

Holy Trinity Christian Day School
"WHERE LOVE AND LEARNING COME TOGETHER"

Family Handbook

Policies and Procedures



2023-2024

WORSHIP, GROW, SERVE

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Holy Trinity Christian Day School is a ministry of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. Additional information about the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be found at www.elca.org

I. WELCOME!

Welcome to Holy Trinity Christian Day School! We are delighted that you have decided to choose our program for your child(ren). Many thanks for the continued support of returning families and a special welcome to our new families. We know that choosing quality child-care that is right for you and your child is never an easy decision. Working in partnership with our families, HTCDS provides a loving environment for your child.

What makes HTCDS stand out are our dedicated staff and supportive parents. Our wonderful teachers develop a special relationship with the children. Our School Board, made up of church members, staff, and parent representatives, provides oversight of the Center. We encourage you to communicate regularly with your child's teachers and to participate in the Day School community by attending field trips, volunteering in the classroom, helping out on workdays, or making a financial donation to support special events.

As a Christian program, we are committed to providing a place where love and learning come together for every child. We offer a Christian environment where the love of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is taught through both words and actions. This Handbook is designed to be a guide to provide you with an understanding of our philosophy, policies, and procedures.

If you are not a member of a worshipping community, we encourage you to visit us on Sunday. Our service time is at 10:30am with Sunday School at 9:15 am for all ages (including adults!)

As the Pastor of the Church and Child Care Center, I look forward to working with you and the staff to ensure each child is given the opportunity to grow into the person God has created. I am eager to be of help with any issues or questions that you may have about our outstanding program. We ask that you keep this handbook in a convenient place and use it as a reference during the school year. It is also available in electronic form on our website: www.htlcdayschool.com

Serving Children in Christ's Name,
Pastor Justina Sergeon

II. HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT

Holy Trinity Christian Day School and After Care is a ministry of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, serving children ages 24 months to 12 years. The School was opened in 1999. Over the years, as the community's needs and demographics changed, so did our Center, growing both in size and adding a School-Age Programs. Today, we are licensed to serve over seventy children in the preschool and the aftercare programs. We are a well-established and respected partner in the Laurel community.

III. THE ORGANIZATION

Mission

Our primary mission is to provide an atmosphere in which a child may grow spiritually, physically, cognitively, morally, and socially, including developing a positive sense of self, feelings of trust and security, and a love for learning and respect for others. The Center is also dedicated to promoting a harmonious diversity and to supporting families by providing consistent, convenient, affordable, and high-quality childcare.

Philosophy

At HTCDS we believe that children have a God-given curiosity and desire to learn. We believe information is not taught in isolation, but rather it is integrated into the daily events and connected to the children's individual and group experiences. We also believe that play is the work of children and that it is through meaningful play experiences that a child's overall development is fostered. Teachers at HTCDS support the children's natural curiosity by providing them with relevant, developmentally appropriate activities, materials and stories which enable them to experiment and create while growing in their awareness of themselves and the world around them.

HTCDS welcomes children of all abilities and offer a balance of child initiated and teacher directed activities reflecting the interests of the children, their primary languages, and their cultural backgrounds. Additionally, we accept families of all races, religions, and nationalities. We also work closely with parents and other health care professionals to include children with disabilities and/or special health care needs.

The School Board

The Board is primarily responsible for setting policies, establishing the budget, and providing for the well-being and success of the Center. All parents are invited to consider being a Parent Rep on the Board. Parents interested in serving on the Board may contact the Board Chair or the Center's Director. Meetings are generally held the fourth Monday of each month.

The Director

The Director is responsible for the daily operations of the Center, oversees the staff, and ensures licensing requirements are fulfilled. She is also responsible for coordinating communications between families and the Center.

The Administrative Assistant

The Administrative Assistant is responsible for all tuition-related needs/questions and maintains the children's files.

The Teaching Staff

Holy Trinity employs a qualified and highly dedicated staff. All staff are certified by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Office of Child Care. All teachers have thorough reference and criminal background checks and each employee undergoes a mandatory 90-day probationary period. All staff is involved in continuing education on a regular basis.

State Licensing

Our center is licensed by MSDE, Child Care Licensing Division, Prince George's County. Their policies and mandates are available in the office and at: www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/regulat The Center undergoes yearly inspections. The results of inspections can be found online at www.CheckCCMD.org

IV. THE PROGRAMS

Provisional Period

Each new student begins enrollment with a 45-day provisional period. At the end of the provisional period, an evaluation will be made by the teacher and Program Coordinator regarding the child's continued enrollment. The purpose of the provisional period is for the Program Coordinator and the

family to observe and mutually agree that HTCDS offers the best possible learning environment for the child to excel.

HTCDS offers several programs. Each program is designed to meet the developmental needs of the children.

Toddler Program: The Busy Bees – 24-36 months

The Toddler Program is open to children 24-36 months old. This program is staffed with a 6:1 student-teacher ratio. Regular reports are available, reporting on the child's eating, sleeping and potty experiences of the day, as well as other pertinent information.

Our goals for children in this program are three-fold:

1. Development of self-help skills including potty training (when ready); feeding.
Putting on own coat, etc.)
2. Development of language skills...expanding vocabulary
3. Development of peer to peer social skills through play

Toilet Training

HTCDS accepts children who are age 2 and not toilet trained. Toilet training is offered as part of the two-year old self-help curriculum. Parents are encouraged to support the staff in the training process and to look for signs of readiness at home.

Curriculum

This program currently is using the Itty Bitty Bookworm curriculum for 2's which you can preview at <http://www.ittybittybookworm.com/?catID=14351>.

Preschool Programs: The Caterpillars (3 yrs.) and The Butterflies (4 yrs./PreK)

The curriculum used is The Investigator Club, which aligns with the core curriculum for school readiness in the State of Maryland. Teachers are encouraged to use their own creativity in preparing and presenting the curriculum content.

The curriculum used in all class's centers around books and themes, making it language rich. Using story, the children widen their world view and learn to relate to one another. Children learn by doing, so we provide firsthand experiences to help them see, hear, smell, touch and feel, to increase understanding. Because of this approach, there are times when learning is teacher directed and other times when it is self-directed, frequently through play.

The primary Christian education curriculum is the Bible itself, provided in an age appropriate format.

Home learning folders are also sent home for parents and children to share together in the work they are doing in the classroom. They are designed to be an opportunity for parents to engage in the educational process with their child. They are also utilized to communicate with parents and send home completed materials.

Assessments

Our staff provides ongoing assessments of the children through observations, collection of work created, conversations with the family, as well as formal assessments done in December and again in May. Parent conferences are scheduled in December and May (if needed).

Placement in Classrooms

Children are placed in a classroom with children their age, following the State of Maryland age cut-off date of September 1. However, several factors other than age may be considered when placing children and moving children to a new classroom. These considerations include the child's level of development, group dynamics, and the attendance schedule.

Transition to a New Classroom

Home to Program- Parents are asked to bring their children with them for when they visit the school. Children may also spend time visiting their new classroom during the week or two before they start to become familiar with the new teachers, children, and routine. A parent must accompany children during these visits. Additionally, we ask parents to provide us with IEPs/IFSPs and/or any other individualized care plans for children with disabilities and special health care needs.

Within Program- Children are typically moved from one classroom to another when transitions take place in the summer following our week-long closing at the end of the school year. Children may be moved at other times during the year if parents and staff agree this is in the child's best interest. The child will spend time visiting the new classroom during the week or two before the move to become familiar with the new teachers, children and routine. Parents are strongly encouraged to arrange a meeting with the teachers in the new classroom for an orientation. A portfolio with information regarding each child's assessment and developmental progress is given to their new teacher before they move to their new classroom.

Program to School- Our Pre-K teachers do an amazing job of preparing our students for Kindergarten by discussing the differences between our school and "big kid" school. We also end our school year with an end of year ceremony where our Pre-K students officially graduate from our program to school.

Cubby

Each child is assigned a cubby. Please place all personal belongings in your child's individual bin, with lunch box above and coat on the hook underneath. Be sure to check this area daily as completed work and forms such as permission slips will be placed in the cubby. A complete change of seasonal clothing should be kept in your child's cubby. If you see that it is empty, please bring in the required articles of clothing the next day of attendance. Teachers are encouraged to report any pertinent information to you by leaving a note in your child's cubby or through email.

Parents are asked to be sure to review all materials contained in the take-home folders.

Newsletters, periodic at-home work, and other important information are handed out via the take-home folders. Folders are to be returned the following day.

School Age Program (Kindergarten – 12 years old)

Kindergarten through 6th grade students enroll in the School-Age program for Before and After School. No per diem for this program. Projects, games, homework support, music, outdoors activities, and sports are offered. A snack is provided. Devotions and prayer are shared daily. Field trips and community service projects are also an important part of the school-age curriculum. A Christmas program is presented to the entire school. Scotchtown Hills is the primary school we support as it provides bus service to and from the Elementary School. Our bus is available to drop off/pick up children from CMIT and Bond Mill Elementary Schools.

NOTE ABOUT HOMEWORK

HTCDS recognizes the demands on the time of the children and families and the dilemma of picking up children from daycare, getting home late, eating dinner, and doing homework. Therefore, to support families, HTCDS will provide a block of time (up to 45mins) for children to begin their homework in an environment conducive to studying. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that the homework is accurate and completed.

Extended Day Program/Public School Closed Days

On days when the Prince George's County schools have an early dismissal or full-day scheduled closings, our School Age children may sign up for extended day care from 6:30 am – 6:00 pm. as long as they have signed up in the notebook, provided at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled closure. For full day care, an additional fee of \$22 is charged. Families who desire only the normal half-day (2-6 pm) services, are not charged an additional fee but must also sign the notebook to indicate participation.

TRINITY KAMPERS: School Age Summer Program

The School-Age Summer Camp is a recreational program with many field trips, including bowling, skating, swimming, and movies. Other activities include arts and crafts and sports. Each week of the summer has a specific theme, and outings and activities are developed for each week accordingly. Each week is a stand-alone session with fees to be paid in full prior to the first day of the session. Registration begins in the spring.

V. TUITION AND PAYMENT POLICIES

Tuition Fees

The tuition fees for full time (5 day/week) students are as follows:

Two-year-old (non-potty-trained 3+): \$255 per week

Three-year-old: \$230 per week

Four/Five-year-old: \$220 per week

A child will be considered fully potty trained when he/she goes two consecutive weeks without an accident in our care.

Per Diem: \$69 (2 yr. old); \$64 for (3 yr. old); \$59 (4 yr. old).

The tuition for before/after care students is (All day school age \$105 per week)
School Age children transported by the Center bus are assessed \$15.00/week.
The tuition for extended day care for school closed days is \$20/day

Your tuition rate and payment plan will be reviewed at the time of your enrollment. Questions should be directed to the Administrative Assistant who handles all tuition accounts. Tuition payments should be made payable to HTCDS and should be placed in the tuition box or they may be paid online at holyltrinitychildcare.org. Please note your child's name on the check or money order.

Payment and Billing Procedures

Tuition is pre-paid. Payment in full is expected by the close of business of the first day of the tuition period (Monday close of business for fulltime students). Accounts in arrears at 9:00 am on the day following the tuition period (for fulltime students Tuesday at 9:00 am) will be assessed a late fee of 10% of the **balance due**.

Tuition is charged for days when the Center is closed due to severe weather, holidays, and emergencies. Tuition is charged if a child is absent due to illness or vacations.

For families who are paid on a cycle different than our tuition cycle, there is the option of signing up for VANCO which is a direct withdrawal program from one's checking/savings account (set up by the school).

If a VANCO withdrawal is refused by the bank, a fee of \$10 will be assess. For the families that set up their own online payments, the payment **MUST** be received on the first day of services or a late fee will apply.

Tuition Receipts

Every two weeks a statement will be given, this serves as a receipt for previous payments. It is the parent's responsibility to review the receipt for accuracy. Thirty days after the receipt is issued, all receipts will be considered accurate and official. If there are questions or an error is detected, contact the Administrative Assistant immediately.

Suspension of Services

Suspension of services occurs when an account is still past due at the time of billing. It is a period of up to two weeks during which the family is given time to bring their account to 0 balance. The child may not attend the program and no tuition fees will be charged. When the account is paid in full, the child may return immediately to the classroom. If the tuition is not paid within the two-week period, the child will be considered withdrawn from the program making his/her space available on a first come/first served basis. A child may return to the program when the tuition is paid **AND** there is a space for him/her.

Absences

Families must pay tuition for scheduled days even if a child is absent, whether it is due to illness or vacation. If you know your child will be absent, please let the teacher and Administrative Assistant know in order to facilitate planning of classroom activities.

OTHER FEES:

Key Card

A deposit of \$20 will be assessed for all key cards. Key cards returned at the end of services, will receive a refund. Cards not returned or returned but not in working order will have the fee forfeited.

Returned check fee

Payments returned from the bank result in a \$33 fee being added to the student's account. Two returned checks will lead to payment acceptance only by money order or VANCO direct withdrawal for the next 6 months. **We do not accept cash for tuition payments.**

Registration/Curriculum & Materials Fee:

All families must pay a non-refundable registration fee of \$100. Each successive year of enrollment a curriculum and materials fee will be assessed at the time of re-registration. It will be \$75 for preschool/\$50 for school age.

Last Week Tuition Deposit Fee

A refundable deposit fee (Last Week Tuition/LWT) equivalent to one week's tuition is required at the time of registration. With a two-week written notice of withdrawal, the deposit is applied to your last week's tuition. If two weeks' written notice regarding withdrawal from the program is not given, the deposit will not be refunded.

DISCOUNTS (Only one Discount per Family) and TUITION SUPPORT

Sibling Discount

We offer discounts for families with more than one child enrolled at our center. The discount is 10% off the child with the lowest tuition rate.

Church Member Discount

Members of Holy Trinity receive a 10% reduction in tuition **if the family remains active with the congregation.** Active means worshipping at least 1/month and volunteering in the church and/or school ministry.

Military Families, Tower Federal and Laurel Hospital Employees

Families in which the parent(s) can demonstrate employment at these businesses will receive a 10% discount on services. Periodic proof of continued employment will be required.

Referral Discount

To thank our wonderful families who refer our program to a family who enrolls and remains in the program at least 3 months, a 50% one-time tuition reduction will be given for a bi-weekly period to the family who referred or recruited the new student. Deposit will be applied to oldest child's tuition. It is responsibility of the referring parent to notify the school of a referral within three months of the referred child's start date.

Scholarships:

HTCDS has limited funds for need-based scholarships. To apply for a scholarship, go to the website (www.holytrinitychildcare.org) for an application or get one from the Center office. Completely fill out the application, including supporting documents as requested. All scholarship applicants are asked to file for Purchase of Care vouchers through DSS as well. Scholarship requests are received at the July Board meeting for the fall term and at the January Board meeting for the spring term. Fall recipients will be asked to update financial information to be reviewed in January. If a student is accepted into the program after the July meeting, a scholarship request may be made and will be reviewed at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. Scholarships are not guaranteed.

Tuition Assistance Programs through the Department of Social Services

The Center accepts Purchase of Care Vouchers. If the tuition subsidy does not cover the full cost of the tuition, the family is required to pay the remaining co-pay of the tuition fee. http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/child_care/subsidy/ccs.htm

Change in Tuition Rates

Tuition fees are reviewed by the Board of Directors each year. A 60-day notice will be given before a change in tuition rate is implemented.

Delinquent Accounts

Students no longer enrolled who have a past due balance will be considered delinquent when no payment has been received on the account for 30 days at which time the account will be forwarded to our collection agency. Accounts with payment plans will not be referred as long as payments are being received. Any associated legal fees will be the responsibility of the parent(s) or legal guardian signing the contract for services.

VI. SPECIAL ITEMS

Birthdays and Holidays

HTCDS recognizes that families have different traditions and practices and believes that diversity enriches our program. We feel that it is important to learn about many cultural traditions and customs and welcome families to share their holiday traditions with us. If you have a project you would like to share, please discuss it with your child's teacher to make sure it is appropriate for young children.

If you would like to provide goodies to share to celebrate your child's birthday, please let the teachers know in advance. We request items be in individual packaging (such as, ice cream cups/ice pops/cupcakes) for easier delivery. Enough must be supplied for all the children in the classroom.

DUE TO SOME CHILDREN HAVING LIFE-THREATENING NUT ALLERGIES, NO NUT PRODUCTS ARE TO BE BROUGHT IN FOR LUNCH AND ALL ITEMS BROUGHT FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS MUST HAVE THE INGREDIENTS LISTED. ALTERNATIVE LUNCH SUGGESTIONS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

Field Trips

Each class participates in multiple field trips throughout the year. Children visit places like pumpkin patches, the fire station, parks, and live theatre. The staff uses either the HTCDC bus or contracts a bus

company to transport children. Occasionally the After Care we will use public transportation. If a parent does not want his/her child to participate in a field trip, the family will be responsible to provide childcare during the period of the trip. No staff will be available to remain behind. Some field trips may require a parent/guardian to accompany their two-year-old.

Car seats are required for children who need them when using the HTCDS bus. If a field trip is occurring, we ask you to leave your child's car seat, labeled with his/her name, at the Center on the day of the trip.

Visiting for Special Events

Parents, other family members and friends are welcome to enrich our program by sharing their interests, talents, or hobbies. This might include telling stories, playing instruments, leading a cooking project, or dancing with our children. Please prearrange visits with your child's teachers. Families and friends are also invited to the Center several times a year for festivals and celebrations. Please be sure to sign in on our visitor sign in log.

If you wish to visit your child during the day, without picking him or her up, please clear that in advance with the teachers in the classroom as this is sometimes a difficult transition for the child.

Technology/Media

We utilize various technologies (tablets/computers/keyboards) to introduce technology to the children and to enhance the curriculum content. Screen time will be curriculum centered, age appropriate, and teacher directed. Screen time will be limited to no more than ½ hour per day. In the spring, this same technology will be introduced in the 2 and 3-year-old classrooms.

A children's media center is located at the school. Children visit the library once a week for the opportunity to check out library books or videos. Media items not returned or returned damaged may be charged to your tuition account to cover replacement costs. Children will not be allowed to have or use any unapproved electronic device during the school day.

Chapel time

Each Wednesday at 10:30am the children have chapel time with Pastor Justina. It is not our goal to convert the children but rather to teach them the stories from the Christian scriptures. Prayers prior to meals and snacks are included daily.

Spanish Language

Bilingual education is encouraged. You will see bilingual words on the classroom walls. We appreciate the leadership of our Spanish-speaking staff in teaching Spanish to the children.

VII. GUIDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINE

The primary goal of discipline is to help children learn how to control their bodies and emotions and to develop appropriate social behaviors. Our approach is preventative and positive. A child will be disciplined, when necessary, by his/her teacher in a caring way with a positive approach – e.g. redirection, time-out followed by a talk with the teacher. If a behavior is repetitive, parents will be notified in writing so that a joint plan can be developed for working with your child.

Discipline is geared to the developmental level of the children. For the youngest children, redirection is the most typical technique. In using redirection, the teacher helps guide the child's energy and attention from a negative behavior or situation to a positive one. The teacher helps the child "problem solve" while avoiding conflict and possible aggression. With younger children who are not yet using language, a teacher who notices two children tugging on the same toy might offer one child another toy or change the focus of both children by singing or starting a new activity.

As children get older, language is used more often to guide children's behavior. Teachers help children label their feelings and teach them to use language rather than inappropriate physical actions. As children reach the age of three, they typically begin to develop an understanding of "cause and effect" and the concept of consequences. Reasonable consequences for inappropriate behavior are used, when necessary.

The following methods are used by staff to prevent and minimize behavioral problems:

- Establishing clear classroom rules and limits.
- Anticipating problems before they happen.
- Redirecting a child's behavior by suggesting a positive alternative.
- Reinforcing positive behavior.
- Ignoring negative behaviors that are not harmful/dangerous if they are being used to attract attention.
- Creating environments appropriate to children's needs and interests.
- Setting clear and consistent expectations regarding behavior.
- Creating predictable routines that help children to feel secure.

The Center believes the following methods are inappropriate. They are NOT here:

- Physical, emotional, or verbal abuse.
- Leaving a child unsupervised.
- Directing a child to face the corner of the room or ordering a child to perform a humiliating task to serve as a model for the other children.
- Group punishment.
- Using food as a reward or punishment.

Consistent and Serious Behavioral Concerns

Serious behavioral difficulties are discussed through parent conferences or as they become an issue. If a child's behavior is consistently challenging, the teachers, Program Coordinator and parent(s)/guardian(s) will work together to understand possible causes for the behavior and to establish a behavior management

plan. If it is determined that the Center is unable to meet a child's needs, the Center reserves the right to ask that the family remove the child from the Center as a last resort. All efforts will be made to work with families.

Repetitive behaviors such as, but not limited to, hitting, kicking, biting, spitting, undressing, and cursing or offensive language are behaviors which may lead to dismissal.

Parent Concerns About Other Children's Behaviors

If you have a concern about the behavior of a child (other than your own), you are encouraged to express your concerns to a teacher or talk with the Director. Parents should not confront a child without permission from that child's parent.

Children with Special Needs

HTCDS makes every effort to include children with differing abilities in our program, in accordance with the 1992 Americans with Disabilities Act. Our staff assesses each child on an individual basis. We are prepared to make reasonable accommodations and carry out adaptations that are readily achievable. The decision to accept a child with a life-threatening illness or disability will be made on a case by case basis. This will be determined based on whether the child may pose an undue risk to others, whether our program setting may pose an undue risk to the child, whether the center has sufficient personnel to meet the needs of the child and a timetable for periodic review of the decision. The child's right to privacy will be respected and personnel will be advised of the child's condition on a need to know basis. The Center, however, may terminate a child's enrollment after attempting to accommodate him/her, if the child's needs require a different type of program. Any expenses for observation and testing incurred will be the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

Biting

Biting is, unfortunately, a behavior that is common in young children. Despite teachers' best efforts to reduce instances where biting may occur, a child may occasionally bite another child. If this happens, the bite will immediately be washed with antiseptic soap and both the biter and the child who has been bitten will be cared for. If your child is bitten, you will be informed of the incident and an Incident Report Form will be filled out. The name of the biter will only be revealed to the biter's parent(s)/guardian(s). If your child bites someone else, you will be notified of the incident.

VIII. GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Hours of Operation

We are licensed to be open from 6:30 am until 6:00 pm. Children arriving by 8 am, who desire, will be served breakfast. We do not receive children after 10:00 am unless prior arrangements for appointments have been communicated to the teacher. Parents must arrive by 6:00pm to pick up your child or a late fee will apply.

Non-Discrimination

Children are enrolled in this program regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin. Children are taught to respect one another's similarities and differences and to recognize the uniqueness of each person

as a child of God.

Calendar

The Center is open 12 months per year, with the exception of the following holidays and special closures:

New Year's Day (January 1)
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (3rd Monday in January)
President's Day (3rd Monday in February) –Teacher In-Service
Good Friday (Friday before Easter) and Easter Monday (Monday after Easter)
Memorial Day (Last Monday in May)
Juneteenth (June 19)
Independence Day (July 4th) (Observe July 5th)
Labor Day (1st Monday in September)
Third Friday in October – MD State Teacher's Convention – Teacher In-Service Day
Thanksgiving Day (4th Thursday in November) and day after (4th Friday in November)
Christmas Break (December 23rd, 24th and 25th)

*****The Center will close at 1:00 pm on the final day of the school year in June*****

Note: Calendar is subject to change.

We are closed the full week prior to the scheduled opening of Prince George's County School. This time is used for professional development, clean up/refreshment and preparation for the upcoming year. FAMILIES WILL NOT BE CHARGED FOR THIS WEEK; HOWEVER, ALTERNATIVE CHILD CARE WILL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH FAMILY.

Babysitting Policy

The Center has no official policy on the use of Center Staff as babysitters for private hire. However, the Center shall not be held responsible for events that occur outside of the school environment, even if those events include staff currently employed by the Center.

Inclement Weather and Emergency Closing Policies

It is difficult to predict the weather. Conditions sometime appear safe in the morning, then worsen during the workday, requiring the Center to close early. If challenging weather is scheduled to occur, please follow the policies below. Every family should have an emergency childcare back up plan in place at the beginning of the school year.

Public School Delayed Opening/Early Closing

ALL programs follow the Prince George's County School's schedule for delayed openings and early closings. For a two-hour delayed opening, we will open at 8:30 am.; for a two-hour early dismissal, we will close at 4:00 pm. Late fees will apply after 4:00.

Inclement Weather Public School Closings

When County Schools are closed for inclement weather, the Center MAY OR MAY NOT BE CLOSED. Plans for the day will be made by 5:30 am and announced via radio/tv/e-mail/school phone message. If our Center is open and the public schools are closed, emergency extended day care is available for school age children at the normal extended day fee rate.

The following procedure will be followed on an emergency closure day.

An e-mail will be sent to everyone in our e-mail bank for closures.

The school and church phone messages (school 301-317-6600 or church 301-725-1666) will be changed to announce the delay/closure. When school closes early for inclement weather a late fee will apply if your child is not picked up by the announced time.

Contact Information

It is essential your contact information (at home/cell/work) is always up to date. It is the parent's responsibility to keep the school informed of contact information changes.

Emergency/Crisis Policy

As required by Maryland State Law, HTCDS has a disaster plan both for sheltering in place and for sheltering off-site. Our off-site locations are Laurel Presbyterian Church and Pallotti Child Care Center (Montgomery St.). In the case of an emergency, families will be contacted by e-mail and phone as soon as we are able.

Arrival and Departure Procedures

When a child enters or leaves the building the parent/guardian is required to sign the child in/out on their mobile device using the QR Code at the sign-in desk. If the individual picking up is not on your emergency form or is on the form but does not have access to ProCare, you must write a note/e-mail your desire for the individual to pick up. The name of the individual must be in the written documentation. Please inform the individual that he/she will be required to produce photo ID (which will be copied) before the child may be released.

Children must be at school no later than 10:00 a.m.

Children must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or an individual listed on the emergency form when entering or leaving the building. Greet your child's teachers and let them know when you have arrived and when you leave. Inform teachers of any pertinent news such as changes in eating or sleeping habits or changes in the home situation. Please hold your child's hand while entering and exiting the building. Do not leave other children in your vehicle while in the building. Do not park alongside the stairwell. This is a fire lane.

School-age children are served breakfast at 7am, and preschoolers are served 8 am.

As parents, you are welcome to spend time in your child's classroom. However, let teachers know in advance of your plans to do so, and please do not disrupt the classroom activities.

Pick-up:

Pick up your child early enough so that you have time to gather their belongings and exit the building by 6:00 p.m. Playing in the classroom after 6:00 p.m., even under parental supervision, is not permitted.

The Center closes at 6:00 p.m. A \$1.00 late fee for each minute, beginning at 6:00 will be charged for children who are left at the Center. The late fee begins to be assessed at 6:00 pm according to the attendance computer. It is assessed at \$1.00/minute of lateness. Siblings who are involved in a late pick up will only be charged one late fee assessment. At 6:15, unless we have received a call from the parent, the staff will attempt to call the parents and then the individuals listed on the student's emergency form.

At 6:00 pm our program is no longer licensed by the State of Maryland and our staff is no longer on payroll. Therefore, lateness is a serious issue. After a parent has been late three times, different pick up arrangements may be asked to be made or for the parents to look for another program better suited to their schedule. Late fees are paid at the time of pick up to the staff person who is present. The adult picking up the child will be asked to sign a Late Pick Up Form and to pay the fees promptly. If you know you will be late, please call the Center to let your child's teacher know. However, the late fee policy still applies.

Late fees not paid within 24 hours will be assessed on the student's tuition bill and will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian for payment.

CHILDREN STILL AT THE CENTER BEYOND 6:30 P.M. If a child is left at the Center beyond 6:30 p.m. and no parents or emergency contact can be reached, the staff will call the Laurel Police. The staff person will stay with the child as long as she/he is able. Families are responsible for the late fee for the entire period the staff person stays with the child. This policy is a last resort. Every effort will be made to make contact with the family, therefore, **it is extremely important that your emergency contact numbers are up to date AND that if you must be late, you contact the office to make them aware of the anticipated time of arrival.** Put the school's number (301-317-6600) in your cell phone! Remember, even with prior notification of lateness, late fees will be assessed beginning at 6:00 pm.

We cannot and will not admit a child with a fever or any symptoms under any circumstances, even with a doctor's note. Admission of a child will be at the discretion of the staff member receiving the child. Even the slightest of symptoms can cause a compromise of your child's and the other children's immune systems so we will be extremely conservative in our decisions.

Sick during the Day?

If your child becomes symptomatic during the day, they will be isolated from the group and you will be called to pick them up immediately. Please be sure that you have a reliable back up person and we have a good number to reach you and them. Your child will not be allowed back until they have been symptom free for the minimum amount of time required by MSDE and cleared by a doctor with documentation. If your child has any health-related issues (runny nose, cough, diarrhea, fever, etc....) Please keep the child home until they have been symptom free for at least 24 hours.

Nap Time

All sheets and blankets are to be taken home weekly to be laundered.

These policies will be updated as required by MSDE.

IX. ENROLLMENT

Eligibility

Children between the ages of 24 months and 12 years are eligible for enrollment. HTCDS accepts families of all races, religions, and nationalities. We also work closely with parents and other health care professionals to include children with disabilities and/or special health care needs.

Procedures for Enrollment

- Make an appointment with the Center for a tour and orientation.
- Visit the Center with your child at least once.
- Fill out all needed paperwork.
- Provide a copy of your child's IFSP/IEP (if applicable)
- Once all enrollment forms are returned and fees paid, you will be notified of your child's placement and start date.
- If a placement is not available immediately, you will be informed and, if you desire, your child's name will be placed on a waiting list.
- Visit the Center before the first day so your child gets to know the program. This also gives staff an opportunity to meet you and your child. Please limit these visits to approximately one-half hour to minimize classroom disruption.

Items Needed to Start School

Upon entering the school, a child needs the following supplies:

- A complete change of clothing (including socks and underwear).
- A small sheet (crib sheet works), blanket and pillow for nap in a plastic bag.
- Pull ups & wipes (if necessary).
- A lunch box with a food thermos if planning to send hot foods (we do not warm up food)

*****ITEMS MUST BE MARKED WITH CHILD'S NAME IN PERMANENT MARKER*****

Please do not send in items that are irreplaceable. The staff cannot be held accountable for any personal belongings of the children.

Items that could pose choking hazard, or toys that depict violence in anyway, should not be brought into the school. Items of this nature will be confiscated by the teacher and returned to the parent/guardian.

Children must be dressed in appropriate clothing for outside and indoor play activities and in a manner appropriate for a Christian school. All clothing should fit properly and be comfortable for playing and activities on the floor. All children should have properly fitting shoes. Clothing should be seasonally appropriate. The Program Coordinator will gladly address any concerns parents may have over what constitutes appropriate clothing.

Waiting List

If your child's name has been placed on a waiting list, you will be notified as soon as a placement opens that

fits your requirements. Once you have paid the registration fee and Last Week Tuition fee, HTCDS can “Hold” a placement for your child for only seven days.

Withdrawal or Reduction of Schedule

To withdraw without forfeiting the last week tuition deposit, a letter to the Director/Program Coordinator/Admin. Assistant must be received two weeks before the withdrawal becomes effective. If a two-week written notice is not given, the family will be billed through the last day of service.

Dismissal from the Center

It is very rare that a child or family is dismissed from the Center because we work hard to both avoid dismissal and to meet the diverse needs of the children and their families. However, in the circumstances described below and with the following process, the Center reserves the right to dismiss children, and their families from the Center, specifically in the situations described below:

- A child’s physical aggression endangers the health and wellbeing of himself/herself, other children or the staff. The dismissal will be effective immediately, with the balance of tuition already paid for that child to be returned promptly to the family.
- Procedures and policies outlined in this Handbook are repeatedly disregarded. If such a determination is made, the family will be given a two-week notice prior to the effective date of the dismissal to afford the family an opportunity to find alternative childcare.
- The program is unable to meet the expectations and needs of the family. Most parents are satisfied with the Center’s services; however, occasionally parents will seek multiple exceptions to the policies in this handbook and/or register complaints at an unusual pace. If such a determination is made, the family will be given two weeks’ notice prior to the effective date of the dismissal, to allow the family an opportunity to find alternative childcare.

X. CHILDREN’S PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Clothing

Children should wear comfortable clothes that they can remove easily for pottyng. Play clothing are best as they are likely to get messy. Weather appropriate clothing should always be provided: hats, gloves, etc. in the winter and shorts in the summer. A change of clothing should be kept in the child’s cubby in case of “emergencies”.

Children must always wear shoes. Sturdy footwear is highly recommended. For their safety, children may not wear shoes in which their toes are exposed.

Lost and Found

If your child is missing an item and it is not there, contact the Center office. Articles left in the lost and found for over one month will be donated to charity or sold at the next yard sale.

Toys from Home

Because toys from home are often difficult to share, easy to lose, and breakable, we ask that children do not bring toys from home to the Center except for show and tell if assigned. If your child has a special item s/he would like to share, please let your child's teacher know. The Center does not allow toys that promote aggressive behavior such as guns, knives, or swords.

Rest Time Items

All children in Preschool need a crib size sheet and a blanket to sleep with at rest time. You may also send a small pillow and any other item that will help your child feel comfortable and relaxed. PLEASE label all items and store in a pillowcase or small bag. Rest time items MUST be taken home at the end of each week to be laundered.

XI. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Building Security

The safety and health of our students is our highest priority. For the safety and security of the children, we have an electronic door system. To access the system, a key card is required (see "other fees"). Tailgating is when one person allows another person behind them access to the building. To assure the children's safety, each person must have a key card to access the door. If the person behind you does not have a key card, please do not hold the door open for them to gain access. If you forget your key card, call 301-317-6600 to be given access by an employee of the Center. If you lose your key card, you MUST have it replaced. Please do not ask another parent to grant you access.

Sick Policy

Before your child's first day, it is important that you have an alternate plan in the event that your child becomes ill. If you keep your child home due to sickness, please call the Center to notify us of his/her absence and the particular illness. If you bring your child to the Center but think that he/she may not be feeling well, please tell the teachers so they can be more alert for any signs of a developing illness. **If your child should become ill during the school day, you will be called to take him/her home.** If you cannot be reached, Center personnel will contact the persons listed on your child's emergency contact form. Your child must be picked up within 1 hour. Until pick-up, your child will be separated from the other children in the Center.

Exclusion Criteria

Children may not attend HTCDS if they have any of the following signs or symptoms:

- Infectious conjunctivitis (pink/red eye with white or yellow eye discharge)
- Fever (over 100 degrees by mouth or ear)
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Persistent cough that interferes with activities
- Sore throat and swollen glands to the point of discomfort and difficulty eating

- Difficulty breathing (e.g. uncontrolled asthma attack)
- Lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, or other signs of possible severe illness
- Contagious rash (chicken pox, impetigo, scabies, ringworm of the scalp)
- Rash with fever or behavior change
- Head lice
- Any illness that prevents the child from participating comfortably in program activities
- Any illness that results in a greater need for care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children

Maryland requires that children may NOT attend the school if they are running a fever of 100.4°F or higher, are vomiting, have diarrhea, or have a rash. Children may not return until **24 hours after these symptoms are no longer occurring** and the child can comfortably participate in program activities or with a note from the child's pediatrician. The program reserves the right to refuse admission to a child who was sent home sick with one of these symptoms the previous day. While the program recognizes this is a hardship on parents, our parents must recognize the risk posed to their child and all the children if this policy is not strictly adhered to.

Medication Administration

Before any medication may be administered, a State-approved medication form must be completed. All medications must be in their original container and labeled with the child's name, date and expiration date. Prescriptions must have a doctor's name as well. Documentation will be made by those administering as to time and amount given. We do not administer over the counter medication.

Immunizations

Your child must be up to date on all immunizations recommended by the Maryland Department of Health. If you do not want your child immunized for a medical or religious reason, you must fill out the appropriate exemption form.

Communicable Disease

The Health Department does not permit children to remain in the Center if they have a communicable disease or symptoms of a communicable disease. Parent(s)/guardian(s) should notify the Center within 24 hours after the child has developed a known or suspected communicable disease. If a child is found to have signs or symptoms of a communicable disease, a notice will be posted throughout the Center indicating the disease and the nature of the illness. The name(s) of the child(ren) will not be provided. All information about communicable diseases is confidential.

First Aid

Teachers administer basic first aid, utilizing soap and water and band aids. At all times, there are staff on site who are CPR and First Aid certified.

Injury while at the Center

An incident report form will be completed which the individual picking up the child will be given to sign with a copy to be kept in your child's file. If your child has a serious injury, we will contact you by

telephone. We routinely contact a parent if a child has a head injury. Please make sure your telephone information is up to date, including your Emergency Pick Up information.

Emergency Procedures

If a child is seriously injured or in need of immediate medical attention, a staff person will call the rescue squad and the child will be taken to the nearest Hospital. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified immediately. Parents are required to pay for the cost of the ambulance and all medical expenses. Staff will not transport children in the case of a medical emergency.

Significant Special Needs and Food Allergies

Parents of any child enrolled or applying to enroll at HTCDS must notify the Center of any medical condition requiring special attention. All information will be transmitted to the child's teacher.

The Center will make every effort to meet the child's special needs. These special needs include any allergies a child may have to certain foods (e.g. peanut butter, milk, eggs).

If an allergy or other special condition exists requiring accommodations, (e.g., administration of an Epi-pen, special feedings, etc.), a medication administration form is required. The Center will make any reasonable accommodation of the child's special needs, consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

HTCDS is a nut-free program. Families are asked to refrain from sending food items containing nuts into the building. Foods containing nuts will be immediately discarded. Appropriate alternatives, such as soy butter, are permitted.

Toilet Learning

There is no magical age at which a child will automatically start to use the toilet independently. Children will use the toilet when they are ready. When a child shows interest, we will support him/her by providing a safe and nurturing environment where he/she can explore the toilet and toileting procedures. Please be sure to talk with your child's teacher about your child's toileting needs. Parents and teachers working together provide for the highest success for the child. Until a child is fully potty trained the parents/guardians are still responsible for bringing pull ups, wipes, ointment etc. If the parents/guardians do not bring all required potty items, we will provide them at a cost to the parent/guardian.

Drugs, Alcohol & Cigarettes

Because we care about the safety of children, if, in our judgment, an individual coming to pick up your child is impaired by drugs or alcohol, the staff person in charge will:

- Inform the person of the observation that he or she appears to be under the influence of drugs/alcohol.
- Ask the person to contact someone else to transport the child.
- Contact the police department if the authorized person insists on transporting the child.

Cigarettes may not be smoked in the Center or on the grounds surrounding the Center. A receptacle is available at the entrance for cigarette butt disposal.

Child Neglect/Abuse Reporting Responsibilities

If there is a suspicion of child neglect or abuse, it is our legal and moral responsibility to report our suspicions to the proper authorities. Children are observed daily for bruises and monitored that their basic needs are being provided for.

XII. FOOD, NUTRITION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Food Provided by Center

The Center provides children with two snacks and a breakfast (if here by 8:00 am) each day. We provide whole grains, fresh fruits and/or vegetables at least four times a week, and we limit fat, sugar, and salt in the food we serve. The breakfast includes a grain such as cereal, French toast or waffles, juice, and milk. Typical snacks include foods such as cheese, crackers, fruit, or vegetables. Menus are posted in the kitchen.

As required by Licensing, we provide all drinks. Milk is served at breakfast and lunch times and milk, apple juice (50% water and 50% juice) or water is served at snack times. Please do not send drinks to school with your child(ren).

Food from Home

Lunch is to be brought in a food thermos, superheated if appropriate. Please do not send foods that require a significant amount of preparation or need to be heated. Young children require nutritious and wholesome foods. Holy Trinity Lutheran Church is a certified Wellness Center, believing that good eating habits last a lifetime. Therefore, we prefer that you send healthy foods in your child's lunch. If you want to include a dessert in your child's lunch, we suggest yogurt, raisins, fruit, or low sugar cookies. Please note that we monitor meals provided from home and supplements as necessary to ensure that children are receiving nutritious, balanced meals.

Reminder: The Center has a no nut policy!

Food is not used as a means to reward or punish children.

Physical Activity

Physical activity is essential for a healthy lifestyle and can prevent a host of diseases in conjunction with eating healthy. According to the Department of Agriculture, physical activity helps control weight, build lean muscle, reduce fat, promote strong bone, muscle, and joint development, and decreases the risk of obesity. Children need 60 minutes of play with moderate to vigorous activity every day to grow up to a healthy weight, and adults need to be active at least 30 minutes a day.

Outdoor play increases children's mental and physical health, and one of the easiest ways for children to get the recommended 60 minutes of play is for them to play outside. Outdoor play reduces stress in children, helps them maintain a healthy weight, and boosts their immunity and bone health. Swimming, picnics in the park, and outdoor concerts are great opportunities to increase outdoor activity.

Weather permitting; the children go outside for recess twice a day. We go out in temperatures as low as

32 degrees and as high as 89 degrees; please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for outdoor play.

XII. FAMILY and CENTER COMMUNICATIONS

We consider a free exchange of information between parents and staff to be critical for the welfare of your child. On an on-going basis, we share information about your child's growth and development and daily activities.

During arrival and pick-up times, the staff is frequently busy with the children, and it is difficult to talk at any length. So that we can have uninterrupted times to talk, we encourage parents to call (301-317-6600), e-mail (htlclaurelmd@gmail.com) to schedule a time to discuss any problems or questions you may have.

It is VITAL for us to have any information that may affect your child and important for you to be aware that all family information is confidential. If there are any changes in family life, jobs or other situations that may be stressful for the child, we need to know in order to give the child extra nurturing and support. The relationship we have with your child will be a special one but will never take the place of your relationship with your child as parents.

We seek to also have a special relationship with you as parents, working together in the support and education of your child.

XIII. PARENT/FAMILY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Communication between families and staff is essential in maintaining a high-quality program. We encourage you to let your child's teacher know which mode of communication is best for your family. Teachers and families may communicate daily, at drop off and pick up times, via the telephone and/or through notes or e-mails. We encourage you to schedule meetings with your child's teaching team at any time during the year.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher communication is an ongoing process; however, twice a year (in January and May (if needed) parents are invited to schedule a formal conference to discuss your child's developmental progress. Please do not wait for a formal conference if you have questions or concerns about your child's daily activities or development.

Back to School Night

Back to school night occurs within the first weeks of school. It is required that one adult be present representing each child/family. At this time staff will be introduced, policies and procedures reviewed, and parents will have an opportunity to meet with their child's teacher and to review the year's curriculum and goals.

Parent and Communication Bulletin Boards

The Center regularly posts notifications about upcoming events, changes in the Center's scheduling, important contact information about the Center, safety issues regarding the community, parent education

opportunities and other relevant information regarding the care of our children. Boards are located at the attendance computer and outside each classroom. Please check the boards regularly.

Special Events

Throughout the year special programs of interest to parents and families will be posted or offered internally. Parents are invited and encouraged to attend whenever possible.

Parent Representation on the Board of Directors

In order for our parents to have input in the visioning and implementation of the Center's program, we have parent representatives on the school board. A parent who would like to be considered for the position should contact the Director. Parent reps help plan fund raisers, outreach activities, teacher appreciation week, and fun events such as the end of the year picnic and Christmas luncheon. Board meetings are generally held the fourth Monday of the month beginning at 7:00 pm.

Newsletter and Email Notices

Our newsletter, Kids Talk, is distributed monthly and contains information about Center events and activities. In addition to the monthly newsletter, emails are used to communicate important announcements. Please make sure that both the office and your classroom teacher have a current email address for communication regarding your child(ren).

Meetings with the Director

The Director is available to meet with you should you have questions or concerns about the program. Please feel free to contact the Director at any time to arrange an appointment. The Director is also available for telephone conferences if you are unable to meet at the Center.

Families as our Partners

Families are encouraged to participate in HTCDS's program in any capacity. Family members may volunteer to spend time in the classroom, to chaperone field trips, or help in the office. Family members are also encouraged to join the School Board, attend board meetings, attend Back to School Night and participate in fundraising and Center-wide events. If you would like to get involved but are not sure how, send an e-mail to htlclaurelmd@gmail.com and we'll get you connected.

Fund-Raising

Periodically, fund-raisers will take place. We ask that you participate to the best of your ability and comfort. All fund-raiser projects will be used for school-related purposes (for example, playground equipment) or contributed to a designated charity which will be identified at the time of the fund raiser. Gambling and raffling are not permitted at the Center.

Donations

We are a nonprofit organization. All donations made to the Center are tax deductible. If you would like to make a donation, please notify us or leave the donation, appropriately marked, in the tuition box. If you would like to donate toys or other materials, please let the Director know. Teachers have ultimate authority to choose which donated toys to keep in the classroom. Previously used stuffed animals cannot

be accepted.

Family Events

Periodically throughout the year HTCDS families and friends are invited to Center-wide celebrations. All special events are announced in the newsletter and posted on the Parent Board. Please join us for these events, which help strengthen the HTCDS community.

School Pictures

We are delighted to be able to provide the opportunity for school photos in the fall and again in the spring. Siblings and whole families are welcome to participate if they can be scheduled within the hours we have scheduled with the photographer. Purchases are not required.

XV. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Families should attempt to resolve problems or express concerns about the program in the following order:

1. If the problem concerns your child's classroom, please speak to your child's teacher.
2. If the problem concerns the program or a policy matter, please speak to the Program Coordinator or Director.
3. If the problem concerns a financial matter, please speak to the Administrative Assistant.
4. If the problem is not resolved by speaking to a teacher, the Administrative Assistant, or the Program Coordinator, please speak with the Director.
5. If the Director is unable to revolve your concerns, you may bring your concern, in writing, to the attention of the School Board. If the issue is a program or policy matter, the matter will be discussed at the next scheduled Board Meeting. If the issue is a confidential matter regarding a child, all parties involved must document their views and submit them to the Board Chair. The Board Chair will schedule a meeting with all involved to facilitate a resolution.

XVI. CHANGES TO HANDBOOK

Holy Trinity Christian Day School reserves the right to change this Parent Handbook from time to time at the discretion of the School Board. Changes will be presented in writing and parents will be informed in a timely manner.

Holy Trinity Christian Day School is a ministry of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church. Additional information about the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America may be found at www.elca.org

Visit the School web site at www.holytrinitychildcare.org

Visit the Church web page at www.htlclairel.org

Contact us at htlclairelmd@gmail.com

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and ...he will not depart from it." Proverbs 22:6

FAMILY HANDBOOK AGREEMENT

**I agree to abide by the policies outlined in the handbook
for the 2023-2024 school year.**

Child Name (Please Print)

Parent/ Guardian Name
(Please Print)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/ Guardian Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date