



The Cartwright School

Parent Operational Handbook

2026–2027 School Year



Texas
Rising
Star

Texas Rising Star Approved Policies
have been added to this edition.

Table of Contents



Welcome Letter – **Includes:** *TCS Mission, Philosophy, & Statement*

1. Administration & General Info
2. Holidays
3. Classroom Hours and Curriculum – **Includes:** *Curriculum, Developmental Milestones and Early Intervention Support*
4. Arrival and Departure – **Includes:** *Release of Children, Legal Custody, and Late Pick-Up Fees*
5. Tuition & Fees – **Includes:** *Payment Methods, Neighborhood Centers Inc (NCI) Parent Fees, Receipts/Financial Statements*
6. Enrollment and Policy Changes – **Includes:** *Enrollment Forms & Absences*
7. Vaccine-preventable diseases (Employees)
8. Health Checks
9. Child Illness & Exclusion
10. Medication
11. Medical Emergencies
12. Unassigned Epinephrine Auto-Injectors
13. Immunizations
14. Hearing and Vision Screenings
15. Communication – **Includes:** *Communication Systems and Emergency Information/Update Contact Information*
16. Parental Notifications – **Includes:** *Inclement Weather*
17. Discipline and Guidance – **Includes:** *Behavior Expectation | Challenging Behavior Support & Intervention*
18. Child Suspension and Expulsion
19. Meals/Nutrition – **Includes:** *Special Occasions and Food Allergy Emergency Plans*
20. Inclusive Services
21. Rest Time Provisions
22. Clothing and Uniform
23. Field Trips, Transportation, and Water Activities
24. Animals
25. Indoor and Outdoor Physical Activities
26. Screen Time Policies
27. Insect Repellent and Sunscreen
28. Safe Sleep for Infants
29. Breastfeeding
30. Parent Code of Conduct
31. Parent Concerns/Complaints
32. Parent/Teacher Relationships
33. Right of Access / Parent Rights – **Includes:** *Family Participation, Parent/Teacher Conferences, Parent Rights, and Family Input & Program Improvement*
34. Childcare Licensing and Minimum Standards
35. Child Abuse and Neglect
36. Emergency Preparedness
37. Gang-Free Zone
38. Schooler Information – **Includes:** *After School Van Service*

Welcome to The Cartwright School!

Hello, and welcome to The Cartwright School (TCS)! The Cartwright School is a uniformed, academic childcare program for preschool children aged 18 mos. - 5 years old. Our childcare facility has been open and operational since September 2011 and is family-owned and operated. TCS provides students with a stimulating learning environment that will increase the child's social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development.

TCS Mission

At The Cartwright School, our mission is to help students "gain knowledge for success!" To achieve this goal, our students learn through age-appropriate play experiences, music, art, and active participation in an environment suited to each young learner's needs. We encourage not only academics but also the motivation to become self-learners and a love for acquiring new knowledge and skills. We want to provide an atmosphere and a reliable program to equip each child with self-confidence, independence, and robust cognitive and social skills.

TCS Philosophy

Our philosophy at The Cartwright School stems from the belief that all children learn best in an early childhood program that provides developmentally appropriate practices in a safe and healthy learning environment. We believe in the student-based philosophy of Progressivism, which emphasizes that children learn through "hands-on" activities cultivated from real-world experiences, from which they can voice and view various perspectives and solutions. Students learn from planned field trips, reenacting, playing, and testing an idea to discover if it holds merit. The teachers utilize the Gradual Release Model as a scaffold for instruction because they know every child is unique and learns at their own pace, and we are here to foster and encourage their learning!

TCS Statement

We are excited to have you and your family join our preschool/pre-kindergarten facility and TCS circle! Whether your child is a new student or has been with us for some time, you and your family are an essential and valued asset for our continued success. We strive to make each family feel comfortable with our operation and the academics taught in each classroom. The Cartwright School acknowledges the significance of relationships among teachers, students, parents, and the broader community. We are here to promote continuous collaboration for the success of our children!

We look forward to having you and your child(ren) join us this school year for all the fun learning and activities we have planned! Again, we thank you for your time, patience, participation, and consideration in connection with our team. Let's make this a **great** and **productive** year for your child!

Sincerely,
TCS Management Team



I. ADMINISTRATION & GENERAL INFO

School Address/Phone: 1314 Turtle Creek Drive
Missouri City, Texas 77489
Phone: (281)437-6300 / Fax: (281)437-6301

Online: E-mail: tcschool1647@gmail.com | thecartwrightschool.connect@gmail.com
Website: www.thecartwrightschool.com
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/tcschool1647>

Director I: **Aarica McIntyre**
msmcintyre84@gmail.com
(281)810-7088

Director II: **Kayla Shuler**
thecartwrightschool.connect@gmail.com
(281)437-6300

Business Manager: **Malcolm Wiley**
amthereanholdinginc@gmail.com
(281)940-4833

Building Manager: **Domonique Washington**
thecartwrightschool.connect@gmail.com
(281)437-6300

Hours of Operation: January – December (*except on specified holidays or days designated by the Center*)
Monday – Friday; 6:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

2. HOLIDAYS

The Cartwright School acknowledges the following nine (9) recognized holidays:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Fourth of July
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving
- Christmas

The Center may designate other early dismissal days or closures. Please refer to the school calendar for holiday dates and early dismissals.

3. CLASSROOM HOURS AND CURRICULUM

The Cartwright School believes education is the key to a child's future; therefore, we would like the children to be at the Center no later than **9 a.m.** We want to ensure that every child receives the maximum benefit from our educational program. Therefore, all children must be in their classrooms by 9:00 a.m. All children who arrive at 9:00 a.m. or later will be marked as "tardy" on the daily attendance sheet.

CURRICULUM

The Cartwright School implements the **Experience Early Learning Curriculum**, integrated with Brightwheel, for all our classes. Experience Early Learning Curriculum is aligned with the Texas Infant, Toddler & Three's Early Learning Standards and Texas Prekindergarten Standards. EELC's integrated curriculum system uniquely weaves 35 research-based skills into playful games and discovery projects. The cross-disciplinary model supports a child's social-emotional, physical, language, and cognitive development. Within cognitive development, EELC focuses on *Mathematics and Reasoning, Creative Arts, Science, and Social Studies*.

The Experience Curriculum family applies child development theories and brain research to a unique teacher support model, child experience, and family engagement.

- **THE VIEW OF THE CHILD:** Every child is full of potential, naturally curious, and essential to the community.
- **THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER:** The teacher is a learner alongside the child. As a researcher and guide, the teacher offers resources and support.
- **THE ROLE OF THE ENVIRONMENT:** Children explore their environment to experiment with ideas, manipulate materials, and construct knowledge.
- **THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY:** Families are central to the intellectual and social growth of the child. Family culture and beliefs add beauty to the school community.

DEVELOPMENTAL MILESTONES & EARLY INTERVENTION SUPPORT

The Cartwright School utilizes developmental milestone checklists and child progress monitoring tools to support each child's growth and development. For children ages 18–48 months, the program uses CLI Engage Infant and Toddler developmental checklists. For children ages 4 and 5, the program uses the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Developmental Milestones Checklists.

Developmental milestone checklists are conducted three times throughout the academic school year (beginning, middle, and end of year) in alignment with the program's academic assessments. These checkpoints allow teachers to monitor developmental progress and identify any potential concerns early.

Families receive results during scheduled parent-teacher conferences following the beginning-of-year and mid-year assessments. End-of-year results are shared prior to the start of the summer program. Additional conferences may be scheduled as needed to discuss a child's development.

If a developmental concern is identified, the program will communicate with the family and provide guidance and resources for additional support. For children under the age of 3, families may be referred to Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) services through the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. For children ages 3–5, families may be encouraged to contact their local school district to request an evaluation through Child Find or Early Childhood Special Education services.

Families may request information regarding developmental milestones, screening results, or support services at any time.

4. ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Parents and guardians are expected to use the Brightwheel Kiosks in the front office to sign their child(ren) in and out daily. There are **NO EXCEPTIONS!** Each individual listed in the child's file as a parent, guardian, or authorized pick-up will have a personalized code they must use. It is recommended that individuals refrain from sharing this code. Type in your code on the kiosk, select the child(ren) you are signing in for, and then press Confirm. You will sign your name on the following screen and then confirm again. Once complete, you will see a green screen with a check mark indicating that your child is signed in. When entering and leaving the building, children should be escorted **into** the Center by the person who brings them to school and accompanied by the designated pick-up person. Upon arrival, a staff member will escort your child to class, and at departure, wait with them in the reception area until the pick-up person has completed the sign-out procedure. To ensure your children's safety, please **do not** allow them to exit the building ahead of you.

▪ **RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

As a requirement of the enrollment process, you must complete a section on the admission form for *Authorized Pick-up Release*. This section permits select individuals to pick up children from the Center. **The children of The Cartwright School may only be released to a parent or a person designated by the parent (MS 746.4101).** Suppose an alternate person, who IS NOT listed as a designated person on the admission form, attempts to pick up the child. In that case, the Center must have written authorization from the parent with the person's name and relation on the statement. If a staff member does not have written confirmation, a TCS staff member will immediately contact you or the person on the admission form. **The designated person picking up the child(ren) must have a valid form of identification, which will be photocopied and documented in the child's file, as well as the person's license plate number. TCS WILL NOT release the child until the parent has authorized the pick-up person** or if any staff member suspects the person receiving the child is under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

▪ **LEGAL CUSTODY**

The Cartwright School cannot restrict a parent listed on the enrollment/admission document from picking up their child unless obligated by a court order. The primary parent must give a copy of the official, stamped court document indicating this ruling to the Director, Controlling Person, or Person in Charge. TCS Administration must place the court order in the child's record to ensure the restriction can be honored. Without the court order on file with TCS, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. The Cartwright School cannot limit one parent's access by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason, without a valid court order.

If a situation arises where one parent does not want the other to have access to their child, The Cartwright School recommends that the parent retain custody until a court order is issued. If one is issued, we **must maintain** a copy of the court order in the child's file. Our rights to retain a child are secondary to the parent's entitlement to immediate access. The Cartwright School's staff will contact the local police if a conflict should arise. If conflicting court orders are presented, TCS will follow the court order that is most

recently dated. Once presented with any court order (e.g., Custody order, restraining order, protection from abuse order), The Cartwright School must follow the demand for the entire period it is in effect. At the request of anyone (except the issuing judge), TCS employees cannot allow any court order to be violated. The Cartwright School will report any violations of these orders to the court.

Upon receipt of a valid court order signed by a judge that prohibits a parent from removing the named child or children from TCS, we must:

- Comply with the court order immediately and until a receipt of a subsequent court order that revokes the primary order is given or the court order expires as defined in the document.

▪ **LATE PICK-UP FEES**

The Cartwright School will hold the parent or person picking up the child responsible for paying a late pick-up fee after 6:30 p.m. Therefore, if your child is picked up after the specified school hours, be prepared to pay the closing staff a late pick-up fee. ***The late pick-up fee is \$5 per child for every 5-minute interval (and any part thereof) after the regular hours of operation.*** Late pick-up fees will be added to your weekly tuition if not paid on the day of the late pick-up. All forms of payment for the late pick-up fee are accepted. No exceptions!

5. TUITION AND FEES

Parents must pay an annual registration fee before their child attends The Cartwright School for the academic school year. **The registration fee and weekly tuition payments are NON-REFUNDABLE** unless otherwise specified by the Business Manager. All tuition payments for The Cartwright School are due on Mondays. **Tuition is considered late on Tuesday, and TCS will charge the parent a \$10 late flat fee (per child) until tuition is paid in full. If tuition and applicable late fees are not paid by Friday, the child will be excluded from the Center starting the following Monday until tuition payments are up to date.** *Please Note: If your child attends one (1) day of the week, the FULL tuition amount is due. If your child attends zero (0) or no days in the week, half (½) of your tuition fee is expected to hold your child's space on the roster.* The Controlling Person or Business Manager will handle all tuition issues and concerns. **There is NO CREDIT for scheduled school holidays, child illness, or closings due to emergencies and/or inclement weather.**

PAYMENT METHODS

The Cartwright School accepts tuition payments through checks, money orders, debit/credit cards, and cash. Parents may also pay via our online options of Zelle, Brightwheel, and www.thecartwrightschool.com. **Always write your child's name on the check, money order, debit/credit slip, or cash envelope before dropping the payment in the blue box (located on the desk).** Please DO NOT give any tuition payments to staff members; place all payments in the blue metal box on the desk. **All returned checks will incur a \$25 charge. Any individual who has submitted two (2) returned checks will be required to pay by money order or debit/credit card only.**

CHILD CARE SERVICES (CCS) PARENT FEES (Formerly NCI)

If you are a parent who receives vouchers from **Child Care Services (CCS)**, formerly known as **Neighborhood Centers Inc. (NCI)**, you must pay your **weekly parent fee** on time. If you have not transitioned to weekly payments, then half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of your monthly parent fee is due on or before the 5th of each month, and the second half must be paid by the 15th of each month. CCS Parents can also pay their parent fee in full at the beginning of the month. However, CCS parents will also be subject to late fees if payments are delinquent.

RECEIPTS / FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

TCS Administration will only give computerized payment statements monthly upon the parents' request. **TCS will NOT issue weekly automated reports.** If parents need specific documentation, such as a receipt with the school's name, please maintain your Credit/Debit receipt with all of the school's information on the top and/or all money order stubs. If the parent pays with a money order, a member of management will sign, date, and write the school's information on the backside of the money order stub. ALL parents should keep stubs and receipts for their records if a discrepancy with their child's account occurs.

6. ENROLLMENT AND POLICY CHANGES

The Cartwright School has year-round open enrollment. When we are near capacity, enrollment priority is given to siblings of children attending the Center and those receiving NCI. The Cartwright School welcomes students regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, ability, gender, or family structure.

ENROLLMENT FORMS

All forms given in the Enrollment Folder from The Cartwright School must be filled out, signed, and returned, including documents that require a doctor's signature, immunization records, and hearing and vision screening, if applicable. Parents must update enrollment forms every three months or when there is a change in student or parent information. The parents must also have a health statement on file at the Center within one (1) week after the date of admission. School-age children do not need to provide an immunization record or health statement; list the name, address, and telephone number of the elementary school they attend in the designated area on the enrollment form. In addition, the parents will be given an updated TCS Operational Policies Handbook or an amendment that will require the parents' signature. TCS Admin will provide a copy to the parent upon request.

ABSENCES

If your child will be absent, please call, e-mail, or message the Center on Brightwheel to let us know.

Please Note: If your child attends one (1) day of the week, the FULL tuition amount is due. If your child attends zero (0) or no days in the week, half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of your tuition fee is expected to hold your child's space on the roster. Children who are absent for more than ten (10) days will automatically be withdrawn from the Center, with or without notice. Parents will be charged $\frac{1}{2}$ tuition for those two weeks if prior notification was not given. The parent **must** pay the registration fee if they wish to re-enroll their child after being withdrawn by either the parent or the school. If your child is going on vacation, please notify the school of their extended absence to avoid withdrawal and repayment of registration fees.

If your *school-age* child is absent, you must notify the Center by noon so the van driver is aware before making the afternoon pick-up from their school.

7. VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES (EMPLOYEES)

The Cartwright School policy does not mandate that staff members receive vaccinations as a condition of employment. Staff members are encouraged to receive immunizations annually; however, it is not mandatory. Staff members must obtain a tuberculosis test and receive a negative result.

8. HEALTH CHECKS

Upon enrollment, a child assessment form is required to inform The Cartwright School of your child's daily habits, such as toileting, eating, and behavior. The assessment also addresses general medical information about your child. Upon arrival, the Cartwright School will perform a daily health check on all children enrolled. *The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services requires a health check and a visual or physical assessment to identify potential concerns about a student's health, including signs and symptoms of illness and changes in a child's behavior and everyday habits.* The Cartwright School staff will conduct a VISUAL health check based on the assessment provided, our fundamental knowledge of the child, and previous observations of the child. The staff member will document any signs of health concerns or illness on the Child Notes Form and/or Illness Report available for each teacher.

9. CHILD ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION

TCS requests that parents **not** bring their children to the Center if they display sickness or have a fever. We also kindly ask parents to respect the staff's judgment when they determine that a child should not attend the Center due to illness. **As an added safety and health measure, TCS will continue performing temperature checks when students arrive at the Center.** If your child becomes ill at the Center, a parent or emergency contact will be contacted and instructed to pick up the child immediately. The child must be isolated from the other children until the moment of departure. Any considerable sickness or illness your child may have requires exclusion from the Center for 24 HOURS. NO EXCEPTIONS!

Children must be excluded from The Cartwright School and associated activities if they have a temperature of 100°F or more. The Cartwright School **only** utilizes the infrared temporal (forehead), tympanic (ear), and axillary (armpit) gauges/thermometers to determine a child's temperature. Children may also be excluded from the Center for:

- severe lethargy,
- abnormal breathing,
- uncontrolled diarrhea and/or vomiting (2 or more episodes within 24 hours),
- a rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, behavior changes, continuous abnormal nasal discharge (yellow or green discharge indicates infection),
- and if the child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease (MS 746.3601).

When a child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness, they may return with a doctor's note stating they are clear for re-entry. If your child is ill while at the Center, the staff will:

- Fill out an Illness Form.
- Contact the parent or designated contact person immediately.
- Care for the child separately, away from other children, with proper supervision.

All parents must have a signed and dated Sick Child Policy Form.

10. **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

The Cartwright School Director or another member of management will administer medication to a child if the parents sign an authorization form that must include the times for the medicine to be issued (according to the label directions). The medication must be in the original container with the child's first name, last name, and the date brought to the Center labeled on the container. TCS management will administer all medication in the amounts according to the label directions or as the doctor prescribes. TCS Administration **will not** administer medication after its expiration date; they will only distribute medicines to the child they are intended for (MS 746.3801). Assuming the child has a recurring medical problem (ex., Asthma or eczema), the parent or doctor may sign a medical authorization allowing The Cartwright School to administer the medication when symptoms occur for up to six months (MS 746.3803). **Please note that the Center will not administer medication that is NOT age-appropriate according to the directions labeled on the original container** unless otherwise specified by the child's doctor. TCS must obtain written verification with the doctor's authentic signature to administer such medications.

11. **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

If a child has a medical emergency, The Cartwright School will contact emergency medical services (EMS), take the child to the nearest emergency center, and/or give the child first-aid treatment or CPR when needed. Next, the Center will contact the child's doctor listed on their record if EMS has yet to be reached. Finally, the Center will call, text, or e-mail the child's parent while ensuring all other children in the group are appropriately supervised (MS 746.3607).

12. **UNASSIGNED EPINEPHRINE AUTO-INJECTORS**

Currently, The Cartwright School will not utilize unassigned epinephrine auto-injectors – sometimes known as an EpiPen – for someone reasonably believed to be experiencing an anaphylactic reaction. **Therefore, all students with known environmental/food allergies, with a TCS Allergy Action Plan on file, MUST supply their own EpiPen.** However, TCS has policies and procedures to address ecological/food allergies and the use of Epinephrine auto-injectors.

Avoidance Strategies

The Cartwright School has implemented strategies that reduce the risk of exposure to anaphylactic agents in the rooms and common areas where a child is attending. We significantly reduce the risk of an anaphylactic reaction; however, the facility cannot be deemed free of any food or non-food products that may cause or lead to any anaphylactic response.

Food Avoidance

- All food-allergen-children should only eat lunches and snacks prepared at TCS. **Foods that students cannot have will be substituted with other items on the menu.**
- There should be no sharing of food, food containers, and utensils.
- Hand washing is required before and after eating.
- Surfaces such as tables, toys, etc., will be washed clean of contaminating food and sterilized.

Treatment Strategies & Protocols

Accidental food ingestion can occur despite avoidance measures. For these emergencies, treatment will be immediately available. A physician must prescribe any protocol, and a TCS Allergy Action Plan must be completed. We use the Epinephrine auto-injector device, EpiPen, because of its simplicity.

Epinephrine and any other doctor-prescribed medication specified on the child's TCS Allergy Action Plan are kept in a location that is easily accessible and not in locked cupboards, drawers, or medical boxes. All staff, students, and volunteers with TCS know the location of the Epinephrine auto-injector devices (EpiPen). The Epinephrine auto-injector device is readily available in the child's classroom. The auto-injector accompanies the child when they are not in their classroom. All individuals entrusted with the child's care are trained to use Epinephrine auto-injector devices (EpiPen). This training is given to the administration and all staff by the parents. The parents should advise the staff on procedures to be followed if a child has an anaphylactic reaction. The staff member shall sign to confirm that this training has been completed. Upon registration, parents and a licensed healthcare professional must complete a TCS Allergy Action Plan, allowing The Cartwright School to administer the required medications. These forms are to be updated as changes occur.

Allergy Communication Plan

Based on the information provided by the parents, all staff, students, and volunteers at The Cartwright School are aware of the child's life-threatening allergies and the specific foods and causative agents to be avoided. Acknowledging allergies is done through written communication, one-on-one verbal communication, or a staff meeting. You may also see an allergy chart listing all known allergies of enrolled children posted in food preparation areas, eating areas, and activity rooms.

TCS Allergy Action Plan

At registration, The Cartwright School requires that the parent/guardian and physician complete an individual Action Plan for each child with an anaphylactic allergy. The Plan includes information on life-threatening allergies on a TCS Allergy Action Plan, which will be posted in the child's room, and a copy remains with the EpiPen. The unexpired EpiPen and the TCS Allergy Action Plan are kept in a case, fanny pack, or small backpack that the child or staff can easily carry. Before the child starts, the parent will review all of the following information with the Supervisor:

- The child's photo for precise identification of the child,
- A description of the child's allergy,
- The monitoring and avoidance strategies,
- The signs and symptoms, i.e., hives, itching
- Documentation of the first-aid response, including any prescribed medications,
- Emergency contact information,

- The location and storage of Epinephrine auto-injectors/medications.

As mentioned, this Action Plan is kept in the attendance binder, posted in the room, held with the EpiPen, and in the child's file. **The child's parent/guardian must ensure that the information provided for the child's file (TCS Allergy Action Plan) is up-to-date with the child's medication.** The Plan offers details to inform all staff, students, and volunteers who regularly interact with the child, including the type of allergy, monitoring and avoidance strategies, and appropriate treatment. In addition, the parent/guardian must sign a consent that allows our staff to administer the allergy medication if their child has an anaphylactic reaction.

Training

The administration of The Cartwright School is responsible for providing ongoing education to staff, parents, students, and volunteers. The education includes, among other things, training on recognizing the symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction, administering the EpiPen, proper hand washing techniques, and encouraging non-sharing of food. The administration has arranged for mandatory annual reviews of this policy before employment or involvement at TCS and at any time in the year deemed necessary. The Center's administration will train all individuals entrusted with the child's care to use an epinephrine auto-injector device, like the EpiPen.

Symptoms of Anaphylactic Shock

In the case of a child who has had an anaphylactic shock previously and who is exposed to a particular allergen, the occurrence of any of the following symptoms, in any combination, indicates anaphylactic shock:

- Hives and itching on any part of the body.
- Swelling of body parts, especially eyelids, lips, face, or tongue.
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.
- Severe stomach cramps.
- Dizziness.
- Coughing, wheezing, or change of voice.
- Difficulty swallowing or breathing.
- Throat tightness or closing.
- Panic.
- Fainting or loss of consciousness.
- Changes of color.

Emergency Action

As in the case of any potential crisis, planning is helpful in successfully managing the event. For example, in dealing with matters of anaphylactic shock, the emergency action is as follows:

1. Get an EpiPen and administer it immediately. Or, have someone call an ambulance and advise them of needing an EpiPen.
2. Record the time at which the EpiPen is administered.
3. Unless the child resists, lay the child down and place the child in recovery.
4. Cover the child.
5. Reassure the child and remain at its side.
6. Have someone call the parent/guardian/emergency contact.

7. Even if symptoms subside, take the child to the hospital immediately.
 - a. If possible, have a staff member accompany the child to the hospital.
 - b. Provide ambulance or hospital personnel with a copy of the TCS Allergy Action Plan for the child and the time a staff member administered the EpiPen.
 - c. Take or hand over all medication relevant to that child's anaphylactic reaction (including the empty EpiPen).
8. Once the crisis has been dealt with, an Incident Report is completed per the policy.

13. IMMUNIZATIONS

All children must be current on immunizations before admission to the Center and must be updated when needed. The parent must give a copy to The Cartwright School to be placed in the child's file. The Center will issue reminders on the child's immunization record, but the parent must ensure the child stays current on vaccinations. A doctor or healthcare professional must validate acceptable documentation for an immunization record through a signature or rubber stamp and include the child's name and date of birth, number of doses, vaccine type, and the month, day, and year received. Immunization records that are not updated promptly can result in the child being excluded from the Center until the records are updated.

14. HEARING AND VISION SCREENING

The Cartwright School requires all children aged four years old to receive a vision and hearing screening by their doctor or a professional. TCS administration must retain a copy in the child's file at the Center to comply with the Texas Department of State Health Services.

15. COMMUNICATION

Communication between parents and staff is one of the most vital aspects we stress upon enrollment. However, ALL IMPERATIVE information from a parent and/or guardian needs to be DIRECTLY relayed to a MANAGEMENT TEAM member, which includes the **Director, Assistant Director, Business Manager/Owner, Overseer, and Controlling Person**.

- All vital information includes but is not limited to the following:
 - o Absences/Tardies/Early Pick-Up
 - o Change of telephone number, address, etc.
 - o Illnesses and injuries
 - o Tuition and fees
 - o Withdrawals

If important information is not disclosed to a member of management, TCS will not be held responsible for any subsequent actions or consequences. Sending personal texts, messages, and other forms of communication to a staff member who is not in management will not be accounted for and will therefore be considered **void**.

COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Parents can communicate with the school in person or via phone (281-437-6300), e-mail (tcschool1647@gmail.com), or Brightwheel messaging. Written reports of your child's experiences will be documented using the Brightwheel app, which features a feed of information for only the parent to view. For parents who opt out of using the Brightwheel app, an email will be sent from a member of management with an attachment of each report.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION / UPDATING CONTACT INFORMATION

The Center will immediately attempt to contact the parent and other listed (and approved) numbers in emergencies. Please ensure **that all contact information is up to date**. You can update your contact information anytime by logging into Brightwheel or emailing a management member. Admin will place the current information in your child's file.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the administration immediately. In addition, you may communicate with a management team member via e-mail (tcschool1647@gmail.com) or business phone (281-437-6300). Lastly, you can call or text Mr. Malcolm at (281)940-4833 and/or Ms. Aarica at (281)810-7088.

16. PARENTAL NOTIFICATIONS

Important notifications that The Cartwright School will send to parents include, but are not limited to:

- if their child requires medical attention from a doctor,
- has a sign or symptom that indicates that the child needs to be excluded from the Center,
- if the child has been placed at risk in any situation,
- and if the Center has unsafe conditions due to weather or other problems.

TCS management will notify the parent if the child has an incident at the Center during operating hours and if their class or teacher has been diagnosed with a communicable disease or an outbreak (MS 746.307). Voice calls will be made for more severe issues.

In addition, TCS Admin will communicate with parents via parent bulletin boards in the front office, e-mail, text messages, or phone calls for any basic school notifications. Each parent will receive a monthly calendar via email, which provides important dates and upcoming activities at the Center.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

Suppose the Center closes due to inclement weather. In that case, parents will be notified via messaging through the Brightwheel app to all contact numbers provided, as well as through e-mail and other media outlets such as social media.

17. DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

The Cartwright School only uses positive methods of discipline and guidance with the children to encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. These values are achieved by fostering good behavior, using clear and age-appropriate communication, reminding the child of good behavior, redirecting the child, and providing brief supervised separation time from the class (MS 746.2803).

Children feel more secure when they have appropriate and consistently enforced limits. Given limitations, children can learn to make independent decisions. In addition, children need the security of knowing that adults will not let them go beyond reasonable boundaries when their self-control fails them. The goal is to maintain appropriate limits, which allow children to explore and grow without harming other children or themselves by:

- Responding to inappropriate behavior by redirection activities and providing positive alternatives;
- Showing disapproval of the child's actions rather than the child;
- Talking with and not to children in a natural voice;
- Giving children positive attention and recognizing positive behaviors;
- Helping children to express anger with words rather than inappropriate actions;
- Involving the group in making rules;
- Considering the individual needs of children as well as the needs of the group whenever possible;
- Providing a choice of developmentally appropriate activities;
- Using encouragement rather than competition, comparison, or criticism;
- Showing appreciation for children's opinions, responding to positive behavior, and using praise and approval.

The Cartwright School staff may not threaten, punish with food, pinch, shake, hit, humiliate, yell, use profane language, or place a child in separation for an inappropriate period (MS 746.2805). In no instance shall a child be deprived of food, isolated, or subjected to corporal punishment or abusive physical exercise as a means of punishment, either by staff or another child.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS

We encourage each child to make appropriate choices and sometimes use the "take a break" area to have a moment away to recollect their composure. The "Take a Break" is the Center's most effective form of discipline. This area is used to remove a child from a location or activity for a few minutes, allowing them to regain self-control. The duration of time they are in this area depends on the child's age. For example, if the child is three (3) years old, they may only "take a break" for three (3) minutes.

Staff are trained to help children with practices that help them calm down, process choices, and redirect their focus. Suppose a caregiver feels that they must take further disciplinary actions. In that case, they will immediately inform a member of management, who will then contact the parent/guardian of the child. In cases of constant inappropriate behavior, parents/guardians **must** attend a parent/teacher conference to outline and agree on a behavior modification plan. Follow-up will be made with the parent daily until the issue is resolved.

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR SUPPORT & INTERVENTION

The Cartwright School recognizes that challenging behaviors may occur as children learn self-regulation, communication, problem-solving, and social-emotional skills. The program is committed to using developmentally appropriate practices and positive guidance strategies to support children in managing behaviors in a safe and supportive learning environment.

Staff are trained to respond to challenging behaviors through positive reinforcement, redirection, emotional support, modeling appropriate behaviors, and helping children identify and express their feelings appropriately. Classroom expectations, routines, and transitions are structured to support children's success and minimize behavioral challenges.

When persistent challenging behaviors occur, teachers and administration will work collaboratively with families to identify concerns, discuss possible contributing factors, and develop appropriate support strategies. Interventions may include:

- Redirection and positive reinforcement;
- Environmental or classroom adjustments;
- Individual behavior support strategies;
- Parent/teacher conferences;
- Documentation of behaviors and interventions;
- Additional communication between school and home; and/or
- Referral recommendations to outside support resources or evaluation services when appropriate.

When ongoing or persistent challenging behaviors require additional support, the program may implement a Behavior Support & Intervention Plan (BIP) to help promote positive behavioral outcomes. The Behavior Support & Intervention Plan is designed to identify behavior concerns, establish individualized support strategies, encourage family collaboration, and monitor progress over time. Families will be included in the development and review of the plan as part of the program's commitment to supporting the social-emotional development and success of each child.

The Cartwright School will make reasonable efforts to support children with challenging behaviors before considering suspension or expulsion from the program. Suspension or expulsion will not be used as the program's first response to behavior concerns except when necessary to protect the safety of children and staff.

Families will be kept informed throughout the intervention process and are encouraged to partner with the program to support positive behavioral outcomes.

18. STUDENT SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION

Unfortunately, there are unanticipated reasons and/or a fundamental change of circumstances that The Cartwright School may or will have to expel a child from our program on a short-term or permanent basis. Before termination of services, The Cartwright School will make every effort to converse with the family to resolve an issue, implement a plan of action, or come to an agreement. If none of the following methods achieve the desired result, The Cartwright School will notify the family in writing that their services have been indefinitely suspended.

The following are reasons we may have to terminate or suspend a child from this Center:

- **Immediate Causes for Expulsion**
 - The child is at risk of causing severe injury to other children or themselves.
 - Parents were breaking the Parent Code of Conduct as stated in the Operational Policies.

- o Parents did not adhere to The Cartwright School policies mentioned in this handbook.
- **Parental Actions for Child's Suspension/Expulsion**
 - o Failure to pay/habitual lateness in payments
 - o Failure to complete required forms, including the child's immunization records.
 - o Chronic tardiness when picking up your child.
 - o Attempted or actual physical or verbal abuse to staff and/or children at The Cartwright School.
 - o Any other action TCS Administration feels threatens the school, staff, or children in care.
- **Child's Actions for Suspension/Expulsion**
 - o Failure of the child to adjust after a reasonable amount of time.
 - o Uncontrollable tantrums/angry outbursts.
 - o Ongoing physical or verbal abuse to staff or other children.
 - o Excessive biting.
 - o Physical property damage.
 - o Multiple Behavior Intervention Sheets.
 - o Any other action TCS Administration feels is detrimental to the learning environment, children in care, and staff.
- **Proactive Actions That Will Be Taken to Prevent Suspension/Expulsion**
 - o Staff will try to redirect the child from damaging behavior.
 - o Staff will reassess the classroom environment, appropriate activities, and supervision.
 - o Staff will always use positive methods and language while disciplining children.
 - o Staff will praise appropriate behaviors.
 - o Staff will consistently apply consequences for rules.
 - o The child will be given verbal warnings.
 - o The teacher will give the child a brief "take a break" time to regain control.
 - o The child's disruptive behavior will be documented and maintained in confidentiality.
 - o TCS Management will verbally notify the parent/guardian and give written copies of the Behavior Intervention Report of disruptive behaviors that might lead to expulsion. The teacher, Director, and parent/guardian must sign *Behavior Intervention Reports*.
 - o The Director / Program Coordinator, classroom staff, and parent/guardian will have a conference(s) to discuss how to promote positive behaviors.
 - o The parent will be given literature or other resources regarding improving behavior.
 - o Recommendations of evaluation by professional consultation and/or local school district team.
- **Schedule of Expulsion**
 - o The Cartwright School teachers are responsible for informing the Director of serious concerns for a child in their classroom. The caregiver will informally communicate with the Director and parents of the child (with Admin approval) when it is determined there are concerns for a particular child at the school. Formal parent conferences will be encouraged if the problem remains unsolved.
 - o Suppose the remedial actions mentioned above do not show progress, and the child has received at least three (3) written reports. In that case, TCS Admin will advise the child's parent/guardian verbally and in writing about the child's or parent's behavior, warranting a suspension by the management team. Suspension is meant to be when the

parent/guardian may work on the child's behavior or establish an agreement with the Center.

- o TCS management will inform the Parent/guardian regarding the length of the suspension period.
- o TCS management will inform the parent/guardian about the expected behavioral changes required to return to the Center of the child or parent.
- o Upon return, if the child/parent fails to satisfy the Plan's terms or the unruly behavior persists, this may result in permanent expulsion from the Center. The parent/guardian will be given a specific expulsion date that allows the parent adequate time to seek alternate child care (approximately one to two weeks' notice, depending on the risk to other children's welfare or safety).

A Child Will Not Be Expelled:

- If a child's parent(s):
 - o Made a complaint to Licensing regarding a center's alleged violations of the licensing requirements.
 - o Reported abuse or neglect occurring at the Center.
 - o Questioned the Center regarding policies and procedures.
- Without giving the parent adequate time to make other childcare arrangements.

Continued enrollment at The Cartwright School is contingent upon the parent's, emergency contact person's, and child's adherence to the policies and procedures of the Center as outlined in this handbook.

19. MEALS/NUTRITION

TCS aims to educate parents and students on the importance of proper nutrition and healthy eating practices throughout the year. The Cartwright School will serve students breakfast, lunch, afternoon snacks, and dinner according to their schedule at the Center. *Breakfast is provided from 7:00 to 8:30 a.m.; lunch is served from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.; the PM Snack is provided from 2:30 to 3:00 p.m.; and dinner is served from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.*

All meals are approved by the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to ensure that The Cartwright School provides our students with the nutritional value needed for proper development and growth. The parents are **not allowed** to bring outside food or snacks. Meals must include milk, grains, fruit or vegetables, and protein. Our menus and food program follow guidelines set by state requirements; therefore, the Center must serve milk with breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Each meal will be served with a cup of water. The Cartwright School never uses food as a punishment. Children will never be denied lunch or snacks for behavioral reasons.

TCS practices silent meals; One of our cafeteria guidelines is to maintain a quiet environment during meals. This is intended to help all students focus on finishing their meals and stay on schedule. After the meal, they can engage in light conversation if time permits.

All parents must complete an online CACFP enrollment and H1531 form for their child(ren) attending the Center. If your child needs a special diet due to allergies, the Center must have written approval from the child's doctor. If the child requires a special diet for religious purposes, the Center must have written documentation from the parent. Parents must provide written notification of any food/dietary restrictions (i.e., lactose intolerance, vegetarian diets, wheat-free/gluten-free diets).

SPECIAL OCCASIONS

Only commercially packaged foods are allowed during special occasions, such as birthdays and holidays. Please note that our Center is a peanut-free zone.

FOOD ALLERGY EMERGENCY PLAN

If your child has a food allergy that a healthcare professional has diagnosed, then the parent and the child's doctor must establish a Food Allergy Emergency Plan. A food allergy emergency plan is an individualized plan prepared by the child's health care professional that includes:

1. A list of each food the child is allergic to or cannot have.
2. Possible symptoms if exposed to a portion of food on the list.
3. The steps to take if the child has an allergic reaction.

The child's healthcare professional and parent must sign and date the Plan BEFORE the Plan is implemented at the Center, with a copy in the child's file.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, which can be obtained online at:

<https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

- Mail:
US Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410; or
- Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- E-mail: program.intake@usda.gov.

20. INCLUSIVE SERVICES

The Cartwright School aims to be an inclusive childcare facility that implements a process in which each child's interests, strengths, and needs, including those with disabilities, are assessed and meaningfully addressed. As a result, each child is included in the program with their peers; their needs are considered when planning/implementing daily activities.

To accommodate the developmental needs of the children in our care, including those with special care needs, we implement the following procedures:

- Resources and information about inclusive childcare and serving children with particular care needs are readily available for parents who require additional information or are expressing concerns about their child(ren). TCS Administration Team may provide this information in other languages upon request.
- Provide accommodations as a healthcare professional or ECI/school district representative recommends, in addition to utilizing any adaptive equipment provided to the Center for a child's use as a professional recommends. **The Cartwright School is not responsible for purchasing or maintaining adaptive equipment recommended for a child; however, we will do so if it aids the child's progress and as an aid to the staff.**
- Have three assessments per academic year to evaluate each child's learning and to determine if modifications are needed for our curriculum. Caregivers can adapt equipment, procedures, and learning materials while using various teaching methods to ensure that care is provided for a child with special needs in a natural environment. However, all activities must integrate children with and without special care needs.
- Ensure that a child receiving an early intervention or special education services can receive those services from a qualified service provider at your operation, with parental request and permission. For example, suppose a child's parent has shared with the Center an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) from a school district or an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) from ECI. In that case, we will try to incorporate the plan, where applicable, into the child's daily activities.

The Cartwright School must include **access, participation, and support** to provide a high-quality educational program for all children in our care.

- **Access** means "providing a wide range of activities and environments for every child by removing physical barriers and offering multiple ways to promote learning and development." Most toys and equipment, for example, are appropriate for all children and can be easily adapted for children with disabilities. In addition, toys and other materials can be placed at eye level for all children to see and touch.
- **Participation** means "using various instructional approaches to promote engagement in play and learning activities and a sense of belonging for every child." Teachers can make simple adjustments or modifications to enable children with disabilities to participate in play and learning activities alongside their peers fully. Adding sensory input, such as texture, making toys easier to grasp, and placing toys near a child are methods to encourage toddlers to engage in play. For a young child with an intellectual disability, activities can be shortened to match the child's attention span. Also, caregivers can break actions into small steps to increase participation. Children with intellectual disabilities will likely need to see or hear one step at a time instead of a long list of instructions. Caregivers can provide opportunities to practice activities repeatedly to help young children master a new skill. Teachers can give bilingual books and multicultural toys to emphasize and encourage diversity. The monthly events calendar features a range of activities that promote awareness of diverse cultural backgrounds and traditions.
- **Supports** refers "to broader aspects of the system such as professional development, incentives for inclusion, and opportunities for communication and collaboration among families and professionals to assure high-quality inclusion." Systems-level support provides ongoing training

for staff and families. They also offer opportunities for communication and collaboration with families, therapists, and staff.

The Americans with Disabilities Act protects children with disabilities and requires childcare providers to serve children with disabilities **ONLY IF** reasonable accommodations can be made. The Cartwright School will discuss the availability of this service during admission inquiries or before enrollment.

21. REST TIME PROVISIONS

The Cartwright School requires that all children have a designated rest period each day, during which they must either nap, rest, read, or play quietly. Rest time gives everyone a much-needed break during the day. With the proper rest time, children become less argumentative in the afternoon or short-tempered with others and are in a better mood when departing for the evening. **The Cartwright School provides all crib sheets and blankets for the children; parents do not have to supply these items.** All items laundered by TCS are washed in Dreft, the baby laundry detergent.

Due to our busy mornings, children need an uninterrupted scheduled naptime. Therefore, unless approved by a management team member, we WILL NOT allow parents to drop off children during this time, regardless of a scheduled doctor's appointment, visitation, or any other circumstance. Please call ahead of time to inform a staff member that your child will be arriving late to school; please do not ring the doorbell, as it may wake up our nappers. Unfortunately, late arrivals disrupt the entire room, and children do not get the rest their body requires. **If you must drop off your child at midday, it must be before noon or after 2:30 p.m.**

22. CLOTHING AND UNIFORM

The Cartwright School is a uniformed school Monday – Thursday unless otherwise specified. All children 18 months and older must wear the uniform, unless otherwise specified. Parents may only purchase individual items through a local retail store. The parents must give those items to the Director so that the TCS logo can be embroidered on the purchased garments. **Each embroidered item costs \$11.** The dress code is as follows:

- **Boys:** Navy Blue/Khaki Pants, Navy Blue/Khaki Shorts, Red TCS Embroidered Polo, Light Blue TCS Embroidered Polo, Navy Blue TCS Embroidered Polo, Light/Pastel Yellow TCS Embroidered Shirt, Any Color Tennis Shoe.
- **Girls:** Navy Blue/Khaki Skirt, Navy Blue/Khaki Shorts, Navy Blue/Khaki Skort, School Plaid Skirt, School Plaid Skort, School Plaid Dress with TCS Embroidery, Navy Blue/Khaki Dress with TCS Embroidery, Red TCS Embroidered Polo, Light/Pastel Yellow TCS Embroidered Polo, Navy Blue TCS Embroidered Polo, Light Blue TCS Embroidered Polo, Any Color Tennis Shoe.

If applicable, please pack a complete change of clothes in the child's backpack with a light sweater or jacket. A full change of clothes consists of a shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes. Clearly label all clothing items with the child's first and last name. Items include but are not limited to coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and boots. The Cartwright is NOT responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing.

DO NOT LET YOUR CHILD WEAR/BRING THESE ITEMS TO SCHOOL:

- × Open-toe shoes, thongs, crocs, or sandals
- × Jewelry of any kind
- × Toys or electronic devices of any kind from home
- × Money and other valuable items
- × Outside food, drinks, and/or candy from home unless otherwise specified

23. FIELD TRIPS, TRANSPORTATION, AND WATER ACTIVITIES

The parent must approve any field trips, transportation, and water activities on the enrollment form in the appropriate designated areas.

Field Trips: Field trips will only be offered to children three years old or older. The Business Manager must approve field trips for children under the age of 3 years. According to the Minimum Standards (MS), the Cartwright School will follow the teacher-student ratios for field trips based on age and notify parents of any field trips at least 24 hours in advance. Children three years and older will participate in field trips, whether educational or recreational, during both academic and summer times. The field trips that the children go on vary depending on each teacher's lesson plans. TCS management will post a notification at least 48 hours before a field trip via a note on the front door, bulletin board, email, or text message. Additionally, event calendars are distributed at the beginning of each month, listing all events. Parents must sign a permission slip for TCS staff to take a child on a field trip, including permission to transport the child.

Transportation: Transportation will only be used for field trips and emergency medical situations. The Cartwright School will follow proper safety procedures by ensuring that children aged nine and younger use a booster seat. Transportation will only be available for children three years and older for safety reasons.

Water Activities: The Cartwright School will only provide wading pools and sprinkler play for water activities.

24. ANIMALS

The Cartwright School only allows cats, dogs, poultry, exotic animals, or reptiles on the premises with proper documentation. Records must show that the animal(s) have been vaccinated as required by the Texas Health and Safety Code and have a health statement from a local veterinarian. If TCS chooses to have animals on the premises and/or on field trips, we will: (1) Notify parents in writing when animals are or will be present; (2) Ensure the animals do not create unsafe or unsanitary conditions; (3) Ensure that children do not handle any animal that shows signs of illness, such as lethargy or diarrhea; and (4) Ensure that caregivers and children practice good hygiene and hand washing after handling or coming in to contact with an animal and items used by an animal, such as water bowls, food bowls, and cages.

25. INDOOR AND OUTDOOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Children are remarkably physical and love to try out all the new skills they are learning. Indoor and outdoor active play enhances fitness and general health and supports creativity, learning, and development. The

Cartwright School offers students numerous opportunities to develop their large-motor skills daily. Students get 60 minutes of structured (adult-led) playtime and 60 minutes of active free play daily. At TCS, students must go outside (**on the playground**) twice a day for 30 minutes per outing to engage in active, unstructured free play that promotes physical and large-motor skill attainment, if the weather permits. Only two classes can simultaneously be on the playground, one on each side. Children also have structured teacher-led physical activities in the **open space** (or in their classrooms, action-dependent) during the morning and the afternoon for 30 minutes each.

Children should play outdoors when the conditions do not pose any concerns about health and safety, such as a significant risk of frostbite or heat-related illness. Extreme weather that poses a considerable health risk includes a wind chill factor below -15°F (-26°C), a heat index at or above 90°F (32°C), as identified by the National Weather Service (NWS), as well as light/heavy rainfall, hail, and/or thunderstorms. The Cartwright School will monitor weather-related conditions through several media outlets, including local e-mail and text messaging weather alerts.

During sunny weather, children are protected from the sun by our natural elements, such as the trees, which provide shade, and umbrellas when eating in the picnic area. Parents can also offer sunscreen with a sun protection factor of 15 or higher that protects against both UV-B and UV-A rays. However, parental/guardian permission is required for the use of sunscreen. The children also have access to and are encouraged to drink water at all times, including during prolonged periods of physical activity. During cold weather, caregivers/teachers will ensure that each child wears the appropriate clothing (coats, hats, gloves, etc.) before going outdoors. Teachers will also check children's extremities for standard color and warmth at least every 10 minutes while playing outside before determining to return indoors.

When the weather prohibits or limits outdoor play, alternate activities are provided indoors, such as dance, preschool exercises, or movement games. These activities will occur during the designated outdoor time as stated on each classroom schedule. The chart on the next page gives examples of physical activities each age group may participate in throughout the day.

Toddler Physical Activities	Pre-Kindergarten Physical Activities	School-Age Physical Activities
• Low-climbing structures (US, OA) • Lightweight balls (S, US, IA, OA) • Push/pull toys (S, US, IA, OA) • Rhythm instruments (S, US, IA) • Games and dramatic play that require running, walking, marching, dancing, stretching, and	• Balance Beams (S, IA, OA) • Climbing equipment (US, OA) • Low slides (US, OA) • Lightweight balls (S, US, IA, OA) • Games such as "Tag" and "Hot Potato" (S, IA, OA) • Other forms of play that require running, walking, marching, dancing, stretching, and climbing (S, US, IA, OA)	• Sports activities such as baseball, soccer, football, and tennis (S, US, OA) • Hula hoops (S, US, IA, OA) • Parachute play (S, IA, OA) • Games like "Simon Says" and "Twister" (S, IA, OA) • Other forms of play that require running, walking,

climbing (<i>S, US, IA, OA</i>)		marching, dancing, stretching, and climbing (<i>S, US, IA, OA</i>)
Legend: S – Structured, US – Unstructured, IA – Indoor Activity, OA – Outdoor Activity		

Children must wear tennis shoes when participating in indoor and outdoor physical activities. Students must also wear a light jacket or coat when playing outdoors in cold weather. Also, re-read section 22 of this handbook to become familiar with The Cartwright School's dress code policy during the academic school year.

26. SCREEN TIME POLICIES

Screen time activities refer to the time a child spends viewing media content on a cell phone, mobile phone, tablet, computer, television, video, film, or DVD. The Cartwright School only allows one (1) hour of screen time for children aged two and up. The Center does not use a screen time activity for a child under the age of two years. During inclement weather, The Center may use a screen time activity to supplement, but not replace, an activity for a child who is two years old or older. The children only view screen time activities with an adult who can help them apply their learning to the world around them.

When screen time is utilized at The Cartwright School, we must ensure that the activity:

- Is related to the planned activities that meet educational goals
- Is age-appropriate
- Is not used during mealtime, snack times, naptimes, or rest times
- Does not include advertising or violence
- Is turned off when not in use

Research indicates that screen time is most beneficial when children actively engage with their viewing content. Labeling objects, identifying people on screen, and asking questions are active viewing strategies that The Cartwright School implements to maximize children's learning during screen time.

27. INSECT REPELLENT AND SUNSCREEN

Sunscreen and insect repellent must be:

- Safe for the age of the particular child.
- In the original container.
- Within the expiration date noted on the product.
- Provided by the parent/guardian.

Combined sunscreen and insect repellents are prohibited.

- Insect Repellent

Insect repellent will be used when recommended by public health authorities or requested by a parent/guardian. The repellent should contain a concentration of **30% DEET** or less. Students and children may only use repellents not containing DEET if safe for the particular child's age. For example, children under three may not use oil, lemon, or eucalyptus products. **A staff member will apply insect repellent to a child's skin only once daily, but they can spray it on clothes for**

later trips outside. School-age children may apply insect repellent to themselves with adult supervision for proper application. After a child returns indoors, staff members wash off the exposed skin with soap and water.

- Sunscreen

Sunscreen/sunblock must provide UVB and UVA protection with an **SPF of 15 or higher** (without PABA is recommended). PABA gives some children blotchy rashes. Sunscreen may be provided by a parent/guardian and labeled with the child's full name. School-age children may apply sunscreen to themselves with adult supervision for proper application. Students should apply sunscreen only to exposed areas of skin and wait 20 to 30 minutes before going outdoors to allow it to absorb into the skin, thereby increasing its effectiveness. **Sunscreen will be reapplied every two hours outdoors** or more often if the child is involved in water play or perspiring. Brimmed hats, long-sleeved shirts, and pants in light colors provide additional sun protection. Hats may only be worn **outside** the building, not within the Center, unless approved by a member of management.

When applying any insect repellent or sunscreen, staff members must wear gloves. In addition, aerosols must be used as directed on the container, which generally states:

- o Hold the can 4 – 6 inches from the body and spray evenly (only to exposed areas).
- o **DO NOT spray onto the face.** Instead, spray into the hand and apply to the face (caregivers must do this step).

Before using them at a center/school, apply sunscreen and repellent to your child at home to test for any allergic reaction. In addition, the parent/guardian must sign a Parent Release-Sunscreen and Insect Repellent form before either is used. This permission slip must be updated annually.

A staff member will store the child's sunscreen in their backpack for personal use ONLY.

28. SAFE SLEEP FOR INFANTS

The Cartwright School does not accept infants at this time; however, all staff, substitute staff, and volunteers will follow these safe sleep recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants and young children to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS):

- Always put infants to sleep on their backs unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional [§ 746.2427 and §747.2327].
- Place infants on a firm mattress with a tight-fitting sheet in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full and non-full-size cribs [§746.2409 and §747.2309].
- For infants younger than 12 months of age, cribs should be bare except for a tight-fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector. Staff should not place items in a crib that include soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts, or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys/animals; delicate objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices [§746.2415 and §747.2315]. Also, infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing [§746.2429 and §747.2329].

- Do not use sleep positioning devices, such as wedges or infant positioners. The AAP has found no evidence that these devices are safe. In addition, their use may increase the risk of suffocation [§746.2415 and §747.2315].
- Ensure that sleeping areas are ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult [§746.3407(10) and §747.3203(10)].
- If an infant needs extra warmth, use sleep clothing such as sleepers or footed pajamas as an alternative to blankets [§746.2415 and §747.2315].
- Place only one infant in a crib to sleep [§746.2405 and §747.2305].
- Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. However, the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal or the infant's clothing by a string, cord, or other securing mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk [§746.2415 and §747.2315].
- If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), move the infant to a crib immediately unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional [§746.2426 and §747.2326].
- Our childcare program is smoke-free. Therefore, smoking is not allowed in Texas childcare operations (this includes e-cigarettes and any vaporizers) [§ 746.3703 (d) and §747.3503(d)].
- Actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound [§746 .2403 and §747.2303].
- If an infant can roll back and forth from front to back, place the infant on the infant's back for sleep and allow the infant to assume a preferred sleep position [§746.2427 and §747.2327].
- Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time" several times daily. "Tummy Time" will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally [§746.2427 and §747.2327].
- Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional [§746.2428 and §747.2328].

29. BREASTFEEDING

The Cartwright School does not accept infants now, so we do not have a designated area for mothers to breastfeed. If children 18 months and older still drink breast milk, self-prepared bottles or containers must be supplied and kept in a separate refrigerated area.

30. PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The Cartwright School always requires the parents of enrolled children to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of The Cartwright School is to provide the most appropriate learning environment in which a child can grow and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is the responsibility of the employees at The Cartwright School and the responsibility of each parent or adult who enters the Center. Therefore, parents must behave in a manner that fosters this idyllic atmosphere. **Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on the property afterward.** The code of conduct is as follows:

- *Swearing/Cursing:* No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use inappropriate language on Center property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will NOT be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to express the frustration or anger using non-offensive

language verbally. **At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.**

- *Threatening of Employees, Children, Other Parents, or Adults Associated with TCS: Threats of any kind will NOT be tolerated.* The Cartwright School cannot afford to sit idly in today's society while threats are made. Additionally, all threats will be reported to the relevant authorities and prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the Center will not assume the risk of a second chance. **PARENTS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES.**
- *Physical/Verbal Punishment of Other Children and Parents:* Parents are prohibited from addressing, for correction or discipline, a child that is NOT their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish a child of another parent.
- Suppose a parent should witness another parent's child misbehaving or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their child. In such cases, the parent should direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or the Director.
- Furthermore, it is wholly unsuitable for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. Instead, parents should bring all behavior concerns to the classroom teacher or the Director's attention. At that point, the teacher and/or Director will address the issue with the other parent.

Although you may be curious about the outcome of the conference, teachers and/or the Director are strictly prohibited from discussing any meetings addressed with other families. All children enrolled in our school have CONFIDENTIAL privacy rights. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the Center.

- *CONFRONTATIONAL INTERACTIONS WITH EMPLOYEES, OTHER PARENTS, OR ASSOCIATES OF TCS:* While it is understood that parents will not always agree with TCS staff members or parents of other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled calmly and respectfully. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

31. PARENT CONCERNS / COMPLAINTS

Any concerns or complaints may be directed to the Center Director or Person in Charge. The Director is responsible for ensuring the Center complies at all times. The parent may also address all written concerns to the Director and receive a verbal or written response within 24 hours. If the parents would like to request a conference with the teacher regarding their child, the parent may fill out a Parent/Teacher Conference Form. If the parent wishes to conduct a classroom observation, please complete a Request for Observation Form. TCS Admin suggests that parents try to request at least two (2) days in advance, with the approval of the Center Director.

32. PARENT/TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

The Cartwright School strongly believes in keeping business apart from personal matters. Therefore, personal parent relationships that staff members have established **after** a child's enrollment are highly discouraged and could lead to possible employee infractions. Parent relationships refer to any association **outside** the school involving a TCS employee interacting with a current or former parent of The Cartwright

School. Such relationships include, but are not limited to, babysitting, housesitting, mother's helper, nanny services, carpooling, social media, and texting, among others.

The Cartwright School staff is **PROHIBITED** from being employed by any parent (current or former), regardless of whether or not those services are voluntary or paid, while maintaining employment at our facility. Parents are also discouraged from soliciting any staff member for work. Parents who employ TCS staff members will have their services ceased, and any deposits will be forfeited. Staff who become employed by current or former parents of The Cartwright School will have their employment with the Center **TERMINATED**.

33. RIGHT OF ACCESS / PARENT RIGHTS

The Cartwright School encourages parents to be actively involved in their child's school experience. We celebrate various activities throughout the year, and parents are more than welcome to attend (please view the monthly event calendars). Parents can visit the Center to assist the teacher (with a Criminal History Background Check on file at TCS) or observe their child in the classroom. ALL visitors, including parents observing their child(ren), must log in on the *Visitors' Log* with their name, the reason for visiting, and check-in time **BEFORE** entering a classroom. Likewise, all visitors must sign out before exiting the building. Individuals who are not parents will only be allowed to observe if they accompany a parent or have written permission to monitor the child. A TCS employee will accompany visitors throughout the school at all times.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

Family involvement at TCS is essential to the success of your child(ren) and our program! There are several ways that families can get involved with the Center and activities to ensure that your experience while enrolled at The Cartwright School will be a great one! Some opportunities for parental involvement include:

- Annual Fundraisers
- Class parties
- Holiday Programs
- Monthly Activities and Events
- Parent Meetings
- Parent/Teacher Conferences
- Pre-K Prom and Graduation

PARENT / TEACHER CONFERENCES

To ensure the safety and supervision of all children, families are asked not to use drop-off or pick-up times for extended conversations with teachers. These transition times are focused on maintaining smooth classroom operations and supervision.

The Cartwright School conducts **required parent-teacher conferences** at designated times during the school year to review each child's development and progress. Additional conferences may be requested by families or staff at any time, as needed. Conferences are scheduled at the beginning and middle of the school year, with final progress shared at the end of the academic year.

A member of the TCS Management Team will provide Parent/Teacher Conference forms to families via email or in person. These forms should be completed and returned prior to the scheduled conference. During conferences, families will receive detailed information regarding their child's developmental progress and will have the opportunity to collaborate with teachers and administration to establish goals based on assessment results. If a family is unable to attend a scheduled conference, alternative arrangements such as a virtual meeting, phone conference, or rescheduled appointment will be provided.

Documentation of conference participation will be maintained to support ongoing communication between families and the program. Following each conference, a Conference Report summarizing the discussion and goals will be shared with families via email or through the Brightwheel app.

PARENT RIGHTS

Because The Cartwright School is a licensed childcare facility, the State grants parents certain rights regarding their chosen childcare facility. As a parent/guardian, you have the right to:

- Enter and examine the center without advance notice during hours of operation. However, you must still sign in on the Visitor's Log;
- File a complaint against the center;
- Review the center's publicly accessible records;
- Review the center's written records concerning your child for use in an emergency and during parent/teacher conferences;
- Receive our HHSC inspection reports and information on accessing TCS compliance history online. Recent HHSC inspection reports are posted in the front office for the public to view;
- Have TCS comply with a valid court order signed by a judge that prevents another parent from visiting or removing the parent's child from TCS;
- Be given contact information for Child Care Regulation, posted in the front office;
- View any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving your child as long as the video recordings of the alleged incident are available. The parent is **NOT** allowed to retain any portion of the video depicting another child (who is not your own). If the video contains other children, TCS must notify the other parent(s) in writing and obtain permission before allowing you to inspect the video recording;
- Obtain a copy of TCS policies and procedures;
- Review, upon request, all staff training records and in-house curriculum;
- Lastly, be free from any retaliatory action by TCS for exercising your parental rights.

FAMILY INPUT & PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

The Cartwright School values family feedback and provides structured opportunities for parents to share input that may influence program practices and overall quality. Families are invited to participate in program improvement through annual and periodic parent surveys designed to gather feedback on curriculum, communication, and overall program experience.

In addition, a suggestion system is available for families to share ideas, questions, or concerns at any time. Suggestions may be submitted through written forms or digital communication, including the Brightwheel app. All feedback is reviewed by administration and considered as part of ongoing program planning and decision-making.

The Cartwright School is committed to maintaining strong partnerships with families and values their input as an essential component of continuous program improvement.

34. CHILDCARE LICENSING & MINIMUM STANDARDS

The Texas Health and Human Services (HHS) - Childcare Licensing Division mandates The Cartwright School. Most of the rules and regulations set in place are directly from the Childcare Licensing Minimum Standards. Parents are welcome to view the Minimum Standards at the Center and online. To access the Texas Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers, please follow these steps:

- Open your internet browser and type in the address bar: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/>
- On the HHS website, click the *Business* tab menu.
- Click on "Licensing, Credentialing and Regulation". You will see a header titled *Child Care Licensing* and a [Texas Health and Human Services](#) hyperlink.
- Scroll down to *Minimum Standards*, and select *Learn more about Minimum Standards*. Once you select that link, move down the screen until you reach *Day Care Operations - Chapter 746*. Click on [Chapter 746 Child-Care Centers \(PDF\)](#) to open the PDF file.

Or copy and paste the following link into your browser to access the Texas Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/provider-portal/protective-services/ccl/min-standards/chapter-746-centers.pdf>.

To access the most recent Licensing Report on the school, simply:

- Follow the first three steps above. Scroll down the webpage until you reach the gray **Resources** box. Click on *Search Texas Child Care*.
- The link will take you to <https://childcare.hhs.texas.gov/Public/ChildCareSearch>. From there, click on *By Provider*
- Type **The Cartwright School** in the Operation Name Box and press *Search*.
- Once the results appear, click on *More Details/Compliance History*. From this page, scroll down until you reach "*Latest Inspection*" and select *View Details*.

Parents can contact the Local Child Care Licensing Office at 713-287-3238 or email ccrquestions@hhs.texas.gov for more questions or inquiries.

35. CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

The Cartwright School staff is required by Texas State Law to report any suspected or identified child abuse to Children's Protective Services (CPS) and must obtain annual training hours in Child Abuse and Neglect set forth by the State. All employees trained in these procedures will learn to recognize abuse and/or neglect and document their concerns in the medical logbook or Child Notes form. ***Abuse may be physical, emotional, and/or sexual. Neglect is the failure, refusal, or inability to provide necessary care, food, clothing, shelter, and medical care for reasons other than poverty or financial hardship.***

Staff and parents who report in good faith are immune from civil or criminal liability; however, staff who intentionally fail to report the abuse are subject to fines or imprisonment under the law. The team does not and will not investigate instances of abuse or neglect; however, CPS handles those situations. All calls to the Child Abuse Hotline are confidential, and the staff and parents must understand that this does not mean abuse or neglect has occurred.

The Cartwright School has a list of organizations, handouts, and resources to provide parents with prevention techniques, awareness of child abuse and neglect, and similar cases of abuse if needed. According to state law, the Cartwright School will support any family involved with CPS and maintain all confidentiality of records about a report. If parents need assistance and intervention for suspected or identified abuse, contact the Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400 or go online at www.txabusehotline.org. When filing a report, you'll need to have as much information as possible, including The child's name and home address, a description of the child's situation, to the best of your knowledge, a description of any injuries, conditions, or behaviors that might be associated with abuse or neglect, names of the child's parents, names of the child's siblings, if any, names of other relatives in the home or those who might know the situation, and the name of the person who abused the child, if known. You should also explain how you know about the problem as part of your report.

36. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The Cartwright School has an Emergency Preparedness Plan in place for emergencies that require children to evacuate the building. The Emergency Preparedness Plan ensures the safety of children during emergencies by clearly outlining staff responsibilities. Each staff member will have specific duties to ensure the children are evacuated and accounted for while having the proper forms and documents to notify the parents (if necessary). The Center will also conduct monthly fire drills, lockdowns, severe weather drills, and obstructed drills to prepare the staff and the children for emergencies. The parents are welcome to view the Plan at the Center.

37. GANG-FREE ZONE

The Cartwright School is considered a gang-free zone, a designated area around a specific location, including daycare centers, where prohibited gang-related activity is subject to increased penalties under Texas law. The gang-free zone is within 1000 feet of The Cartwright School. The area that falls within a gang-free zone can vary depending on the type of location. The local municipal or county engineer may produce and update maps for prosecution. In addition, parents may contact their local municipality or courthouse for information about obtaining a copy of a map if they choose to do so. Similar to the motivation behind establishing drug-free zones, the purpose of gang-free zones is to deter certain types of criminal activity in areas where children gather by enforcing harsher penalties.

38. SCHOOLER INFORMATION

The Cartwright School does not provide before/and after-school drop-off/pick-up for children. However, parents may utilize an outside van service.

BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL VAN SERVICE

A third-party entity provides before and after-school van services during the academic school year. **Ms. Renee's Transportation Service** and **Kids en Route** are privately owned businesses that parents must contract to implement services. Parents need to inform the public school of the van service's name, not The Cartwright School, which will pick up their child. Parents must also ensure the public school has the child at the correct designated pick-up place when the van service arrives. The parents must notify the van service if their child is absent or has been picked up from school early. This measure will prevent concerns with The Cartwright School and van service attempting to locate a child not at school.

Van Service Information:

RENEE'S TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

(832) 372-0042

Contact – Mrs. Rhonda

KIDS EN ROUTE

(281)940-4833

Contact – Mrs. Aarica

Schoolers will be given homework, activities, and outside time, and provided with a light dinner for the time they are present at The Cartwright School. However, the parent must ensure their child's homework is complete and accurate.

Students suspended from school will not be allowed to attend The Cartwright School when they are supposed to be in school. The Cartwright School will contact your child's school to verify that they are not suspended. In addition, please do not send schoolers who feel ill or have been excluded from school due to sickness. The Cartwright School must adhere to the same health policies for ill and sick children as public and private schools. **THE CARTWRIGHT SCHOOL DOES NOT HAVE A GET-WELL PROGRAM; WE CAN NOT ACCEPT SICK CHILDREN.**

There will be an additional fee for schoolers who require full-day care because of teacher in-service days or public school holidays. The cost will be \$10.00 per day, and the regular weekly tuition. If your student is absent for the entire week, half (½) of tuition is still due. However, if your child attends one (1) day, FULL tuition is due.

Schoolers may participate in the planned holiday activities at The Cartwright School that are not classroom-specific (e.g., Pre-K Prom and Graduation).

If you have any other concerns not addressed in this handbook, please speak with a member of management. Once again, thank you for becoming part of The Cartwright School Family; we look forward to watching your little ones grow!

The Cartwright School Administration Team