



THE CHILDREN'S HOUSE
Montessori School



COMPASS
Montessori Junior High

Family Handbook

Updated for the 2024-2025 school year



5363 North Long Lake Road
Traverse City, MI 49685

Phone 231-929-9325 Fax 231-929-9384

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.

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1. SCHOOL EVENTS AND DESCRIPTIONS

The family calendar is posted on the school's website and can be synced with your personal Google calendar. <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/familycalendar.asp>

Staff and Faculty Return to School

Faculty is on campus at least one week before 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 classroom staff. The campus is closed the two weeks before school starts for staff 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 guide and classroom assistants. Children in the Nido and YCC attend according to their regular schedules because of the year-round nature of these programs.

Tears and Cheers

This informal gathering during the first day of school is a great way to connect and reconnect with other parents and guardians. Join us after drop-off 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 parents and guardians to connect as a community. Classroom guides will explain the upcoming year's 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 Festival

This gathering shares the highlights of our Earth to Table program with families! The harvest of our campus gardens is showcased and shared in a community meal followed by arts and crafts, games, and music.

Staff and Faculty Retreat

This professional development day usually includes 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 employee culture and growth.

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 Young Children's Community through Junior High.

Classroom 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 before 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, 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.

Grandparents and Special Friends Day

This is a heartwarming day when grandparents and special friends spend time in the classrooms. Visitors are treated to a musical performance, campus tours, and time spent 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* to the next.

8th Year Graduation

A ceremony recognizing the accomplishments of our 8th-year graduates.

Field Day

This is a great day of outdoor fun for all of the children in The Children’s House and Compass Junior High community!

Dance of the Cosmos / Last Day of School

This tradition 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 final 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.

2. CONTACT INFORMATION

SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION

The Children's House
5363 N. Long Lake Road
Traverse City, MI 49685

Compass Montessori Junior High
101 North Park Street
Traverse City, MI 49684

(231) 929-9325 T
(231) 929-9384 F

e-mail: learn@traversechildrenshouse.org
web: 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>

3. 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 school 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.

Background screenings are completed in the following manner:

- MSP and FBI background check using live scan fingerprinting to screen for the following:
 - 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;
 - Search of the individual through the national and state sex offender registries;

- Search of the individual through all state criminal registries or repositories for any states of residence in the past five years;
- Request that the Department of State Police perform a criminal history check on the individual;
- Search 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.

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. Guides and the Head of School meet one-on-one bi-weekly throughout the year, faculty from each level meet monthly, and philosophical and informational meetings are held with the entire faculty.

Faculty members are offered three 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*.

Comprehensive Infant/Child/Adult CPR, AED, epi-pen, and first aid training are provided in person every two years during the fall training week for all classroom guides, the program director, and most classroom personnel. Within the first six months of hire, all new classroom employees are required to take the online version of this training including bloodborne pathogen training.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION ROLES

HEAD OF SCHOOL

Michele Shane, Head of School, serves as the professional educational and strategic leader of the school and is 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 oversight 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 the liaison to state health and safety inspectors. She coordinates volunteers and directs summer programs. She reports to the Head of School.

Norie Warnke, Facilities Manager, coordinates the custodial, aesthetic, and upkeep of the school building and ensures the school maintains its commitment to being a Green School.

Martin Miklos, Office Manager, supports human resources, licensing requirements, school-wide logistics, business office, 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 to the Head of School.

ADVANCEMENT OFFICE

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

Shanna Gonzalez, Director of Donor Relations, connects and communicates with stakeholders to strategically nurture and grow our fundraising program to support the mission of our school. She manages the full scope of philanthropy at our school including annual giving, corporate and major gifts, grants, campaigns, and the endowment. She reports to the Head of School.

Arielle Sika, Media Coordinator, is responsible for school photography, the Waypoints weekly e-newsletter, the school's social media, and spirit wear. She reports to the Director of Advancement.

4. 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 the 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 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. We intend to foster not only a high standard of academic excellence but also provide an environment where every individual strives to cultivate their 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. During 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 farmhouse 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 farmhouse and moved to the Royal Drive building in the fall of 2001.

Today, The Children's House and Compass Junior High enroll over 250 children in programs offered year-round for children between the ages of 3 months and 14 years, infant through 8th grade. Our 8-acre rural campus on North Long Lake Road just west of Traverse City, Michigan, opened in the fall of 2002 and was architecturally designed to enhance the Montessori philosophy and teaching method. In January 2022, The Children's House opened a second campus in 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, nonsectarian school and childcare center, registered with the Michigan Department of Education; licensed by the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs; and accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS). The Children's House guides have completed AMI or AMS Montessori training from reputable training centers. 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 organization. The entire control of the organization and its affairs and property are vested in the Board of Directors. To learn more about the Board and its current members, visit this webpage: <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/board.asp>.

THE MONTESSORI METHOD

From our 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 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, and 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. 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 adults 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 neighborhood 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.

5. FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

CHiPA

CHiPA is the acronym for Children's House Parent Association. The purpose of CHiPA is to organize volunteer efforts and engage new and current families in the school community through event planning, outreach, and effective communication. CHiPA meetings are on the first Wednesday 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 with families on behalf of their classroom guide and/or the school
- Volunteer to help organize school events and community service opportunities
- Welcome new families
- Attend monthly CHiPA meetings
- Organize fall classroom picnic

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Meetings of a social, educational, and informative nature are offered to families throughout the school year. Waypoints, a weekly school newsletter, lists upcoming 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 and to keep tuition costs accessible. It is expected that all families and staff support our *Bright Futures Fund* each year at a level that is meaningful to them. Additional fundraising opportunities include:

- Bright Futures Gala

- 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 their time throughout the year. From grounds work bees to event support, there are regular posts in Waypoints that describe where there is a need.

Unsupervised parents and guardians who volunteer to work with children 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 Director of Operations provides guidance and paperwork for all required screenings.

ADULT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES “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 guides, there are speakers, classroom visiting days, and more. Information about Montessori Up Close is posted in Waypoints and in the Family Portal. Bi-weekly blog posts are written by our faculty and staff on pertinent topics specific to Montessori and parenting. The blog, *Points of Interest*, can be found on our homepage and new posts are featured in Waypoints.

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. It is best to call ahead to schedule an observation. Observing in these designated areas 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 environment. 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.

6. PROGRAMS and TRANSITIONS

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 (YCC)

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. Being five years old by September 1 is a guideline for Kindergarten readiness. During this year, the child has additional privileges and responsibilities as they are the oldest members of their classroom community. Children grow up in the Primary classroom and look forward to becoming leaders and mentors to the younger learners. It is expected that children who start in Primary complete the Kindergarten year.

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 1st – 3rd grade students and **Upper-Elementary** continues with 4th – 6th grade students. These programs are based upon a 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.

COMPASS MONTESSORI JUNIOR HIGH (7th and 8th grades)

The Junior High program cultivates a love of learning through our curriculum, which includes Humanities, Occupations, Self-Expression, Algebra, Literature, Science, Music, Art, and Spanish as a Foreign Language. Through hands-on work with academics, travel, and relating students to the roles and responsibilities of adulthood, students develop a strong personal identity and responsibility through a developmentally tailored approach to the needs of young teenagers.

7. ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

EARLY CARE

The Children's House opens at 7:30 a.m. for early care. For Nido/YCC rates and scheduling, please contact the Advancement Office. For Primary through Elementary, early care (not already included in the tuition agreement) can be added a la carte using Boonli. Please contact the Office Manager with questions regarding Boonli. Parents and guardians walk their children into school to these locations and make contact with a TCH staff member before leaving their child at Early Care:

- Nido: starts in their classroom
- Young Children's Community: starts in a designated YCC classroom
- Primary: starts in the Primary Great Hall
 - At 8:00 a.m., Primary students join their own classrooms
- Elementary: starts on the playground or in Barn depending on the weather.

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 or Elementary student is eligible to join Friend's Club if space permits. If you would like to enroll your child in Friend's Club according to a regular schedule, please get in touch with the Advancement Office. For Primary and Elementary drop-in Friend's Club, please register using Boonli. <https://childrenshouse.boonli.com/login>. Please call the Front Desk with questions about childcare sign-up.

SUMMER PROGRAM

Programs are offered for 9 weeks during summer break. The school is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The school is closed the week after the school year ends and two weeks before the school year starts in the fall.

During the summer, the Nido and Young Children's Community provides a continuation of the school year program. 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 re-enrolled students and is based on availability with a seven-week minimum.

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, require a three-week minimum schedule, and enrollment is based on availability.

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>.

8. ADMISSION, ENROLLMENT, and CLASS PLACEMENT

ADMISSION PROCESS

The admission process at The Children's House begins with a school tour and a meeting with prospective parents. 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 apply, they must complete an online application with a \$50 non-refundable application fee to join the applicant pool. Students applying to Elementary or Junior High must provide recent progress reports from their current school and the parents or guardians must meet with the Head of School prior to being accepted.

The annual application deadline for the following school year is March 1. The first round of admission takes place in the month of March with decisions being made before Spring Break. Rolling admission begins in April as space becomes available.

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).

ACCEPTANCE and EXPECTATIONS

Acceptance is based on available space in the program and a family's:

- Intentional choice for Montessori education
- Willingness to partner with our school by being informed, involved, and invested
- Alignment with the values and mission of The Children's House and Compass Junior High, including a commitment to long-term enrollment

Additional considerations:

For children entering Kindergarten, Elementary, or Junior High, current academic reports, classroom visits, and parent interviews are a part of the admission process.

To comply with our immunization policy, only students who are up-to-date on all required vaccines are admitted. Non-medical waivers are not accepted.

Admission preference is given to siblings of returning students, children or siblings of alumni, students transferring from another Montessori school, and children of staff members.

Children who start at any point during the First Plane of Development (Birth to Age 6) are expected to remain enrolled through the Kindergarten year. If a family withdraws a child before completing kindergarten, enrollment for other children in the same family will not be guaranteed. Rather, they will be part of the applicant pool and considered for enrollment on a case-by-case basis.

ENROLLMENT

To enroll, families sign and return the letter of intent, provide proof of up-to-date immunizations, and make a \$500 non-refundable enrollment deposit toward the student's tuition. If not returned by the due date noted on the letter of intent, the student's classroom placement will be surrendered. Signing a tuition agreement is the final step in the process.

It is expected that once a child begins attending The Children's House or Compass Junior High, they remain enrolled through Kindergarten or, once in elementary, until they graduate 8th grade. Each February, tuition agreements for the upcoming school year are presented to families to accept by the March 1 deadline.

CLASS PLACEMENT

Our goal when making class placements is balance: academic balance, social balance, and age balance. For details, please consult the class placement process found on this webpage:

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

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 the Advancement Office.

- Nido and YCC require a minimum schedule of five half-days (M-F, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.) or three school days (M-W, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.).
- Primary requires a minimum schedule of Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
- Kindergarten through 8th grade requires a Monday through Friday school-day schedule.

9. 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 10th of that month. Electronic funds transfers are processed on the 10th 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 10th 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 debited/charged on the 10th 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 10th 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.

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

School closes promptly at 5:30 p.m. A fee of \$50.00 is charged every 15 minutes a child is at school beyond closing time beginning at 5:31 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, understand 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.

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, carline assistance, and

graphic design. Work cooperatives are awarded based on the skill set of the applicant with some consideration made for financial need.

WITHDRAWALS/DISMISSALS

Notice of Program Withdrawal

Nido, YCC, or Primary Program (not including Kindergarten): Families are required to notify TCH, in writing, on or before June 1st 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 1st 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.

Kindergarten, Elementary, or Junior High Programs: Families are required to notify TCH, in writing, on or before June 1st 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.

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 1st of the school year in question.

Post-Deadline Contract Release Request

In the event that a family decides to withdraw after June 1st 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 an 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).

10. GETTING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

BATA

BATA is pleased to assist with school transportation to help parents be where they need to be too. Departs the Hall Street Transfer Station at 7:35 a.m. on weekdays. Students arriving by BATA receive Early Care free of charge. To ride BATA at the end of the school day, your child's name must be on the BATA list. Email the Front Desk at learn@traversechildrenshouse.org with your child's BATA schedule in advance. Single ride for students: \$1.50 (cash or rechargeable BATA card available for purchase at the Hall Street station).

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

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 the day. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask a TCH staff person.

ARRIVAL AT MAIN CAMPUS

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 sidewalk, next to the toddler playground.
- When you are the first car in line, you may drive to the area in front of your designated entrance. Do not pass cars waiting in front of you.
- Once you are first in line, 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 start of the sidewalk**.
- 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 main entrance on their own.
- Drivers should exit onto Herkner Road during 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 end of the sidewalk 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 curbside.**

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 AT MAIN CAMPUS

- Half-day Nido and Young Children's Community is dismissed at 12:20 with carline ending at 12:30. 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.
- Half-day Primary is dismissed at 12:30 with carline ending at 12:40. 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 AT THE MAIN CAMPUS

See [this diagram](#) for a visual of the following:

- Pull into the driveway from North Long Lake Road. Stay in the right lane if you are picking up a child in Nido, YCC, or Primary. Pull into the left lane if you are picking up a child in Elementary, not earlier than 3:10 p.m.
 - Always wait in the lane of your youngest child. For example, if you have a child in Primary and a child in Elementary, wait in the right lane
- Drivers may pull up in front of the school for carline starting as early as 3:10 p.m. Once all of the spaces in front of the school are full, cars must stop at the start of the sidewalk along the playground. A staff person directing traffic will tell you when to move ahead.
- 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.
- Carline ends promptly at 3:40 p.m. At this time your child will be in Friends Club and you must park and walk into the school. You will see a Friends Club charge added to your account.
 - To avoid having your child wait for twenty minutes on a bench, please call the Front Desk as soon as you know that you will be late so that your child can be taken to Friends Club earlier.

JUNIOR HIGH ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Junior High arrival is 7:45 – 8:00 a.m. and departure is at 3:00 p.m. daily.

- JH students may enter and exit the building through the Park St. entrance only.
- See [this parking diagram](#) and page 28 for more details.

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. For everyone's safety, do not take your child without contacting 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. If absences become excessive, parents or guardians will receive a letter home requesting a meeting with the child's guide and the Head of School to discuss the issue of attendance. Please report absences before or on 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 a 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.

11. 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 faculty 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:

- **Waypoints:** 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/waypoints.asp>
- **Website:** The website is a comprehensive source of information about the school. The Parent Portal has pertinent information including the family calendar, classroom pages, school forms, family directory, spirit wear, lunch and childcare ordering, and more. <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org>
- **Google Calendar:** This is the most current source of information for school events and other important dates. <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/familycalendar.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:** Available to read in the Community Room, this 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:** Faculty 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 GUIDE

Communication between the school and your family is of utmost importance to us. The guides 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 guide 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 guides check regularly.

12. SCHOOL CLOSINGS (WEATHER-RELATED)

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

TCH Administration determines school delays and closings. Parents and guardians will receive an email by 7:00 a.m. (or earlier if possible) and text via the Honeycomb 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>

13. 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 guide 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 viewed on this webpage: <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/policies.asp>.

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 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 equity 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. Clothing, including footwear, is appropriate for all school activities and does not interfere with a person's ability to participate appropriately.

- 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.
- Clothing and accessories must not have offensive images or messages, and 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.

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 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 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 guide 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. We ask students 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 your child's guide with any questions.

Personal Electronics

Cell phones, iPods, Apple Watches, 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 classroom-specific designated location 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 retrieved and taken to the Head of School. Cell phones, iPods, and other forms of electronic communication and entertainment are not permitted on school outings.

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 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 the 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.traversechildrenshouse.org/policies.asp>

TUTORING POLICY

It is our mission to provide every unique student with the opportunity to thrive. On occasion, some students may need outside support to supplement their time working in the classroom for some specific and direct instruction. To that aim, The Children's House employs a Montessori-trained learning specialist who works with some students individually and in small groups during the school day.

There are times when teachers determine through assessment and observation that a student may benefit from additional support from an outside tutor. The Children's House and Compass Junior High has the following parameters for allowing outside tutors to work with students during the school day:

- Tutoring may be scheduled during the school day for students with an IEP.
- Students, whom the guide and caregivers mutually agree on need additional support, may meet with a tutor between 1:15 and 3:15 p.m.

- First-year students may begin school-day tutoring after winter break.
- Tutoring can be scheduled Monday through Friday except on the classroom's "Specials" day.

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 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 guides plan and participate in the field trips. Permission is required and is part of the back-to-school forms. Overnight trips require additional permission signatures. Notes describing the details of the field trip are sent to families approximately two weeks in advance.

Kindergarten Trips

These field trips occur throughout the year 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 at the start of the school year as part of the school permission form.

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 Going Out

Elementary 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 by participating in these experiences. Parents and guardians are notified two days before 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 requires additional payment by the families.

14. 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 must be completed by parents and guardians through **Ravenna** which is accessed via a link in the Family Portal:

<https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/ravenna.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 the 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 during school hours, within Michigan. Field trips are offered for children in Kindergarten through Junior High. Details about field trips are available in this handbook.
- **Sunscreen Permission** – allows school personnel to apply school-provided sunscreen to children at school. If you want to send and use your sunscreen, please complete the “special instruction” section of the form.
- **Junior High Tool Use Waiver**
- **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. The Children’s House 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.
 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.
- 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 shared with families and can also be found on this webpage: <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/ravenna.asp>.
- **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 the **Pest Management Form** found on this webpage: <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/ravenna.asp>.

IMMUNIZATION POLICY

The protection of the children’s good health and safety is among the top priorities of our school’s mission. The Children’s House 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 multiage interactions. With the advice of respected physicians in the Grand Traverse area, TCH bases its immunization policy on best practices 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 this webpage:
<https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/policies.asp>.

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. Read our Wellness Policy here: <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/policies.asp>.

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. (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 and can be accessed online <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/policies.asp>:

- Immunization Policy
- Illness Policy
- 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 guide and the Director of Operations 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. Note specific instructions by completing the **Medication Form** found in Ravenna. <https://www.traversechildrenshouse.org/ravenna.asp>

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 backpack or lunch box, but hand it directly to the adult who greets your car.

Emergency medication (such as Epi-Pens and inhalers) is stored in each classroom, away from and out of reach of children, and administered from that location by school personnel. Non-emergency medications are stored in the office of the Director of Operations. 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 24 months of age are permitted to sleep on demand. They sleep in cribs or on cots. 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 guide 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, wind, and lock-down 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 participate in additional safety training specific to lockdowns annually with our Grand Traverse County emergency liaison.

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

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

GUN POLICY and BE SMART PLEDGE

Guns are prohibited in the school or on school premises at both Long Lake Road and Park Street campuses.

As a member of The Children's House and Compass Junior High community, we must all do our part to keep children safe. To help normalize the expectation that guns are to be securely stored away from children, we ask that families log into Family Access and e-sign our Be SMART pledge to our community every year.

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

The SMART framework helps parents and adults prevent child gun deaths and injuries:

- Secure all guns in your home and vehicles
- Model responsible behavior around guns
- Ask about the presence of unsecured guns in other homes
- Recognize the risks of teen suicide
- Tell your peers to be SMART

For more information on Be SMART: <https://besmartforkids.org/>

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>

Communications Policy
Biting in Early Childhood
Be SMART Community Pledge
Carline Diagram for The Children's House main campus
Parking Diagram for the JH Park Street campus
Class Placement Process
Employee Screening and Training Procedures
Infant/Child Product recalls (not including toys)
Illness Policy
Immunization Policy
Nutrition Policy
Safety Drills
Student Conduct and Discipline Policy
Tutoring Policy
Wellness Policy

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

Health Form

Medication Form

Birthday Celebration Form

Electronic Funds Transfer Authorization Form

Pest Management Form

15. COMPASS MONTESSORI JUNIOR HIGH at the PARK STREET CAMPUS

The Park Street campus is located in Suite 220 at 101 North Park Street. The entrance to the school is located on Park Street, on the east side of the building. The following is an addendum to our school handbook that pertains only to Compass Montessori Junior High.

PARKING

Lot D Surface Parking is recommended. It is imperative that our school is not the cause of traffic backups on Park St. or Front St. Always use a parking spot and do not block traffic.

ARRIVAL

The school day starts at 8:00 a.m. Students may arrive as early as 7:45.

- Monday through Friday: drop off in Lot D Surface Parking and students may cross Park Street at the Front Street crosswalk. [See diagram.](#)

DEPARTURE

The school day ends at 3:00 p.m. Each student must have an individual, daily plan for leaving school including walking and cycling independently. Students may be picked up in Lot D Surface Parking.

LUNCH

Students may pack a lunch and have access to a refrigerator and microwave when at the Park Street Campus. Compass collaborates with local restaurants each year to create a school lunch program for students to purchase lunch through Boonli.

KEY CARDS

Every student is issued a key card that is active Monday through Friday, 7:45 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Key cards allow students access to their classroom from the Park St. entrance only.

- Lost keys must be reported to the Director of Operations immediately. Replacements require a \$50 fee.

COMMUNICATION

Everything within walking distance of 101 North Park Street is considered the Junior High campus. Parents will only be notified of trips and going-outs that require motorized transportation through the Junior High Activity Calendar.

- **Email** continues to be the best way to communicate with faculty: treenen@traversechildrenshouse.org; kristina@traversechildrenshouse.org; tori@traversechildrenshouse.org.
- **School phone:** The Junior High may be reached by calling the Front Desk at (231) 929-9325.
- **Cell phone:** To reach the Junior High while they are traveling, call (231) 409-9171. Only use this number if necessary. Do not text.

- **Honeycomb:** This app will be used to give updates when students are on trips or when timely information needs to be communicated.

BUILDING ETIQUETTE

It is a privilege to attend school in a mixed-use building. We expect our students to be aware of their voice and to act with grace and courtesy in public, especially on the sidewalk and in the common areas of the building.

- Students, faculty, parents, and guests are to use the Park Street entrance only.
- Students are not permitted in the Front Street Lobby, nor are they permitted in the stairwell beyond the second floor.
- Unless there is a physical need to use the elevator, everyone must use the stairwell.
- If arriving without a key card, visitors may use the intercom at the Park Street entrance.

STUDENT PICK-UP DURING SCHOOL HOURS

If a student has a mid-day appointment, parents will email guides and cc: learn@traversechildrenshouse.org prior to the start of the school day. The email must state when they will be picking up their child. It is best if parents stay in their car and park in a 15-minute loading spot on Front St. Students will be released at the approved time to meet their parents outside.

SAFETY DRILLS

- **Fire:** Students and faculty will participate in regular drills and plans and protocols will be explained within the first week of school. The entire building is required to do one fire drill each year and our students will participate in four additional drills.
- **Wind:** The stairwell is the safe spot for wind emergencies. Two wind drills will happen each year.
- **Lockdown:** Suite 220 at 101 North Park St. is secured through multiple key access points. Specific lockdown procedures will be discussed with students during the first week of school and practiced periodically throughout the year.

TRAVEL

Junior High students participate in several trips throughout each school year. Travel outside of Michigan and overnight stays require an additional permission form. This form will be provided at least two weeks prior to travel. Any trip within Michigan and during school hours is permitted per the Field Trips form signed at the start of the school year in the Parent Portal. All trips and motorized outings will be posted on the Junior High Calendar at least two weeks in advance. This link is shared directly with parents at the start of the school year.

Expectations of students during trips include:

- Carry your ID card on your person at all times;
- Stay with your assigned travel group for the duration of the trip;
- Respect public and private property including lodging, transportation, and destinations;
- Be respectful of others and behave and dress as a representative of your family, The Children's House, and Compass Montessori Junior High;
- Phones, tablets, smartwatches, electronic video games, or any other form of digital entertainment or communication, are not permitted.