



# Parent Handbook

## 2023-2024 School Year

Updated August 2023

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Please contact CHT Preschool's Office with any questions or concerns regarding this document.



Dear Parents,

Welcome to Christ & Holy Trinity Preschool!

I'm thrilled you have chosen to include us in your child's early childhood journey. CHT has an over 50 year tradition of providing high-quality, play-based early childhood programs for families in the Westport area. We are committed to offering a learning environment that values the natural curiosity of childhood and reflects the unique interests and developmental needs of each child. Together we are educators and families with the shared goal of providing a nurturing and enriching preschool experience for children.

Our philosophy is inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach and respect for each child's innate desire to understand the world around them and express themselves. Our emergent curriculum utilizes the teaching methods of the Project Approach. Teachers follow the lead of the children as they explore their questions, research, experiment, represent their ideas and reflect on their findings. Through these projects children develop and practice the cognitive and social-emotional skills they will need to be successful lifelong learners.

As we begin the 2023-24 school year, we are providing you with this parent handbook outlining the policies, procedures and administration of our preschool. Please review the contents of this handbook before the beginning of the school year. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the policies or procedures contained in the handbook, please feel free to contact me.

I'd like to personally welcome you to our Christ & Holy Trinity community!

Sincerely,

*Kate Nelson*

Kate Nelson, Director

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## **A. General Information**

Christ & Holy Trinity Preschool (“the Preschool”) is a non-profit preschool for children ages one year and eight months through five years of age. The Preschool is a ministry of Christ & Holy Trinity Church and operates under the authority of its Vestry. The Rev. John Betit, Rector, serves as Head of School. The Vestry has authorized the Preschool Governance Committee to manage the affairs of the preschool. The Preschool is licensed by the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood, accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (“NAEYC”), and is a member of the National Association of Episcopal Schools (“NAES”). It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin and all denominations are welcome.

The Preschool operates with a maximum enrollment of 72 children. Our staff has extensive experience working with preschool children and fulfills the necessary education requirements of the State of Connecticut and NAEYC.

### **Program Curriculum**

The curriculum of Christ & Holy Trinity Preschool has been inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach, as it is appropriate and practical in an American school. This celebrated pedagogy is based on the emergent curriculum and includes a combination of topic studies and project work derived from both teacher-designed provocation and child-initiated interests. While introduction of topics can be from any source, the direction of further study follows the interests of the children in an open-ended time frame. Teachers have the freedom to introduce, overlap, and conclude topics/projects when appropriate – as the children’s interests develop and change, rather than uphold compulsory scheduled time frames. In this approach, the emphasis is for the teachers to focus on the depth of the study and incorporate various opportunities for investigation and representations of the learning. Project work is expected of all classes and includes collaborative representations of learning as a construction, collection, or creation and is concluded by the sharing of the project work with families. Most early learning standards are embedded into these provocations, topic studies and project work.

Authenticity is critical to the learning process and therefore the tools used in the investigation (for example: researching and collecting data with clipboards, observational drawings, field work, reference books, the internet, pictures, etc.), are more important than the actual topics or representations themselves. The research supporting this indicates that effective learning experiences for young children must have an element of tangibility and relevance in order for them to make sense to young minds. Creative problem solving, unique ideas, and thinking “outside the box” are highly encouraged in the curriculum at the Preschool.

### **Program Curriculum Goals**

All learning experiences at the Preschool are planned to meet the goals and performance standards of the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS). This document, with its guiding principles, is at the centerpiece of our curriculum as it provides standardized expectations for children across the eight key domains of development:

1. Cognition
2. Social Emotional
3. Physical Development and Health
4. Early Language, Communication & Literacy
5. Creative Arts
6. Early Mathematical Discovery
7. Early Scientific Inquiry
8. Social Studies

Each domain of the ELDS contains strands that specify broad outcomes for curriculum. Within each of these strands are learning progressions with age-appropriate performance indicators from birth through age five. The CT ELDS is a publication of the CT Office of Early Childhood and is designed to articulate with the National Common Core State Standards that are in place in all public and approved independent schools in Connecticut.

Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards  
*What children, birth to five, should know and be able to do*  
CT Office of Early Childhood

In keeping with the CT Early Learning and Development Standards:

We believe that children:

- Are capable and competent;
- Learn best when their basic needs are met;
- Are unique in their growth and development;
- Develop and learn within the context of their family and culture.

We believe that families:

- Are the primary caregivers and educators of young children;
- Are critical partners in all early learning environments;
- Are strengthened through cultural understanding and identity development.

We believe that early learning environments:

- Support young children to learn in the context of positive relationships;
- Reinforce the importance of the cultural context of young children, families, and communities;
- Provide opportunities for active exploration;
- Provide meaningful inclusion of children with special needs where appropriate;
- Provide experiences that are relevant and integrated across domains of development;
- Intentionally promote the development of skills and knowledge;
- Provide opportunities for children to benefit from diversity;
- Support children's language development in their primary language.

We believe that strong communities:

- Believe in, invest in, and provide a full range of high quality resources for young children and families that support early growth and development;
- Build a sense of belonging and identity.

The Preschool offers a regular, yet flexible, daily schedule that meets the individual needs of the diverse population of children and families served by our program, including those with cultural, language and developmental differences. The daily schedule includes both indoor and outdoor activities that support both fine and gross motor development. The daily schedule also includes circle time activities, as well as other experiences that support language development, phonemic awareness, scientific inquiry, sensory exploration, mathematics and problem-solving. Children will have the opportunity to express their own ideas and feelings through open-ended creative experiences in all parts of the program.

### Preschool Contact Information

Preschool office phone: 203-226-4616

Director email: [director@chtwestport.org](mailto:director@chtwestport.org)

Preschool office fax: 203-341-9287

The Preschool office is open Monday through Thursday 8:30am to 2:30pm, Friday 8:30am to 1:30pm, September through June. Our programs run from 9:15am until 1:00pm with an option for an extended day for an additional fee. We generally follow the Westport Public School schedule for holidays and vacations.

If possible, please notify your child's teachers or the Director by text/email/phone before 9:00 am if your child will be absent from school. In case of illness or other emergencies that occur when the Preschool is not in session, we have an answering machine for your convenience.

### Weather Closings

In the event of inclement weather, you may call the Westport Snowline at 203-341-1766 for updates about possible school closings. If the Westport Public Schools have any delay due to weather, the Preschool will open at 10:30 am. Your child will only need a lunch (no snack) on these days. If the Westport Public Schools are closed, we are also closed. Parents are responsible for regularly checking announcements on the Westport Snowline, WNLK 1350 AM or Cablevision Channel 12 for updates regarding school closings. You may also receive an email from the Director to notify you of any delays or closings.

In the event of unusual weather that develops while children are in the Preschool, we will email parents regarding an early dismissal. If we are unable to reach a parent or emergency contact, the Director and another staff member will remain at the Preschool until contact is made. If the Westport Public Schools call for an early dismissal, all classes will end by 1:00 pm and all of our afternoon enrichment programs will be canceled for the day.

Any weather-related school closings and delays will not be made-up at the end of the school year.

## **B. Admission Process**

### Admissions

Our program serves children ages one year 8 months through 5 years old. A child may enroll in the Two's program if he/she is turning two years old before December 31st of that school year. Each child entering school must have an updated health form, signed and dated by his/her pediatrician, including current immunization documentation or meet State of CT exemption criteria. (Please see the Director for questions regarding this). Children must have their physicals updated yearly. The admissions process begins a year in advance of your child's attendance and is open to current families prior to being open to new families. Tours for the upcoming school year can be scheduled at any time. The following order is used to process applications for admission to the Preschool:

1. Children currently enrolled in the Preschool
2. Siblings of children currently or previously enrolled in the Preschool
3. Children of CHT church members
4. All other children/new families to the Preschool (in order by date application is submitted with preference to applications for 5 days in 4/5 day classrooms)

### Child Placement

To ensure the quality of our program and to comply with safety and space regulations set by the State of Connecticut, enrollment in the Preschool is limited. An effort is made to create gender-balanced classrooms, although this is not always possible. Please let the director know if you have concerns or preferences in the placement of your child into the program. We are not obligated to accommodate requests for a particular classroom or teacher, but will take preferences into consideration when appropriate and possible. Children will not be moved from one class to another after the class lists have been distributed as this causes significant disruption to the classrooms. The Preschool strives to provide a minimum of two weeks written notice to parents/guardians if care for a child must be terminated for any reason. The program will work with all children and families to avoid a child's expulsion. In the unusual circumstance that a child is asked to leave the program for other than financial reasons, the matter would be brought before the Preschool Governance Committee for discussion and the Head of School would make the final decision.

### Tuition

A \$250 non-refundable registration fee is due upon registration. A first tuition payment is due at the time of enrollment and this payment secures a child's spot in the class. Tuition payments are to be made in six payments prior to the first day of school. Alternate payment schedules can be requested and must be arranged with the Assistant Director or Director at the time of enrollment in the program. The typical six payment tuition plan has the following payment due dates: January 31, February 28, March 31, April 30, May 31 and June 30. All tuition owed must be paid in full regardless of the reason for the withdrawal from the program. In certain circumstances and with prior approval from the Preschool Governance Committee, if



withdrawal from the program is needed and there is another child that can fill the spot in the program, the remaining tuition can be refunded or will no longer be owed.

Payments may be in the form of cash, check, credit card or ACH Deposit through the Preschool's online payment platform, Brightwheel (<https://mybrightwheel.com/>). If paying by ACH Deposit an additional fee of \$0.90/payment will apply. If paying by credit card, an additional 2.9% will be added to cover credit card fees incurred by the Preschool. Checks should be made payable to: Christ & Holy Trinity Preschool. Tuition payments may be mailed to: Christ & Holy Trinity Church, Attn. Assistant Director, 45 Church Lane, Westport, CT 06880.

## Financial Assistance

Christ & Holy Trinity Preschool utilizes the Independent School Management Financial Aid for School Tuition (FAST) Program to process applications for Financial Assistance. To apply, please visit CHT's website ([www.chtpreschool.org](http://www.chtpreschool.org)) and refer to the Admissions tab to initiate the application process. Financial Aid Applications for the 2023-2024 school year should be submitted by December 15, 2022. Families enrolling after this date may still apply to request an alternate payment plan or to be considered for any scholarship funds that may still be available after this deadline. All information received will be kept strictly confidential.

## Preschool Visits

For all families to CHT Preschool, a preschool visit will be arranged by the teachers prior to your child's first day of school. This visit allows your child to meet his/her teachers in a small group setting. The visit will last approximately 15-20 minutes and provides a wonderful opportunity for the teachers to get to know you and your child. To help make this visit a special time for your child with their teachers, please make other arrangements for siblings during this visit.

## **C. Program Hours**

### Regular Hours

Two-year old Class (Caterpillar):	9:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday
Two-year old Class (Butterfly):	9:15 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Three-year old Class (Sky):	9:15 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday
Three-year old Class (Sea):	9:15 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Four's Class (Sun & Moon):	9:15 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday
Five's Class (Star):	9:15 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday

As teachers are busy preparing their classrooms for your child each morning, children are asked not to enter their classroom before 9:15 a.m. Please note that if a child is having difficulty parting with a parent at drop off time, a short goodbye routine is ideal. The transition becomes more difficult for both the child and the parent the longer a parent remains. We ask that you arrive promptly at the start of each day. Prompt and routine attendance helps your child quickly adjust to the school environment. Parents are always welcome to call the Preschool to check in and learn how their child is doing.

## Extended Day

The Extended Day Program begins the first week of October. Only children enrolled in the Threes, Fours and Fives and who are toilet trained may participate in the Extended Day options (Early Day or Late Day). Early Day is held Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 9:10 a.m. Early Day does not require advance registration. You will be invoiced through Brightwheel for each Early Day your child attends. Extended Day is held Monday through Thursday from 1:00 p.m - 2:00 p.m. In order to comply with CT State Licensing regulations, children who stay for both Early and Late Day on the same day will be offered a cot to rest on if they seem tired or if the child requests to lie down. Children in Extended Day are not required to nap. Extended-day options will include activities that are designed to support our curriculum and provide additional opportunities for exploring new topics, creative expression, play/socialization, skill development and outdoor play. Extended day options may include: Art, Yoga, Building/Legos, Cooking, Science, Clay & Dough, Games, Sports, Discovery Day or other topics.

The Director will send parents information on Extended Day programming, registration and fees in the fall. Extended Day must be reserved in advance for the session unless alternate arrangements are made with the Director. In the event that demand exceeds capacity for Extended Day programming, a lottery system will be used to fill the available slots. Payment for Extended Day is expected at the time of registration. Non-payment of any invoice will limit future use of the Extended Day programs. In order to maintain proper supervision of your child and State ratio requirements, we will not be able to offer any changes in days or refunds for Extended Day reservations.

For your convenience, children enrolled in the 2's classes may extend their day until 1:00pm by signing up for "Mini-late-day" in advance. This allows children enrolled in 2s classes to be picked up at the same time as a sibling in the 3's, 4's or 5's classes. The Director will send parents information on mini-late day registration and fees in the fall.

## Chapel

Chapel is generally held in the upstairs auditorium of the Preschool on Wednesdays at 11:30 a.m. for all classes. This service lasts for approximately twenty minutes and includes learning songs with our organist-choirmaster at CHT, followed by a prayer and story from the Assistant Rector, or the Rev. John Betit. The Chapel service is intended to introduce the idea of a loving God in a child-friendly manner. It is used as a time to celebrate diversity and teach empathy and respect for self and others and encourage care for God's creation (our environment).

## **D. Arrival and Departure Procedures**

### Arrival and Dismissal Routines

Parents/caregivers are responsible for dropping off and picking up their children on time. Children dropped off before regular arrival time (before 9:15 a.m.) will be charged the early day fee. PLEASE DO NOT LEAVE SIBLINGS UNATTENDED IN YOUR CAR AT ANY TIME. IT IS AGAINST THE LAW. If you have a sleeping or sick child in your car, please call the Preschool office and we will assist with drop-off and/or pick-up.

Each class will be assigned a designated “drop-off location” where children will meet their teachers daily. Drop-off will be promptly at 9:15am. As with all transitions, “short and sweet” is the best for most children. If you know your child typically struggles with transitions, please discuss your plan with them ahead of time. (“When we get to school, Daddy will unbuckle your carseat and we will walk together so you can get in line with your friends. Then you’ll give Daddy 3 kisses and I’ll see you so soon!”). Make sure you follow through on your plans. Consistency is the key to success for children. If your child struggles, please be assured that their teacher will support your transition.

<b>Butterfly &amp; Caterpillar Classes</b>	<b>Sea &amp; Sky Classes</b>	<b>Sun &amp; Moon Classes</b>	<b>Star Class</b>
Drop at 2s classroom door.	Meet teachers at the main entrance for drop off.	Drop at the far side gate at the playground on the church side of the playground.	Drop upstairs at the entrance on the front side of the preschool building.

In order to allow additional time for parents with more than one child in the program, any parent/caregiver dropping off multiple children (if one child is in the Star class) may drop off their older child in the Star Class as early as 9:10 am. The parent will then need to walk their younger child to their drop off location for drop-off. Parents with only one child in the program (or two children in the same class) should plan to arrive for drop-off no earlier than 9:15 am. All parents will check-in their child/ren with their teacher using Brightwheel. Children must wash their hands before entering the classroom.

Your child will only be released to you or someone you have listed on your Alternate Pick-Up Permission Form. All persons unknown to staff will be required to show identification. Please notify us in writing or by email of any changes in your regular pick-up routines. If you must make a change after having dropped off your child, please email the office and call to confirm that we have received the email. Teachers should be informed by written note/text/email of any changes in pick-up arrangements.

If a parent is delayed at pick-up time, please call the Preschool office. Children picked up 10 minutes later than their regular dismissal time will be charged the Late Day fee. If the Preschool has not been notified, every effort will be made to reach the parents and/or the other people listed on the emergency form. If no one can be reached, the Director and one staff member (age 18 years or older) will remain with the child for a reasonable amount of time (at least one half hour beyond scheduled pick-up time). When all resources have been exhausted, and we have not heard from you, we will contact the Westport Police who will then take responsibility for the child. This is a policy recommended to us by the State Licensing Department. It is outlined here for precautionary reasons and used only as a last resort. The non-emergency phone number for the Westport Police Department is (203) 341-6000.

### Carpools

Carpools are formed by parents on a voluntary basis. All parents driving carpools must carry liability insurance and abide by seatbelt and car seat regulations. Written notification of parents/children in a carpool should be listed on the Alternative Pick-Up Permission form on file in the office and a copy will be given to the classroom teachers. Any changes in these driving arrangements must be indicated in writing. The carpool driver is responsible for ensuring all children in the carpool have all their respective belongings, including car seats and messages. Children are to be escorted to and from the Preschool by an adult. Extra care should be taken in the parking lot.

## **E. Parent Relations**

### Notices and Classroom Information

Each child has a labeled cubby in their classroom at the Preschool. Any notices, newsletters or communications for events and field trips will be placed in a folder (provided by the Preschool) at the end of each day. We ask parents to check the folder daily and return it in the child's backpack the next day. Artwork will be placed in the children's backpacks. Please feel free to talk to your child's teachers and/or the Director at drop-off or pick-up, but be respectful of their need to also supervise the other children at these transition times. Open and comfortable communication between home and Preschool ensures that your child's individual needs are being met and we are happy to schedule a time to discuss any issues without your child being present. If there are changes in your family routine, such as parent trips, houseguests, hospital visits, medications, etc., please let us know. Parents will be provided with ongoing communication from their teachers each day. Teachers will also be providing ongoing documentation of activities in the classroom through the use of displays, photographs and documentation panels posted in the classroom and hallways.

### Parent Involvement

At the Preschool we see parents as partners in the educational process and encourage your ideas and support. We welcome you to become involved in your child's class by reading to the class, sharing a special skill or talent or bringing family celebrations and customs to the class. Please speak with your child's teacher or the Director before you plan an activity for your child's class. It is important to discuss and plan together to ensure that the activity follows NAEYC Accreditation Criteria for Developmentally Appropriate Practice and best practices with young children.

At the Preschool we make every effort to keep parents engaged and informed of interesting activities available in our community. These communications may include lectures, open houses, benefits, school fairs, as well as activities at Christ & Holy Trinity Church. Notices are posted on the bulletin board outside the Director's office, on our website at the CHT Parent Corner tab (<https://chtpreschool.org/cht-parent-corner>) or via email. Throughout the year, the Preschool also participates in fundraising activities for other local children's charities.

Other ways of getting involved include:

- Classroom visits – sharing special talents or interests, celebrating holiday or cultural traditions or reading a special book;
- Special Events – volunteer and/or attend special events throughout the school year. These events are wonderful ways to bring families and staff together, building our school community;
- Preschool Governance Committee – become part of Preschool leadership. Please speak to the Director if you have any interest in participating in this way;
- Room Parents – be a class parent for your child’s class; help guide the parents to become more involved in the classroom, plan teacher luncheons, assist teachers with field trips and coordinate social gatherings;
- Field Trips – accompany your child’s class as a chaperone;
- Social Opportunities – organize a family or Preschool event of a social or educational nature, such as a social evening for adults, picnic or lecture;
- Annual Surveys – these anonymous surveys give parents an opportunity to reflect on our program and offer ways to improve the program.

### Parent/Teacher Relationship

The Preschool aims to maintain excellent relationships with all parents. Major changes affecting your child should be discussed at the earliest opportunity. Your concerns are welcomed, considered and addressed, balancing the needs of all concerned as fairly as possible. Parents have access to the school at any time during school hours and may pick up a child at any time during the school day. Advance notice to teachers is requested so that transitions can be made easier for the child and the classroom as a whole.

### Behavior Management Policy

The Director and the Preschool Governance Committee believe it is important to disclose and discuss with parents the Preschool behavior policy (the “Behavior Management Policy”) prior to enrolling each child in the program. The Behavior Management Policy complies with all Federal and State civil rights laws and has been put in place to ensure and protect the safety and well-being of all children and staff at the Preschool. The Behavior Management Policy is reviewed and followed by all staff and is outlined below. Any reference to “we” or “our” means the Preschool and any employee or agent of the Preschool.

At the Preschool, our goal is for staff and families to work collaboratively to help children feel encouraged, accepted and capable of expressing themselves in an appropriate manner. Our aim is to provide a supportive and nurturing learning environment that also sets limits for appropriate behavior and helps children grow in ways that will lead to positive experiences and healthy personal relationships. The Preschool provides a structured day with clear expectations and boundaries that help children understand their role in the environment and how to make choices that keep themselves and others safe. It is important for adults to have appropriate expectations for child behavior. Young children are egocentric and often lack impulse control and a clear understanding of cause and effect, which can result in challenging situations or conflicts. The goal of discipline is to help the child develop self-control and move toward appropriate social behavior. We believe that **Positive Discipline** is in the best interest of the child and that it should be implemented in loving, consistent and respectful ways.

Our belief is that through guidance and redirection, a child can learn and make decisions that promote healthy relationships and actions. Examples of developmentally appropriate positive discipline methods we will utilize are:

- **Setting clear limits**

Teachers will set clear expectations for children during activities and will enforce the following classroom rules: Be Safe, Be Kind and Be Responsible. Teachers will set limits, help children calm down or find alternate activities as needed. Teachers will guide children toward understanding why some behaviors are inappropriate and why some behaviors are better or safer choices.

- **Positive guidance**

Staff will closely supervise children's interactions and, as needed, offer support to help children express their feelings or needs and come up with alternative ways to resolve conflicts. Staff encourage children to share ideas or "use their words" and will address or redirect behaviors that are unkind, disruptive or unsafe. Teachers will encourage and model positive behavior and use positive reinforcement to increase the likelihood of appropriate behavior. When disputes or conflicts arise, the staff will encourage a "talking out" process where the goal is to acknowledge feelings and find solutions. Teachers will help children understand the results of their actions and to consider another child's perspective as they work together to negotiate and solve problems.

- **Redirection**

We will not place a child in "time-out," however, a child who is aggressive, disruptive or destructive of other children's work may be asked to make an activity choice in another area or to take time to calm down before returning to an activity. Teachers will remain with the child until he/she is ready to substitute a more appropriate behavior or find a more appropriate setting for a behavior. Teachers will offer support and encouragement to help the child rejoin activities in appropriate ways.

Staff will continuously supervise children during disciplinary actions. Staff will not be abusive, neglectful, or use corporal, humiliating or frightening punishment under any circumstances. No child will be physically restrained unless it is necessary to protect the safety or health of the child or others, using the least restrictive methods, as appropriate. Staff are prohibited from using any form of physical punishment, psychological abuse, or coercion when disciplining a child. If a child requires removal from a situation or area, he/she will be accompanied by an adult to a quiet area of the classroom and given support in a way to calm and prepare themselves to return. We continually strive to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion and any other exclusionary practices.

We feel that it is the responsibility of our staff and administration to provide a safe, supportive, and developmentally appropriate program for all children to the highest degree possible. We will, therefore, adhere to the following policy on the management of children with atypical development and/or challenging behaviors. Atypical development shall be defined as that which does not meet established

norms for children of the same age group in any of the domains of development including physical, language, self-help, cognitive, and social/emotional domains. Challenging behaviors shall be defined as aggression such as biting, hitting, pushing, kicking or other potentially dangerous acts toward other children or staff. Also, inappropriate language, inability to follow rules and comply with directives, escaping from the classroom, outbursts and tantrums, disruption of classroom activities or any act which endangers the health and safety of self or others, damages property, or disrupts program quality.

Procedures for Handling Atypical Development and Challenging Behaviors: The step-by-step process for assessing, referring and accommodating children with atypical development and/or challenging behaviors is as follows:

1. Teachers will bring concerns about a child's development immediately to the attention of the Director who will document those concerns and place them in the child's confidential file. Parents will be notified when any behavior of the child has become a concern. At the Director's discretion, an education, health, and/or mental health consultant who has contracted with our program can be contacted for the purpose of providing advice on assessing, referring, managing and/or accommodating the behavior/development of concern. In many cases, such informal guidance is enough to handle any concerns satisfactorily. Parents will be informed of the consultant's recommendations and how issues will be addressed before there are any modifications to the child's program.
2. In the event that the child's development remains of concern, the parent will be informed by the Director. At this time, it will be the responsibility of the parent to seek evaluation services through one of the following choices:
  - Healthcare specialist (if a physical concern) of the parent's choice
  - Mental Health professional (if behavior concern) of the parent's choice
  - Public school early intervention/special education programs (for over 3)
  - Connecticut's Birth to Three System (for children under 3)
  - Public services (Help Me Grow, Early Childhood Consultation Partnership, etc.)

Any fees related to such evaluations shall be the sole responsibility of the parents unless otherwise agreed upon in advance by the Preschool. Parents will be required to submit evidence of contact/appointment with such services within one week of the referral or the child's attendance will be suspended until the evidence of contact has been provided. The Preschool cooperates with consultants and professionals in allowing them to make assessments of the child and his/her educational environment on-site. No information about the child will be provided to these agencies or individuals without the parent's signed consent.

3. The parent agrees to provide the results and recommendations of assessments to the Preschool for the purpose of appropriate program planning for the child. This information may be presented in writing or in a personal meeting between the parent, faculty, and outside agency or professional. Any cost of such planning meetings will be the responsibility of the parent unless otherwise agreed upon. The Preschool agrees to follow professional recommendations regarding the accommodation and support of the child's development to the greatest extent possible while maintaining program integrity and within budgetary, regulatory, or building restrictions that would prohibit making modifications or accommodations to our program. The parent agrees to provide a copy of an IFSP or IEP and

permission for our program to communicate with special education personnel and therapists for the purpose of consistency and support in a detailed plan of care as required by DPH. This program is fully compliant with the ADA. Support service professionals, therapists, and special educators will have full access and cooperation to provide services on site during regular business hours provided they are oriented and agree to follow program policies and procedures.

4. A re-evaluation of the success of any recommendations will take place at a time set by the Director, generally 7 to 30 days from implementation of any recommendations. At that time, a determination will be made to either continue successful programming, modify programming for another 7 to 30 days, or recommend an alternative placement for the child. In such cases, or in the case of non-compliance with this policy, parents will have 2 weeks to make new arrangements unless the child is a danger to himself or others, or disruptive to program quality in which case dismissal from the program shall be immediate. Exclusionary measures are not considered until all other possible interventions have been exhausted and there is agreement that exclusion is in the best interest of the child. If needed, assistance will be provided to help the family access additional services or find alternate placement.
5. The method and schedule for continual monitoring of the child's growth and development will be determined by the Director and will be dependent on the effectiveness of the program for the child. Parents have the right to access any information regarding their child's program and/or development and will be immediately informed should any issues of concern occur. Parents have the right to make on site visits at any time the program is in session.

We appreciate each parent's willingness to collaborate with staff to provide each child and the other children in the program with a safe, positive and developmentally appropriate environment.

## Conferences

Conferences are valuable opportunities during the school year for parents and teachers to discuss a child's growth and development. Formal conferences for all classes are held twice a year, in the fall and spring. There will be no school for students on these days to allow teachers to meet with parents during school hours. Parents are also given the option to schedule an optional Mid-Year Parent-Teacher Conference. School is in session during this week, so these conferences must be scheduled either directly before or after your child's regular school hours and will need to be done remotely due to children being on site at school this week. Additional conferences may be held any time the teacher or parent feels there is an issue to discuss. Please do not hesitate to call a teacher or the Director to arrange for a conference, set a time to visit the classroom, or share an idea. Remember – your input is valued.

At the Fall and Spring Conferences, parents will receive a written Parent Conference Summary regarding their child's development as well as information about their child's progress on the Connecticut Documentation and Observation for Teaching System (CTDOTS) Observable Learning Progressions. Teachers and parents review these forms together and discuss their child's individual strengths, growth, interests, preferences and learning goals for both home and Preschool. Parents receive a copy of the conference forms and a copy is placed in the child's file at Preschool. Information gathered is considered



confidential in nature and will not be shared with anyone other than pertinent Preschool staff and family without prior permission.

## Plan for Child Assessment

The purpose of assessing children is to inform instruction and design activities that engage children in positive and meaningful learning experiences appropriate for their ages, their individual needs and their cultural backgrounds. To do this, teachers need data to help identify and plan activities that support each child's individual needs and growth. The Preschool uses the Connecticut Documentation and Observation for Teaching System (CTDOTS) for the assessment of each child. This assessment system includes 27 Observable Learning Progressions that enable teachers to connect observations and assessments based on performance standards, with a curriculum based on the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CTELDS). Intentional teaching is a cycle that involves phases of planning and implementing curriculum; and observing and assessing children to enhance planning, implementing and summarizing. Assessment is done through observations, documentation of a child's experiences through anecdotal notes, photos, developmental checklists, and saved portfolio samples of a child's work over time. The learning goals include all aspects of a child's learning and are organized in eight domains: Cognition, Social & Emotional Development, Physical Health & Development, Language and Literacy, Creative Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies.

## Use of Assessment Results/Confidentiality

The teachers will keep all information gathered on a child confidential unless the parents have given written permission to pass along information about the child. Assessment results may be used (i) as a recommendation (as required by a private school application), (ii) if requested by a school district for developmental screening, (iii) as a referral for diagnostic assessment with parental consent, (iv) for planning curriculum to best manage their continuing development, interests and needs, and/or (v) state and accreditation representatives during their Preschool assessment process. The records are kept in the Director's office, which is locked when Preschool is not in session. Records are retained for five years.

## Special Services

Children under the age of three years are eligible for special services provided by the Connecticut Birth to Three Program. If a parent feels there are any significant concerns in speech and language development, motor delays, or any other concerns, this program offers immediate guidance and support. For additional information about this program, call 1-800-505-7000.

Children above the age of three may be eligible for special services provided by their hometown public school system. When a staff member suspects a child has a developmental delay or other special need, we will communicate this information with families confidentially, in as sensitive a manner as possible, and provide information for resources and suggested subsequent actions.

Parents, or the Director and teachers (only with parental permission) may make referrals. The services of a psychologist, social worker, and a speech and language specialist are available. The Preschool considers the

needs of all children. We observe each child and try to individualize curriculum plans to meet his or her unique needs. We ask you, as parents, to help meet your child's developmental needs.

## **Social Media**

The Preschool online presence provides a platform to connect families, share information about Preschool events and build school fellowship within our Preschool community. The Preschool aims to ensure that our school, students, staff and families are not compromised on any form of social networking. However, we acknowledge the important role that social media can play in maintaining a sense of community among Preschool families. Therefore, the following guidelines ensure the privacy, dignity and rights of the Preschool, students, staff and families.

### **Social Media Content:**

Confidential and proprietary information about the Preschool should not be posted. Material that could be deemed as threatening, harassing, illegal, obscene, defamatory, slanderous, or hostile toward any individual or entity may not be posted.

Social media linked to the Preschool may not be used for the promotion of personal financial interests, commercial ventures, personal campaigns or to promote other businesses; provided that Preschool social media accounts may be used to thank local businesses for their support of the Preschool.

It is important to note that any comments, photos, videos, links, etc. posted by "friends" on the Preschool's Facebook page are not endorsed by the Preschool, nor does the Preschool confirm their accuracy. The Preschool shall not be held liable for any harm to any Preschool student or family, whether foreseeable or unforeseeable, arising out of the use or abuse of social media or any other online presence in connection with the Preschool.

**Preschool Facebook Code of Conduct:** The Preschool's Facebook page is a family-friendly community where friends of the Preschool can join in everyday conversations. We encourage online interaction and want each family's experience to be enjoyable and educational. We know there might be times when you have an issue to discuss, but our Preschool's page is a "friend" community and as such we will provide more appropriate avenues for issues that need attention. We reserve the right to remove comments that we feel disrupt the friend community or are contrary to our Preschool's values. We are a child and family-friendly community and operate the same way on this page. Parents are asked to use good judgment in all posts and submissions.

### **Online Privacy and Safety:**

As part of our duty to safeguard children it is essential to maintain the privacy and security of all of our Preschool families. We therefore require that no photographs or videos of Preschool students that are taken by Parents within the Preschool setting or at Preschool events and outings are to be posted for public viewing without the express written consent of each child's Parent. No public discussions are to be held or comments made on social media sites regarding Preschool students, families, staff or members of any committee of the Preschool (except for appropriate use for marketing or fundraising events) that could be deemed offensive or could be construed to have any

negative impact on the reputation of the Preschool or any Preschool student, family or staff or committee member.

Photos of Preschool employees may not be posted without their express written consent.

This policy includes, but is not limited to, the following social networking sites: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Google+, Yelp, blogs, discussion forums, collaborative online spaces, media sharing services (i.e. You Tube).

### **Violations:**

Any violation of this social media policy should be brought to the attention of the Director. Any egregious violation as well as a pattern of repeated violations will be taken seriously by the Director and the Preschool Governance Committee, and may constitute grounds for dismissal from the Preschool.

## **F. Health and Safety**

### **Ratios and Group Sizes**

The staff/child ratio is one staff member for every four children under the age of three years old and/or one staff member for every 10 children over the age of three years old. When there is a mixed age group, the lower required ratio and group size for the age of the youngest child shall prevail. Even if ratios are being observed, at no time should the group size exceed 8 children under the age of three years old and/or 20 children over the age of three years old. Appropriate group sizes shall be maintained at all times in the classrooms, the indoor playspace, when taking children to the bathroom, when outside of the building and during field trips. **NO CHILD/CHILDREN WILL BE LEFT ALONE FOR ANY PERIOD OF TIME.**

### **Health and Illness**

Connecticut State Law requires each child enrolled in an early childhood program to have a physical exam prior to enrollment and to have that exam updated on an annual basis while enrolled in the program. No child can be admitted without a completed, current medical form. (If a child's last exam was on October 30, 2022, this physical will be considered current until October 30, 2023, at which time he/she will have 30 days to complete another exam.) The State of Connecticut requires children in preschool settings to receive adequate immunization against diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, poliomyelitis, measles, mumps, rubella, hemophilus, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, varicella, pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV13) and influenzae type b. Inoculations must be up-to-date and verification from a physician of an annual influenza vaccine must be submitted before December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year for the child to remain in attendance. This year, at the direction of our health consultant, we are requesting proof of your child's flu shot by October 31, 2023.

The State of Connecticut has eliminated the religious exemption as an option for foregoing childhood vaccines. Any child enrolled in a pre-kindergarten or other preschool program on or before April 28, 2021, and who presented a valid religious exemption to the program before April 28, 2021, must comply with immunization requirements by September 1, 2022, or within 14 days after transferring to a different public

or private program, whichever is later, unless the child also presents a written declaration from a physician, a physician assistant (PA) or advance practice registered nurse (APRN), stating that additional immunizations are in process as recommended by one of those types of medical professionals, rather than as recommended under guidelines and schedules specified by the Commissioner of Public Health. Under this circumstance, the timeframe within which they must comply with the immunization requirements is guided by this alternative vaccination schedule. The State of Connecticut continues to allow medical exemptions and any child who presents a certificate in the form prescribed by the Commissioner of Public Health that an immunization is medically contraindicated because of the physical condition of such child may be exempt from the immunization requirements. Please speak to the Director for further guidance regarding immunization requirements.

Please call the Preschool if your child will not be in attendance for a health-related reason. Children should be kept home for closer monitoring and rest if a parent feels they will be unable to fully participate in activities due to an illness or injury. If your child is diagnosed with any communicable disease (*i.e.* Strep throat, Fifth disease, scarlet fever or chicken pox) the parent should report it to the Preschool within 24 hours. A child may return to Preschool only after the contagious stage has passed. The Director will notify parents at the Preschool of possible exposures to a contagious illness or condition within the school community. Please notify the office if you or your child has been exposed to CMV (cytomegalovirus) or fifth disease. Information will be sent to the child's class and posted to protect both pregnant staff and parents.

Children are not allowed in the Preschool if they have conjunctivitis (pink eye), scabies, ringworm, coxsackie (hand, foot and mouth), had a fever or vomiting within the prior 24-hour period or have been ill within that same period of time. Children who have head lice may return the day after treatment begins, as long as they are nit free. Children who are sent home during the day with a fever, vomiting, diarrhea or any other health-related reason cannot return to the Preschool the following day.

Preschool staff are knowledgeable about signs and symptoms of childhood illness and will be responsible for the observation of the health of each child upon arrival to the Preschool and throughout the day. The teachers and Director will evaluate any child showing suspicious signs or symptoms of contagious illness and a parent will be called immediately if it is decided the child requires removal from the classroom and needs to be picked up early. The child will be moved to a designated area where the child will be made comfortable and a staff person will remain with the child until a parent or other authorized adult picks the child up. If a child has an injury of any type during Preschool hours or is sent home sick, it will be documented in an Illness/Injury/Incident Report. The report will be filled out by the teacher and discussed with the parent at pick-up. The parent will then sign the report and a copy will be placed in the child's file at Preschool. If the parent is not at pickup, it will be sent home in the child's folder to be signed and returned the following day.

### Administration of Medication

Preschool staff will only administer emergency medications, which include prescribed inhalers and premeasured commercially prepared injectable medication (*i.e.* Epi-pens, Auvi-Q, etc.), non-prescription topical medication and EMERGENCY oral medications (*i.e.* Benadryl) or if a child has a special health care plan that necessitates administration of a medication during school hours. The parents of any child requiring

medication are responsible for providing the proper emergency health care plan (action plan), medication authorization forms, and medications for their child.

Please note that there are many variations of the medication administration forms that medical providers utilize. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the medication administration form clearly states that it is for licensed child care centers. A child will not be able to attend Preschool if he/she does not have the proper authorization paperwork and medications.

All medications must be in their original child resistant safety container and clearly labeled with:

- the child's name
- the name of prescription
- date of the prescription
- directions for the administration of the medication

For quick access, all rescue medications, such as premeasured commercially prepared injectable medications (i.e. Epipens), glucagon and asthma inhalant medications and any non-prescription topical medications will be stored in the classroom of the child needing the medication and are placed in a location that is away from food and inaccessible to children. All other medications will be stored in a locked container and, if directed by a manufacturer, refrigerated. Controlled medications will be stored in accordance with 21a-262-10 of the RCSA.

Parents will immediately be notified by phone when/if a child has been administered any prescription medication. Staff members are trained in the administration of medication by a State department approved physician, physician assistant, APRN, or RN with such training renewed every three years. The training for premeasured commercially prepared injectable medications is renewed each year. At no time is an untrained staff member allowed to administer prescription medications. The following regulations shall be applied:

No medications will be administered by the staff except to a child:

- a. Having severe allergic reactions.
- b. Requiring medication for the treatment of asthma.
- c. Who is diabetic and requires the monitoring of blood glucose.

In the case of an allergic reaction, a trained staff member will follow the directions listed on the child's Emergency Health Care Plan that is signed by the doctor and the parent. As needed, the Director (or if unavailable, a teacher) will immediately call 911 and the child's parent. All unused medications and equipment prescribed to treat asthma, administer glucagon, or for the treatment of allergic reaction (such as Epi-Pens) will be returned to the parent at the end of the prescribed time of usage or the school year's end. Any medication that cannot be returned to a parent will be disposed of properly and a record of all medications discarded will be signed (by the Director and a witness) and kept on record at the program.

### Outdoor Playground Safety Procedures

The playground is open for children and parents after the regular school day unless the playground is needed for Extended Day activities. Parents must be with their children at all times and supervise them in

following all playground safety rules. Children should wear appropriate shoes at all times on the playground, including in the sand box.

Please help us maintain a safe environment by reviewing the following policies with your child:

- Playground gates should remain closed at all times;
- Adults should closely supervise the area of the playground on which the children are playing;
- Adults should position themselves in close proximity to and in clear sight of their children and limit cell phone use to enable them to closely monitor their child's safety;
- All adults and children should walk (not run) on the blacktop. Ball tossing, kicking and running activities/games should be limited to the mulched areas;
- Tricycles, scooters and other riding toys are to be used on the blacktop area only. Riders must ride safely and in control and wear helmets at all times. When using riding toys, children are not permitted to purposefully bump into other children, vehicles, playground walls or fences;
- All toys are to be returned to the equipment shed and stored in an orderly fashion. Children should help put all the toys away, throw away garbage and leave the playground tidy before leaving. Only teachers are allowed in the outdoor equipment shed;
- During school hours, when children under the age of three are utilizing the mulched areas of the playground, a teacher who has had pediatric first aid training (including skills in managing a blocked airway and providing rescue breathing) must supervise the children and have a working cell phone. After school hours, parents are responsible for closely monitoring children under the age of three to prevent them from ingesting or choking on pieces of mulch.

## **G. Emergency Procedures**

### **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

If an emergency situation should arise that requires evacuation of the Preschool building, the teachers will be notified by the Director and will lead their classes out of the building using the school's fire drill procedures. The classes will then follow their teachers to Branson Hall of Christ & Holy Trinity Church (the building adjacent to the Preschool.) The Director will bring emergency contact information for all children in the Preschool and notify the parents, or the person listed responsible as the emergency designate, to pick up the child at the rear entrance of the Branson Hall. The teachers and the Director will ensure that children are delivered to the proper parent or emergency designate. The Director and at least one other teacher will stay on Church grounds until all children have been reunited with their parents or emergency designate.

### **Emergency Medical Procedures**

In case of a medical emergency, a qualified staff member will administer first aid as needed. Another staff member will notify the family of the child. Attempts will be made to consult with the child's physician or dentist, as needed. If neither is available, the program's medical consultants will be contacted. For extreme emergencies, 911 will be called. An ambulance will take the child and a staff member to the nearest hospital. The child's emergency permission form will be brought with them. A staff member will notify the family or an alternate pick-up person to meet the child at the emergency room. Additional staff will be called in if necessary to maintain required ratios. In the event a child becomes ill or is injured while at the Preschool,

parents will be notified and the child will be moved to a designated area where the child will be made comfortable. A staff person will remain with the child at all times. The Director or child's teacher will call (in order):

1. 911 for an ambulance for an acute medical emergency or a severe allergic reaction
2. The child's parent, if not life threatening situation
3. The child's doctor/dentist, for consultation if needed

The injured child's teacher will ride with the child to the hospital. The teacher will carry the child's emergency release form to the hospital. The Director will cover the class that the teacher has left. The teacher will stay with the child until the parent takes over. The teacher may take a cab (Preschool expense) back to the Preschool or call and arrange a ride. The teacher will write up an Incident Report form to be put in the child's folder. The Director will contact the parents to follow up on the child's condition.

## Fire Drills

Fire drills are held once a month to comply with fire regulations. Fire drill procedures are posted in each classroom and evacuation maps are posted in hallways. Children are taught to exit the building in a quiet, orderly fashion and to follow their teachers to a designated "safe spot" on the playground.

## Shelter in Place/Lockdown Procedures

Certain emergencies may require us to *Shelter in Place* (using an interior space for the purpose of providing temporary shelter from a hazard). *Sheltering in Place* will go into *Lockdown* ("Silent Drill") when faced with the threat of unauthorized individuals entering the school. An intruder is defined as any visitor who, through act or deed, poses a perceived threat to the safety and welfare of children or staff members. If a person enters the school, the Director or designee will quickly assess the situation. If uneasy or suspicious, the Director will immediately call 911 and notify staff via walkie-talkie or cell phone that *Lockdown* procedures should be immediately followed. If, due to the nature of the situation, the Director is unable to place the call to 911 or notify the staff, another staff member will be designated by the Director to call 911 and notify the staff of the Lockdown situation. Teachers will then proceed by following the *Shelter in Place/Lockdown procedures*, maintaining as best as they can a calm atmosphere in the room and keeping alert to the emotional needs of the children. A list of recommended supplies will be available for use in the event we must *Shelter in Place* or be taken to an alternate facility for evacuation.

## Missing Child Policy

If a child is discovered missing from the Preschool, the Director will be notified and the following actions will be taken:

1. Check with the teachers and friends of the child to determine if they know of the child's whereabouts.
2. Call 911 immediately and provide the following information:
  - a. Child's name and age
  - b. Child's address
  - c. Physical and clothing description, including any distinguishing marks such as scars or birthmarks

- d. Medical status, if appropriate
  - e. Time and location child was last seen
  - f. Person with whom the child was last seen
3. Notify parents of missing child and attempt confirmation that the child is not with family; if not, advise parents of situation and steps taken
  4. Have the child's information and photo if possible, available for police
  5. Report incident to Connecticut Department of Public Health (1-800-282-6063) and Department of Children and Families (1-800-842-2288)
  6. Complete a written Incident Report at the earliest opportunity

## **H. Additional Preschool Policies**

### Agreements with Parents

Parents sign contracts, emergency forms, health forms and several other documents to enable the Preschool staff to get to know each child better. Parents must also sign an acknowledgment of the receipt and understanding of the information contained within this handbook. See Appendix III: Acknowledgement of Receipt of Handbook on page 26.

At the Preschool all children's medical records are kept confidential. Access to these records is limited to Preschool staff, licensing representatives of the State of Connecticut, NAEYC assessors and those you have deemed as emergency contacts if needed. Records are retained for five years.

### Clothing

Children should be dressed in comfortable clothing that is appropriate for playing with paint, glue, sand, dirt, markers and water. Clothing should be appropriate for both indoor and outdoor activities. Please provide two extra sets of clothing for your child consisting of: underwear, socks, shirt and pants (and diapers if necessary). All clothes should be labeled with the child's name and placed inside a zip lock plastic bag. Please label the bags with your child's name in large letters and periodically check bags for size and season.

As our first concern is your child's safety, we recommend that children wear rubber-soled shoes to school. Jellies, Crocs, open toed sandals, flip-flops and cowboy boots are not safe for climbing and other large motor activities and are therefore not recommended. Keep in mind your child is developing his/her coordination and self-help skills. Snaps, belts and overalls can be frustrating for many children. Dress your child so he or she may be as independent as possible. The Preschool makes an attempt to go outside every day unless the weather is inclement or the temperature falls within dangerous levels. In the event of reports of unhealthy air quality due to smog or other air pollution, outdoor exposure will be limited or curtailed entirely. On cold days, make sure to send your child with appropriate jackets, hats, mittens, waterproof snow pants and boots.

### Food



Christ & Holy Trinity Preschool would like to remain sensitive to all children with allergies and implement special accommodations necessary to keep them safe and healthy. In order to do so, the Preschool maintains a “**Peanut/Tree Nut Free**” environment.

**Please be advised that all snacks and lunches coming into the school may NOT contain peanuts/tree nuts or be manufactured in a facility that processes nuts.** In addition, all food brought in by parents for special snacks (*i.e.*, birthdays) must be completely nut-free such as fresh fruit or vegetables, or commercially prepared packaged goods that are “school-safe” and in factory sealed containers with clear labeling indicating all ingredients. No home baked goods are permitted.

This policy will be upheld not only with student and staff lunches and snacks, but will include all baked goods for celebrations or onsite events. The school reserves the right to adapt this policy in order to ensure the safety and welfare of all who may attend. Teachers must be aware of any food allergies that a child in the class has, so that allergies and sensitivities may be considered in any cooking plans in the classroom. Ingredients for all cooking projects, even those led by parent volunteers, must be provided to the Preschool and the labels must be thoroughly checked by the teachers to ensure that the ingredients do not contain peanuts or tree nuts, are not manufactured in a facility that processes nuts, and do not pose any other sensitivity or allergy risk to any child in the class. If needed, “food-safe” tables will be provided in any classroom of a child with an allergy. As a visual reminder for those who interact with their child during the day, parents of children with food allergies are asked to give consent to post in the classroom and kitchen information identifying their child’s allergy.

It is the parent’s responsibility to provide a healthy, nut-free snack and lunch each day for their child. A “snack” is a light meal containing two (2) food groups. A “lunch” is a meal containing four (4) food groups. As required by the State, any snack or lunch that includes foods requiring refrigeration must include a cold pack so food will not spoil. Hot dogs (whole or sliced into rounds), whole grapes, popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, chunks of raw carrots and meat pieces that can be swallowed whole will not be permitted as they are high risk foods for choking incidents. Candy, gum and soda are not allowed at Preschool. Grapes, hot dogs and cherry tomatoes must be cut in half lengthwise. Although children will be permitted to eat their lunch in any order, teachers will encourage children to eat the “main” part of their lunch first. No glass containers, sippy cups (except for children in the 2’s class with teacher permission) or bottles will be permitted. Cups with built-in straws are permitted.

## **Birthdays**

If you would like to bring a special treat or read a story to the class for your child’s birthday, please make arrangements with your child’s teacher a week in advance. Please review our food policy before bringing in any snack and check for any allergies in your class so that children are not left out of the celebration or put at risk of an allergic reaction. Remember we are a Peanut/Tree Nut Aware community so “school-safe” baked goods are required unless an item contains a label that verifies the ingredients do not pose a risk of exposure to peanuts, tree nuts or other known allergens. Instead of, or in addition to the celebration, you are invited to donate a book, puzzle or game in honor of your child’s special day. Please check with your classroom teachers for suggestions. If you plan a party for your child outside of the Preschool setting, please mail (electronically or post) all invitations. Invitations and presents may not be brought into the Preschool.

Teachers do not attend birthday or end-of-year parties in order not to offend any family by perceived preferential treatment.

### Email Distribution List Policy

From time to time, parents will receive emails from the Director or Preschool volunteers relating to the entire school community. The parents' personal email addresses that compose this distribution list should only be used by the Director or other designated person for school related business. The email distribution list may not be used by any parent for any advertising or personal causes.

### Holidays

We recognize there are many different cultures in our Preschool community and a host of different ways in which families celebrate holidays. We encourage families to share their religious traditions, culture and values. As this is a ministry of Christ & Holy Trinity Church, we do celebrate Christmas, with the emphasis on Christ's birth and giving to others, as well as Easter, with the emphasis on re-birth in God's world around us. We invite you to share with your child's class how your family celebrates other special holidays.

### Field Trips

Field trips are an important and integral component of our program. The children not only have fun on field trips, but also get to experience a community environment with their friends and learn new exciting skills. All children must have permission slips signed by their parent prior to leaving the Preschool for field trips or to attend weekly chapel or school-wide events/presentations in Seabury or Branson Hall. Staff members bring each child's emergency contact information, first aid kit and any required medications on field trips.

About a week or so before a scheduled field trip, a permission slip will be sent home to parents telling them about the trip and cost (if applicable). In order to attend the field trip, each child must have a signed permission slip. Parents may join a field trip by providing transportation or accompanying the class on foot. The teachers or room parents will arrange extra adult chaperones. No child will be permitted to attend unless an appropriate car seat is provided. When scheduling field trips, enough time is allowed to make the trip enjoyable and yet return in time for dismissal. Safety is of the utmost importance and it is a policy that the class always travels as a group. Attendance is taken at arrival and before leaving the site. Each teacher will bring a cell phone to call for help if needed. Class teachers will take a first aid kit, individual children's medications and emergency information. Children in the Two's classes will take walking trips only, with the ratio being one teacher or parent for every two children.

Below are the procedures to be followed for field trips:

- Before a scheduled field trip, a parent must provide a signed permission slip or send an email giving permission for their child to go on the field trip. Parents must provide an appropriate car seat for transportation of their child to the field trip site.

- If needed, parents will provide written permission for their child to be transported in another parent's vehicle using their own or a borrowed car seat. All car seats must be labeled by the parent. Teachers will email all parents before a scheduled field trip to notify them who will be driving their child.
- Parents may accompany their child on a field trip, however, siblings are not permitted to attend field trips unless otherwise specified by the Director.
- Chaperone/drivers will be expected to make a copy of their current license and insurance card and provide their license plate and cell phone numbers to the office. A map and/or directions will be provided to drivers.
- Attendance is taken upon arrival at the field trip site, when moving to different locations, before leaving and when class has returned to school.
- If any incidents occur while on the field trip that result in injuries or complaints of pain, teachers will attend to any medical needs or administer first-aid. Teachers will call 911 if medical treatment or police are required. Teacher and parent (if present) will stay with the child.
- Teacher will contact parents/emergency designate to give an update on the emergency situation and steps taken. Teachers will notify parent/emergency designate of location for pick-up of child, if different than one indicated on permission slip.

### Diaper Changing Policy

Parents of children not yet potty-trained are responsible for providing commercially available disposable diapers unless the child has a medical reason that does not permit their use. Parents/caregivers are asked to check their child's diaper at drop-off to make sure it is clean and dry. Diapers will be changed in designated changing areas only. Teachers wear disposable gloves for changing diapers, and a clean pair is put on for each diaper change. Diaper changing will be done on a changing table covered with a disposable paper cover that is changed for each child. Surfaces used for changing are not used for any other purposes. Caregivers will keep a hand on the child at all times when on a changing table. Teachers will check children at least every two hours to see if a diaper change is needed. Children are changed if wet or soiled when checked. Soiled diapers are put in a plastic bag and the bag is disposed of in a lidded, hands free container. These containers are closed and contents are not accessible to children. Both before and after changing a child's diaper, the teacher washes her hands and the child is instructed to wash his/her hands. The changing table is then cleaned and disinfected with a bleach solution. Staff members whose primary function is preparing food will not change diapers until their food preparation duties are completed. These procedures are State of Connecticut licensing requirements, and are designed to prevent the spread of diseases.

It is not expected that all children in the 2's and 3's classes will be fully toilet trained prior to the beginning of school. We encourage parents to start the training process as soon as their child seems interested and ready, but teachers will work with parents to develop an individualized plan for toilet training. We ask parents to use diapers or pull-ups until their child is ready for underwear. The teachers will remind children to use the toilet periodically during the school day, and provide encouragement with toileting hygiene.

### Smoke Free/Weapon Free Environment

The Preschool is a sanctuary for children and their families. No smoking is permitted in the presence of children either inside the facility or in the outdoor play area. Weapons, real or toys, are not allowed.

## Pet Policy

Classroom pets are maintained in good health. Teachers are required to provide a detailed Pet Care Plan outlining how the health of the animal in their classroom will be maintained. No pet is kept in a classroom where a child has developed an allergy to this specific type of animal. Teaching staff supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals. Visiting animals are certified in good health, and teachers and trainers supervise interactions.

## Director Absence

If the Director leaves the Preschool building for any reason during Preschool hours, the Assistant Director will be designated as in charge. In the unlikely event that both the Director and Assistant Director must leave the building, a head teacher will be designated by the Director to answer the telephone, be aware of visitors, and lock up the building at the end of the day. In the event that the Director should have a period of extended illness or absence, (s)he or a family member will notify the Reverend John Betit, Rector/Head of School and the Chairperson of the Preschool Governance Committee.

During the Director's absence, the Assistant Director would assume the responsibility of Acting Director. (S)he knows the policies and procedures of the Preschool and will notify parents of any urgent matters, if necessary. The Educational Consultant could be called upon for advice during the Director's Absence.

## Child Abuse and Neglect Identification and Reporting

All of our staff members have a responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of any children enrolled in the Preschool.

### Definition of Child Abuse

- Any non-accidental physical or mental injury (*i.e.*, shaking, beating, burning)
- Any form of sexual abuse (*i.e.*, sexual exploitation)
- Neglect of a child (*i.e.*, failure to provide food, clothing, shelter, education, mental care, appropriate supervision)
- Emotional abuse (*i.e.*, excessive belittling, berating, or teasing which impairs the child's psychological growth)
- At risk behavior (*i.e.*, placing a child in a situation which might endanger him by abuse or neglect).

Child Abuse is defined as a child who has had:

- Non-accidental physical injuries inflicted upon him
- Injuries which are at variance with the history given of them
- Is in a condition, which is the result of maltreatment, such as, but not limited to, malnutrition, sexual exploitation, and deprivation of necessities, emotional maltreatment or cruel punishment.

Child neglect is defined as a child who has been:

- Abandoned
- Denied proper care and attention physically, educationally, emotionally or morally

- Allowed to live under circumstances, conditions or associations injurious to his well-being (CT statutes 46b-120)

### Staff Responsibility

The Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF) mandate certain professionals including healthcare providers and teachers as “mandated reporters” who must report cases of suspected child abuse. As childcare providers we are mandated by law to report **any suspicion** that a child is being abused, neglected or at risk. All suspicions of abuse or neglect must be brought to the attention of the Preschool Director immediately. It is not the responsibility of the reporter to determine whether abuse or neglect has occurred. Reports will be made when an employee of the Preschool has reasonable cause to suspect or believe that a child under the age of 18 has been abused, neglected or is placed in imminent risk of serious harm by a person responsible for the child’s health, welfare, or care, or by a person given access to the child by a responsible person. Legally, any mandated reporter who fails to report reasonable suspicion of child abuse is guilty of a misdemeanor. Reporting in good faith guarantees immunity from civil or criminal liability. Staff are protected by law from discrimination or retaliation for reporting suspected abuse or neglect (CT General Statutes, Section 17a-101e). Failure to report could result in fines up to \$500.

### Reporting Procedures

Connecticut General Statutes Section 17a-101 requires that mandated reporters must **report orally** to DCF or a law enforcement agency within **12 hours** of suspecting that a child has been abused or neglected. The individual who observed or suspects the abuse or neglect is responsible for calling the DCF Child Protection Care line at 1-800-842-2288. Within **48 hours** of making the report, the mandated reporter must submit a **written report** (DCF – 136) to DCF. (Address: 1616 Washington Street Stamford, CT 06902). All phone calls to DCF will be documented and kept on file at the Preschool. A copy of all statements from staff and the DCF-136 shall also be kept on file.

### Staff Training

Staff are required to complete bi-annual professional development training focusing on the steps for reporting suspected abuse and neglect and the role of a mandated reporter. All new staff will be trained in these procedures prior to their start in the classroom.

### Suspected Abuse by Staff Members

The Preschool supports a zero tolerance for abuse and neglect and will implement immediate action should there be an allegation that a staff member abused or neglected a child. The administration will protect the child, including immediate notification of a parent or guardian, once there is an allegation of abuse or neglect of a child in our program. Any staff member accused of abuse or neglect may be immediately removed from his or her position until DCF’s investigation is completed. Based on whether the allegations were substantiated or not, the employee would either be dismissed from his/her position or allowed to return to work. If a Preschool employee is accused or suspected of child abuse, the allegation will be reported to DCF, the Director and Preschool Governance Committee within 24 hours and an internal

investigation will commence immediately. The staff member suspected of abuse will be placed on an immediate leave of absence during the investigative process with termination of employment if the accusation is found. Failure to report the observed mistreatment of a child by other staff members shall result in similar action. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Preschool will follow all protocol required by the State, as such protocol may be amended from time to time.

## Complaint Procedure

The following Complaint Procedure is for child day care programs that are licensed under the authority of Connecticut General Statutes 19a-79-12. Most problems within a day care center are non-life threatening and can be resolved by:

1. Discussing the problem with the classroom teacher
2. Discussing the problem with the Director or Head of School

If a problem is not resolved, the parent may contact the Department of Public Health. In case of emergency, notify the Department of Public Health as soon as the emergency is under control.

In cases of abuse/neglect or life threatening situations contact the:

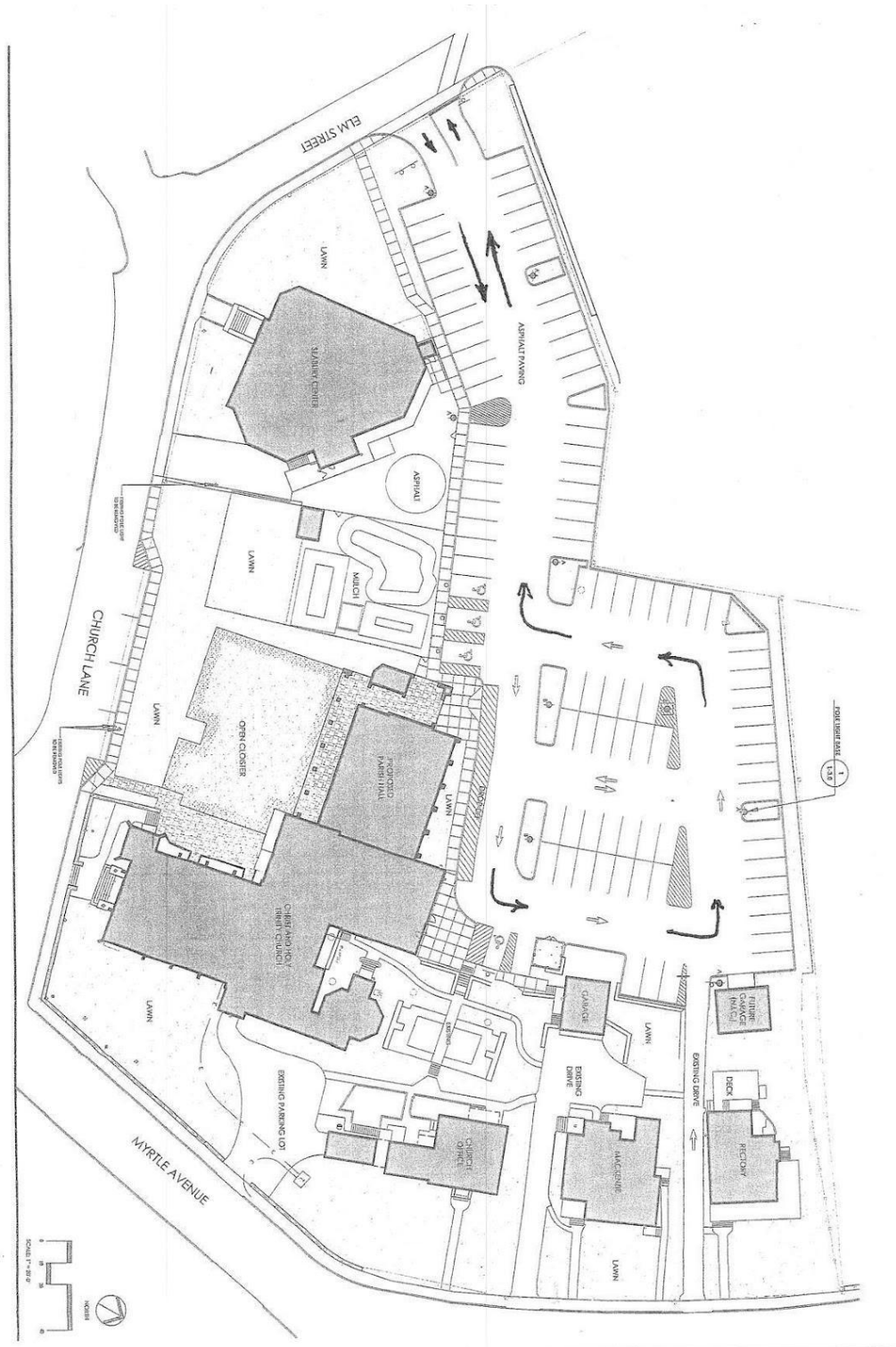
The Department of Children and Families at 1-800-842-2288

The Department of Public Health-Day Care Licensing Unit at 1-800-282-6063

ALL INSPECTION REPORTS AND COMPLIANCE LETTERS ARE AVAILABLE FOR INSPECTION AT THE PRESCHOOL OR BY CONTACTING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES-DAY CARE LICENSING UNIT AT:

State of Connecticut  
Department of Public Health  
410 Capitol Ave., MS#12DAC  
Hartford, CT 06134-0308  
1-800-439-0437  
1-800-282-6063  
1-800-509-8045

# Appendix I: Campus Map



## Appendix II: The Reggio Emilia Approach

Started by Loris Malaguzzi in the post World War II era in northern Italy, the Reggio Emilia approach has been endorsed by field leaders Lillian Katz, Howard Gardner, and George Foreman. Based on the theories of Piaget, Dewey, Bronfenbrenner, and Vygotsky, the philosophy is consistent with the belief in a curriculum that is child-initiated and teacher-facilitated, open-ended, and play-focused. This philosophy benefits children, families, and teachers through eight basic principles (Saltz, 1994):

1. **The Image of the Child** – Adults see each child as having unique strengths and potential. In the classroom, children are encouraged to construct their own knowledge through exploration, self-expression, and interactions with their teachers and peers.
2. **Symbolic Representation** – As a means of enhancing children’s cognitive, social, and creative development, a wide array of media and activities are introduced in the context of an integrated curriculum. These help children represent their ideas and emotions through many “languages” including spoken and written words, visual arts, drama, movement, music, and more.
3. **Education Based on Interaction and Collaboration** – Education is experienced as a continuous cooperative interaction between those involved in the school community. Collaboration takes place between teachers and children, children and peers, teachers and other teachers, teachers and families, and the school and the community. All are important in the educational process.
4. **The Project Approach** – The children learn through cooperating with other children and their teachers in long-term projects based on children’s interests and the arts as central features of the program. Projects may be based on either teacher or child initiatives, but always develop in response to the children’s interests and curiosity as teachers and children engage in the co-construction of understandings and concepts.
5. **The Importance of Time** – Projects and activities are not fragmented or rigidly limited by a predetermined time frame; rather they develop and build upon one another over time, as the children “revisit” their original work and ideas, refining them further through new experiences, activities, and forms of expression. Time is also important in building sustaining, collaborative, working relationships with peers and teachers.
6. **The Role of the Teacher/Teacher as Partner** – The teacher is a partner in learning with the child. The teacher’s role is to act as a resource, provocateur and partner in learning with the children. Children’s work, play, and discussions are documented through notes, photos and videos. These are carefully reviewed by the teachers and guide their curriculum and project discussions based on the children’s interests, ideas, and developmental readiness to acquire new skills.
7. **The Role of the Parents** – Parents are active participants in the activities of the school and in their children’s projects. Parents are welcomed into the schools and collaborate with teachers in curriculum and administrative decisions. They give of their time and talents and serve as advocates for the schools in the community.
8. **The Role of Environment** – Through conscious use of space, color, natural light, attractive and appropriate learning materials and documentation of children’s work, the environment serves as another teacher and is inviting to children, teachers, families, and visitors.



