

Welcome to Thistle!

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

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

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

Observation

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

Snack

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

Volunteering

Our classroom community works to affirm everyone's unique identity. We look forward to celebrating our similarities and differences by hearing from you, the experts! Please let our room parents, Jen Superson (jen.superson@gmail.com) and Ashley Johnson (buehleaa@gmail.com) know if you have traditions, hobbies, or interests to share.

Ashley is in the process of putting together a volunteer flower bouquet donation for the children to use as they explore flower arranging in the classroom. Be on the lookout for that sign-up!

Lunch

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

Personal Belongings

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

Supplies

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

- One pair of indoor sneakers with non-marking soles (Please refrain from lights, bells or whistles.)
- At least one extra change of labeled clothing for accidents and spills, weather appropriate.
- Rain gear (a suit, pants/jacket, and rain boots)

- Two wet bags for soiled clothing
- Sunscreen if you prefer, we use a specific brand
- Water bottle for recess/outdoor work environment (we will still use glass cups at lunch)

Specials

We send four children that are not Kindergartners each morning to gym. Each child is scheduled to go once a week. If a child is absent the day it is their turn, their next turn will be the following week. Kindergartners go every afternoon to P.E. with Steve in the gym. Children that do not have a pair of indoor sneakers with non-marking soles will not be invited to gym in an effort to protect our beautiful gym floor.

Angela will join us for music in our classroom community on Tuesdays this year. She loves to bring instruments found around the world for us to experience and new songs to sing! Kindergartners will enjoy a lesson with Angela every Tuesday.

Birthday Celebration and Snack

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

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

Medication/Illness

- If your child becomes ill at school, I will call you to come and pick them up. They will rest in the comfortable room adjacent to the front desk until you come for them. For specifics about our illness policy, please refer to your parent handbook.
- If your child needs to take medication at school, you must fill out and sign a medication form. This is available online or you can get a copy of this from the front desk.

Drop off and Pickup

- If someone other than you will pick up your child, their name must be on the approved list of adult drivers on your child's account in our database or the child must have a signed note from a parent or guardian. We will check ID of everyone I don't recognize. I appreciate your patience with this safety precaution.
- Carline we ask you to stay in your car until an adult opens in the door in the morning. Similarly, please wait in your car until in the afternoon until your guide arrives at your car with your child.
- If you arrive to school after 8:40, wait at the front desk with your child. The front desk will call our classroom and an adult from the classroom will come to walk your child to our classroom. Thank you for assisting in limiting classroom disruptions in the morning.
- If you need to pick your child up early for an appointment or any other reason, check in at the front desk and then come down to the classroom. Wait outside the door until an adult from the classroom comes to check in with you. We will walk your child to the door to greet you.
- If you know your child will be tardy, arriving after 11:30, we will count on them having eaten lunch with you.

Teacher Availability

- The support system we create for your child will be strongest when we are on the same page. The more we know, the better we can provide for your child's needs and interests. Please never hesitate to contact me. I will do my best to respond within a 24-hour time period. I appreciate your patience as I coach soccer immediately following school several days during the week.
- If you have concerns, or inquiries about what your child is in progress on at school – I will offer meeting times for you to come in to school and share or discuss these with me. I have office hours 2:00-2:30pm daily, or can be available during my planning period on Fridays between 1:15pm and 2:45pm for appointments via phone or in person. Weeknights and weekends will be reserved for spending time with my family. Mornings during the week I can make arrangements to meet in person when planned a little more in advance.

School Phone: (231) 929 - 9325 (Extension 153)

Email: taylor@traversechildrenshouse.org

How to contact me:

- Call the front desk during school hours (8:00-3:30) and leave a message. I will check messages at the end of each school day. If it is urgent, the receptionist will get the message to me
- Set up an in person, or phone meeting
- Send a note with your child in the morning
- Send me an email to talk by phone or in person
- Carline is not an appropriate time for me to answer questions or share about your child while they are present

Looking forward to being partners with you in this year ahead!

Taylor Vancil