

# Welcome to the Iris Community

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

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

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

## Observations

Observation is available after the first six weeks of school. You'll be invited to observe by the two-way window or from the observation chair inside our classroom. If invited to observe inside the classroom, we ask that you be a "fly on the wall" to get the most accurate picture of your child's day.

Please consult me if you are unsure which type of observation makes the most sense for your child. I am always happy to discuss any questions you have after school. Reach out to Renee beforehand so we can ensure another family is not scheduled.

## Snack

Children at TCH enjoy a school-provided snack. Our school is very committed to healthy living and will provide fresh fruits, veggies, lean proteins, and whole grains as snack options, using local, organic

ingredients whenever possible. As always, the children will prepare much of the material in the classroom. We will do specific tastings and culinary experiments outside normal, everyday snacks.

## Volunteering

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

We connect most with the environments we can be involved in, and we would love your help throughout the year. One of the sweetest and most popular works in the classroom is flower arranging. We are lucky enough to have beautiful flowers on the grounds to cut during certain parts of the year, while others require your help! Our wonderful room parents will send out a form for you to sign up to bring in flowers throughout the year. (Hint: It's a great way to get children in the door!)

## 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.
  - <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/boonli.asp>
- If you pack your child a lunch, we will supply cloth napkins, placemats, and plates. Children with home or school lunch will be offered a choice of water or milk to drink.
- Home lunches should be packed in containers your child can open independently. If you need help, I have many great ideas.
- 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.
- We will continue to be a nut-free environment and ask that any "nut butter alternatives" be clearly marked so we know it is safe.

## Personal Belongings

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

## Supplies

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

- One pair of indoor shoes with non-marking soles that your child can put on independently (Please refrain from characters, lights, bells, or whistles).
- Two full sets of seasonally appropriate outfits, each packed in a medium-sized wet bag.
- Rain gear (a suit or pants/jacket) and rain boots.
- One large wet bag for muddy/wet outdoor gear.
- Sunscreen if you prefer. The school provides sunscreen otherwise.
- Brush or comb and other appropriate hair accessories (clips, hair ties, etc.) in a zipped pouch.

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

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

## Birthday Celebrations

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

In addition, your child will have the opportunity to plan and bake a special treat in the classroom to share with their peers. This is a very special tradition the children enjoy immensely.

## 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 everyone's IDs if we do not recognize them. I appreciate your patience while taking this safety precaution.
- If you arrive at school after 8:40 a.m., wait at the front desk with your child. The front desk will call our classroom, and an adult from the classroom will walk your child to our classroom. Thank you for assisting in limiting classroom disruptions in the morning.
- If you need to pick your child up early for an appointment or any other reason, check in at the front desk and then come down to the classroom. Wait outside the door until an adult from the classroom comes to check in with you. We will walk your child to the door to greet you.
- If you know your child will be tardy, please email me beforehand so we can plan lunch.

# Teacher Availability

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

School Phone: (231) 929 - 9325 (Extension 141)

Personal Phone: (864) 640-7660

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

Office hours: Thursdays (1:15- 2:45 p.m.)

## How to Contact Me:

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

Cheers to a new year!

Kristi Johnson