trips throughout the year. They are transported in private cars driven by volunteers, in a school van, 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. Volunteer 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 background 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 field trip are sent to parents and guardians approximately 2 weeks in advance.

**Kindergarten Trips**

These field trips occur monthly and include Kindergarten students from all four classes. Advanced notice about the trip is sent to parents and guardians and a signed permission form is required for each trip.

**Elementary and Junior High Camping Trips**

Elementary and Junior High students participate in overnight camping trips. Trip details are provided in advance to parents and guardians. A signed permission form is required for overnight trips.

**Swimming Lessons**

Lower Elementary students take swimming lessons each year at a Traverse City YMCA pool. They are transported by school bus and are accompanied by school employees. The lessons last approximately 6 weeks.

**Elementary and Junior High Going Out**

Elementary and Junior High 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 and guardians are notified two days prior to the Going Out and must sign a permission form.

**Fees**

Most field trips, camping trips, and lessons are covered in the tuition. The sixth-year trip to Montessori Model United Nations and the Junior High spring trip may require additional charges to the families.

## 15. HEALTH AND SAFETY

### STUDENT FORMS AND INFORMATION

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 by parents and guardians through **Family Access** which is accessed via a link in the Parent Portal: <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/parents.asp>

- **Household information** – including basic contact information, emergency contact, related medical information, people other than parents and guardians who are authorized to pick up the child
- **Nutrition Agreement** – indicates agreement to provide a lunch or purchase a school lunch if the child is at school over the lunch hour.
- **Photo and Website Release** – indicates any restrictions for use of their child’s photograph in school publications or other media.
- **Field Trip Permission** – gives permission for children to attend school sponsored field trips. Field trips are offered for children in Kindergarten through Junior High. Details about field trips are available in this handbook. (see table of contents)
- **Sunscreen Permission** – allows school personnel to apply sunscreen to children at school. If you want to send and use your own sunscreen, please complete the “special instruction” section of the form.
- **Pesticide Notification** – gives 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 in Family Access. If you would like advance notification by mail, please complete this form:  
[https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/pest\\_management\\_form\\_1\\_1.pdf](https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/pest_management_form_1_1.pdf)
- **Junior High Tool Use Waiver**
- A **health appraisal 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: [https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/health\\_appraisal\\_813\\_1.pdf](https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/health_appraisal_813_1.pdf)
- **Statement of Good Health** – This form is used for students from five years old through eighth grade.
- **Parent Notification of Licensing Notebook** – All child care centers must maintain a licensing notebook which includes all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans (CAP). The notebook must include all reports issued and CAPs developed on and after May 27, 2010 until the license is closed.
  1. This center maintains a licensing notebook of all licensing inspection reports, special investigation reports and all related corrective action plans.
  2. The notebook is available to parents for review during regular business hours. It is located in the school community room in the administrative wing.
  3. Licensing inspection and special investigation reports from the past two years are available on the Bureau of Children and Adult Licensing website at [www.michigan.gov/michildcare](http://www.michigan.gov/michildcare).

### IMMUNIZATION POLICY

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 and 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. A complete **immunization record** is required for each student to attend TCH. Non-medical waivers are not accepted. The immunization

policy may be downloaded from our website:

[https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/immunization\\_policy.pdf](https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/immunization_policy.pdf)

## **WELLNESS POLICY AND EARTH TO TABLE PROGRAM**

To encourage The Children's House community to move, grow, and eat well, the Earth to Table program was developed to incorporate Physical Education, Della Terra, and Kitchen Classroom into the curriculum at TCH:

[https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/wellness\\_policy\\_2.pdf](https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/wellness_policy_2.pdf)

## **ILLNESS INFORMATION**

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 Children's House is committed to helping children stay healthy and stay in school. The decision to exclude a child from school because of illness involves a conversation between the parents and guardians and staff. The needs of the child and keeping the child at school when possible are priorities.

The following policies and procedures are in place to help facilitate this goal:

- COVID-19 Policy <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/covid.asp>
- Immunization Policy [https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/immunization\\_policy.pdf](https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/immunization_policy.pdf)
- Illness Policy [https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/illness\\_policy2016.pdf](https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/illness_policy2016.pdf)
- Handwashing requirements for staff and students
- High cleaning standards for classroom equipment and building maintenance
- Grace and Courtesy lessons in the classrooms that teach personal hygiene practices
- Annual staff training on health and safety practices

### **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. Complete this form to note specific instructions:

[https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/bcal1243\\_8\\_15\\_fillable\\_2\\_498629\\_7.pdf](https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/downloads/bcal1243_8_15_fillable_2_498629_7.pdf)

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 or guardians will be taken as well. The parents or guardians 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 12:30 p.m. on any given day. We also acknowledge that many of families 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 children in the Young Children's Community nap from approximately 12:30 – 2:45. The staff supervises nap and all children staying past lunch 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 TCH. 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 their designated nap space. 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.

Kindergarten students 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 or email 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 and 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**

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 and managed by the Director of Operations in conjunction with the Department of Homeland Security, Grand Traverse Department of Emergency Services and Traverse City Area Public Schools. Parents and guardians may review a copy of the plan upon request.

Students learn important life skills during all of our safety drills which include fire and wind drills. During the drills, children learn to listen carefully, follow directions, keep quiet, and stay away from dangerous situations. We discuss these concepts prior to all of the drills and reinforce that the staff at TCH are all here to ensure

everyone's safety with solid plans in place to do so. Faculty and staff review and perform lock down drills twice each school year without children present.

A log of school drills and descriptions can be found on the website:

<https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/drills.asp>

## **GUN POLICY**

Guns are prohibited in the school or on school premises.

## **DIRECT LINKS TO SCHOOL FORMS, POLICIES, AND PROCEDURES**

The following school forms, policies, and procedures can be found in the Parent Portal on The Children's House website.

Policies and Procedures: <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/policies.asp>

- Class Placement Process

- Daily Activity Guide - YCC

- Daily Activity Guide - Primary

- Daily Activity Guide before and after school - Elementary

- Employee Screening and Training Procedures

- Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)

- Infant/Child Product recalls (not including toys)

- US Consumer Product Safety Commissions Toy Recalls

- Illness Policy

- Immunization Policy

- Inclement Weather Policy

- Nutrition Policy

- Student Conduct and Discipline Policy

- Wellness Policy

School Forms: <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/fam.asp>

- Health Form

- Medication Form

- Birthday Celebration Form

- Electronic Funds Transfer Authorization Form

- Pest Management Form