

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. Many children will reach important milestones, and some will 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 has put together a volunteer flower bouquet donation for the children to use as they explore flower arranging in the classroom. Thank you to all who have signed up already!

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.
- We are unable to add children to the lunch list after 9am. If you are late to school and your child is not signed up for school lunch through Boonli already – you will need to provide lunch from home for your child.
- If you pack your child a lunch, know that we will supply cloth napkins, placemats 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

Specials

Kindergartners will go to P.E. every afternoon with Steve in the gym. All children that are not kindergartners will go to P.E. on Wednesday from 10:15 to 10:45am. 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.

We are eager to welcome TCH's music teacher, Angela Aleo, to our classroom once again this year. She will visit us once a week. 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 once a month in the music room as well.

Lastly, kindergartners will join TCH's art teacher, Alison Hoffman, in the art room once a month. They will receive a lesson and background on a style of art. They will then bring their newfound knowledge back to present lessons to children in our classroom.

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. With allergens in our classroom, we are trying something new this year! We will make a plan with your child in the days leading up to their celebration, to bake a yummy treat to share with their peers in our classroom. We hope this will take some off of your plate and look forward to hosting you for your child's celebration this year.

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. DO NOT send medication in with the child. After filling out the appropriate forms, leave it at the front desk and they will get it to adults in our classroom.

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 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 respond within a 24-hour time period 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 1:30-2:00pm daily, or can be available during my planning period on Wednesdays 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 coordinate a time we can meet via phone or in person
- Carline is not an appropriate time for me to answer personal questions or share about your child while they are present

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

Taylor Vancil