

# CHILDREN OF THE WOODLANDS



## Family Handbook

**Celebrating over 40 years of Faith, Joy, and Excellence**

[www.childrenofthewoodlands.org](http://www.childrenofthewoodlands.org)  
[www.thewoodlandsmethodist.org](http://www.thewoodlandsmethodist.org)

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***Children of The Woodlands is a non-profit ministry of  
The Woodlands Methodist Church***

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## **GENERAL SCHOOL AND CHURCH INFORMATION**

### **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

Children of The Woodlands (COTW) is a developmental preschool that looks at the whole child. Our philosophy is rooted in hands-on, concrete experiences and believes that children learn best using all their senses. Social/Emotional skills are as important as academic (literacy, math, science, and social studies) skills. Faith development and learning about God's love is integral to our program.

In the classroom, play-based learning centers offer students opportunities to experiment and explore a variety of activities. Both small and large groups as well as one-on-one interactions allow students to practice and experience skills that teachers intentionally facilitate to meet children's individual needs in an age-appropriate way.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

To provide a joyful, Christian education through which children develop a lifelong love of learning, pursue excellence, and positively impact the world.

### **CHILDREN OF THE WOODLANDS SCHOOL MOTTO**

Faith - Joy - Excellence

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

#### **Spiritual Growth**

We believe each individual is created by God as a unique and special person with the potential to grow and learn. We employ Christian staff who share their faith and teach about God's Word daily.

#### **Learning Environment**

We celebrate the unique learning potential of each child. Our small class sizes enable highly qualified preschool teachers to better meet individual and developmental needs in a safe, secure, nurturing environment.

#### **Accountability**

We are both responsible to and supported by The Woodlands Methodist Church (TWMC) and the families we serve. COTW is licensed by the State of Texas.

#### **Excellence**

We uphold high individualized expectations while guiding students to develop to their fullest abilities and discover their own unique talents and interests. We strive to develop their hearts, minds, and bodies to their greatest potential, pursuing joyful excellence in all we do.

#### **Family Partnership**

We believe learning extends beyond the classroom and that a collaborative relationship with families is essential to a successful education. We maintain open communication and opportunities for involvement.

#### **Compassion**

We strive to develop individuals of integrity with a heart for serving others. We demonstrate love and respect daily in all our interactions. We guide students to be Christ-like, responsible citizens who positively impact the world.

### **THE WOODLANDS METHODIST CHURCH MISSION**

Reach People for Jesus - Disciple Them in Faith - Help Those in Need



## **OUR SPIRITUAL BELIEFS**

*"In essential beliefs we have unity, in non-essential beliefs we have liberty, and in all beliefs, we have charity."* – John Wesley, Founder of the Methodist movement

### **About God**

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He exists eternally in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is both holy and loving.

### **About Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ is the unique Son of God. He lived a sinless human life and died on the cross to atone for our sins. He rose from the dead and ascended to heaven and will return again to Earth.

### **About the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is present in the world to make people aware of their need for Jesus Christ. When we receive Jesus as the leader of our lives and the forgiver of our sins, the Holy Spirit comes to live within us. He provides us with power for living, enables us to understand spiritual truth, and guides us in doing what pleases God. As Christians we seek to live under His control daily.

### **About the Bible**

The Bible is God's word written by human authors under the supernatural guidance by the Holy Spirit. It is the final authority for determining our Christian beliefs and how we are to live.

### **About Human Beings**

People are made in the spiritual image of God—we are rational and moral beings. Because we are God's creation made in God's image, each person possesses great self-worth. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, all of us are marred by an attitude of self-centeredness which the Bible calls "sin." This attitude and its resultant actions separate us from God, others and ourselves.

### **About Being Made Right with God**

Becoming right with God and having our relationship with God restored is what the Bible calls salvation. Salvation is God's free gift to us. We can never earn it or achieve it by self-improvement or good works. We accept God's gift of a new life when we turn from our self-ruled life and accept Jesus as our Savior. The new life that God gives us is an abundant life in this world and eternal life in the world to come.

### **About the Kind of Life We Are Called to Live**

Though we are not made right with God by our own goodness, "good works" are not optional for the Christian life. When we give our lives to Christ, it is expected that we will grow toward loving God with all our being and our neighbors as ourselves.

### **About Baptism**

Baptism is our initiation into the church and our identification as children of God. God initiates this relationship and chooses us as daughters and sons, beginning our life-long journey of faith. God's choice happens regardless of our age or our response. Because God chooses us once and for all, this is an act that should not be repeated. Those that are baptized as children must make the choice to confirm their belief in Christ to continue as members of the church.

### **About Holy Communion**

Communion is an opportunity for us to renew our relationship with Jesus Christ. On His last night before His death, Jesus ate a special meal with His disciples. He charged his church with repeating this meal to remember His sacrifice and celebrate our new life through His death and resurrection. God offers this relationship to everyone, so all who desire to receive are welcome to participate.



## **OTHER PROGRAMS OF INTEREST AT TWMC**

For more information about these and other ministries, please visit [www.thewoodlandsmethodist.org](http://www.thewoodlandsmethodist.org)

### **The Woodlands Methodist School**

The elementary and middle school is located in the Family Life Center on our campus. TWMS promotes students' spiritual, social-emotional, physical, and cognitive growth by utilizing varied developmentally appropriate instructional strategies to encourage student learning, collaboration, and inquiry. Class offerings are 5-day Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. For more information, visit their website at [www.twmschool.org](http://www.twmschool.org) or call 281-822-8220.

### **Noah's Nook Nursery**

Our busy church nursery is committed to providing high quality care while parents participate in church activities. The nursery is often prearranged for specific preschool events, but it is not available for "drop in" care. To reach the nursery reception desk, please call 281-297-5949.

### **NextGen Kids**

Our vision is to excellently engage children with biblically missional principles in a safe environment. This will allow us to fulfill our Holy Spirit-led mission of:

- Empowering Families
- Creating Disciples
- Serving Others

For more information, please visit this website: <https://www.thewoodlandsmethodist.org/children>

### **NextGen Student Ministry**

Welcome to NextGen Students Ministry! Students from 7th to 12th grade move beyond the basics - we want to help students answer the question, "What's next?" We want them to grow in their faith, take ownership of their relationships with Jesus and honor God with their lives. Everyone is welcome. We can't wait to meet you!

For more details, please visit this website: <https://www.thewoodlandsmethodist.org/students>

### **NextGen Sports**

NextGen Sports is a uniquely designed sports experience that adapts and expands as players grow in their personal athletic journeys. The program develops total athletes through character building, player development and the formation of deep relationships between teammates and coaches. NextGen Sports is developmental and focused on advancing knowledge and skill in the sport as well as character and faith maturation. Our values emphasize sustainability, perseverance, purposefulness, and ethics.

For more information, please visit this website: <https://thewoodlandsmethodist.org/nextgen-sports>

### **Women's Ministries and Mom2Mom**

Are you interested in fellowship with other mothers? TWMC has many options, including monthly "moms" meetings, weekly Bible studies, and small group opportunities. Please visit this website for more information: <https://www.thewoodlandsmethodist.org/women>

### **Special Blessings**

Special Blessings shares the love of Christ and serves children with special needs in pre-K through 6th grade. Special Blessings Sunday School is offered at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m. for students in Pre-K - 4th grade in the Main Building on The Woodlands Campus. Special Blessings also serves children with special needs in 5th and 6th grade in the Family Life Center on The Woodlands Campus. Additional worship, social and recreational opportunities are offered for Special Blessings students and their families throughout the year.

For information, please visit this website: <https://www.thewoodlandsmethodist.org/special-needs>

**The Woodlands Methodist Church welcomes you to our church family.  
Please contact the church at 281-297-5900.**

**ADDRESSING CONCERNS**

While we hope there is never an issue with your child, if a concern should arise, please feel free to bring it to the teacher’s attention or communicate with our director via email. All issues are handled confidentially.

Sometimes, there are situations that require a conference with a child’s parents/guardians. COTW believes an open parent/teacher/administrator partnership is imperative. Therefore, please know that when issues are brought forward, each is addressed confidentially. If you ever have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to make contact. Our goal is to resolve all your concerns in a timely manner so your child can have the best educational experience possible.

**TEXAS CHILDCARE REGULATION CONTACT INFORMATION**

COTW is regulated by and meets or exceeds all standards set by Texas Health and Human Services (THHS) Child Care Regulation. Our operation number is 810265. A copy of the Minimum Standards is available on site for parents to review, as well as the most recent licensing inspection report.

Parents can access Minimum Standards online at: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/doing-business-with-hhs/provider-portal/protective-services/ccl/min-standards/chapter-746-centers.pdf>

The local licensing office can be contacted at (713) 287-3238 or [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov).

**PARENT’S RIGHTS**

A parent or guardian of a child enrolled in COTW has the right to:

- Enter and examine COTW during its hours of operation and without advance notice.
- File a complaint against COTW.
- Review COTW’s publicly accessible records.
- Review COTW’s written records concerning the parent’s/guardian’s child.
- Receive inspection reports and information about how to access COTW’s online compliance history.
- Have COTW comply with a valid court order signed by a judge that prevents another parent/guardian from visiting or removing a child from COTW.
- Be given the contact information for COTW’s local Child Care Regulation office.
- Inspect any video recordings of an alleged child incident of abuse or neglect involving their child provided that: the video recordings of the alleged incident are available; the parent/guardian does not retain any part of the video depicting a child that is not their own; and the parent/guardian of any other child in the video receive prior written notice from COTW.
- Obtain a copy of COTW’s policies and procedures handbook.
- Review COTW’s staff training records and any in-house training curriculum.
- Exercise these rights without receiving retaliatory action by COTW.

**SCHOOL OPERATING HOURS**

Parents/legal guardians are free to observe the school any time their child is present during operating hours without prior approval. All visitors must sign in at the COTW reception desk, provide valid photo ID, and wear a COTW visitor tag throughout the duration of the visit. School and administration hours are as follows:

Reception and Administration	Monday - Thursday	
School Year	8:15 am	2:30 pm
Summer	9:00 am	2:00 pm
Student Classes	Arrival	Dismissal
Toddlers and Twos	9:00 am	1:00 pm
Pre-K Threes, Pre-K Fours, Transition	9:00 am	1:30 pm

## **ADMISSIONS INFORMATION**

COTW does not discriminate against children on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, gender, or ethnicity in its admission process or with regard to rights, privileges, programs, and activities available to children at the school.

The admission process includes:

- Tour of COTW (optional)
- Online Application and payment of non-refundable application fee
- Online Enrollment and payment of non-refundable enrollment fee
- Post-enrollment Gesell Developmental Screener (Pre-K Threes, Pre-K Fours, and Transition students only)

### **APPLICATION**

A complete online application is required for each child interested in attending COTW. The non-refundable application fee is \$40. Non-enrolled siblings of currently enrolled students must complete an application and submit the non-refundable application fee. Please note, there is no guarantee of COTW admission for non-enrolled siblings of currently enrolled students.

### **ENROLLMENT**

Before a child may attend COTW, the online enrollment packet must be submitted, and the non-refundable enrollment fee (\$300) paid. Additionally, no child is permitted to attend school without a completed Preschool Medical Release and updated immunization record on file with the nurse.

### **REENROLLMENT**

Current student reenrollment for the following school year occurs in January. Notification of reenrollment dates and times will be sent via email. Current student reenrollment is completed online and is on a first come, first served basis for children currently enrolled in the Toddlers-Pre-K Fours. Completion of online reenrollment during the priority window qualifies the student for a discount on the reenrollment fee.

### **AGE PLACEMENT**

Children will be placed in classes according to their age, based on the age requirements of public schools in the State of Texas. Currently, this is September 1 of the current school year. Exceptions are limited to placing children with younger peers if developmentally appropriate.

### **CLASS PLACEMENT**

Class placement is determined carefully and prayerfully in order to meet the individual needs of each student. Taking into consideration a variety of factors, administrators decide on the class rosters. The classroom placement process considers several key factors including the child's learning style, social opportunities, balancing boy/girl ratios, Preschool Developmental Checklist, recommendations from teachers, and special needs of each child. Teacher requests will only be considered from parents with a younger student requesting a teacher their older child previously had as a teacher. We kindly ask that you refrain from making friend requests. If you feel that you have important information to share in this process, an email must be sent to the age- level advisor or enrollment coordinator prior to the end of the school year.

**CLASS ROSTERS AND CLASS RATIOS**

Through the class placement process, children are assigned to a specific teacher for the entire school year. COTW makes class rosters available for viewing in the FACTS Family Portal. The COTW office staff will not share roster information until teachers have been given rosters and sent Meet the Teachers invites.

Class ratios are adhered to during all parts of the child's school day.

Age Group	Ratio (Children:Staff)
Toddlers	8:2
Twos	10:2
Pre-K Threes	12:2
Pre-K Fours	14:2
Transition	16:2

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Our developmentally appropriate environment is designed to provide learning opportunities for a wide range of abilities. Depending on facilities and resources, we make every effort to accommodate special needs. Students with special needs will be considered carefully for placement. Teachers and staff will seek to create the best situation for inclusion. We reserve the right to request a formal, professional evaluation to better serve our students. Because providing the best possible care for all our students is a high priority, a copy of the results should be mailed directly from the specialist to the director within seven working days of the evaluation or diagnosis. If your child has been diagnosed or is currently attending any therapy, COTW requests to communicate with the outside therapeutic professionals. If we are unable to meet the needs of a student, COTW has the right to release the family from their financial commitment and unenroll the student. On occasion, a student will attend school with a shadow who helps the individual student with their needs. Shadows are paid for by the student's family.

Should COTW teachers or staff suspect that a child has a developmental delay or other special need, this possibility will be communicated to families in a sensitive, supportive and confidential manner and is provided with documentation and explanation for the concern, suggested next steps, and information about resources for assessment.

**TOILET TRAINING**

Any child entering the Pre-K Threes, Pre-K Fours, or Transition program must be fully toilet trained, unless a doctor's note provided states a medical condition preventing the child from being toilet trained. Diapers/pull-ups are not to be used in the Pre-K Threes, Pre-K Fours, or Transition classrooms.

COTW's definition of toilet-trained is:

- The child is able to inform the teacher of their need to use the child-sized potty, so the teacher can take him/her to the restroom.
- The child can independently take clothing on and off.
- The child can independently get on and off the child-sized toilet and wipe his/her own bottom (with minimal assistance for Pre-K Threes) and wash their own hands.
- Can postpone going to the restroom if they must wait for someone currently in the bathroom or if class is away from classroom.

If parents feel this may be difficult for their child, they should discuss the situation with the director as soon as possible. Additionally, if, after a reasonable transitional period of time after the start of the school year, a child has regular or repeated accidents, the teacher and/or director will follow up with a phone call to discuss.

**TUITION AND FEES**

Current tuition information, including the school's financial policy, can be found on our website at [www.childrenofthewoodlands.org/tuition.html](http://www.childrenofthewoodlands.org/tuition.html)

## **NON-NORMAL CONDITIONS**

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

The school day at COTW will be cancelled if Conroe Independent School District (CISD) cancels school due to weather. If CISD delays start time due to inclement weather, COTW will notify families via email or Parent Alert text whether we will open at 9:00, have a delayed start time, or close for the entire day. Families will be contacted immediately via email or Parent Alert text if an unsafe condition arises when children are at school and immediate dismissal is required. Inclement weather days will not be made up and no refunds will be given for closures due to unavoidable circumstances.

### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

In case of emergency relocation, COTW will evacuate under the direction and assistance of local authorities. Children will walk with school staff to the FLC (Family Life Center) building or the Loft building on the TWMC campus if they are determined to be safe evacuation sites. In the event further evacuation is needed, COTW will evacuate to the Montgomery County Sheriff's facility on Lake Front Circle (near the corner of Grogan's Mill). Emergency transportation will be coordinated by local emergency authorities. As soon as children, teachers, and staff have been safely evacuated or relocated, families will be notified by email, text, or phone as services are available.

## **HEALTH AND WELLNESS INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN**

Any health information disclosed to COTW teachers and staff must remain confidential. This includes information regarding a child's allergies, medications, and/or medical diagnosis. Health information and immunization records are maintained in the COTW nurse's office. These files are only accessed by the nurse, director and appropriate staff members.

Parents/guardians are requested to update their child's health information (allergies, medications, immunizations, etc.) as regularly as possible. By enrolling their child in COTW, parents/guardians give the COTW staff and his/her child's teacher reasonable access to the child's health information.

### **ALLERGIES**

Please notify COTW and the nurse in writing if your child has a specific allergy and include all allergy information in the Medical Information section of the online enrollment packet. If a child has a life-threatening allergy (i.e. food, insect sting or bites, latex, etc.), the FARE Allergy Action Plan form must be completed and signed by the physician, signed by the parent/guardian, and kept on file in the clinic. You may obtain a copy of the form from the school nurse. The nurse will contact you to discuss your child's allergy(ies) prior to the first day of school or immediately after diagnosis.

### **SCREENING EVALUATION**

All Pre-K Three students are required to be screened annually for speech and hearing. All Pre-K Four and Transition students are screened annually for speech, language, hearing, and vision. This policy is based on the Texas Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act and a decision of COTW. Family releases are secured at the time of enrollment. Early identification of a speech, language, vision, or hearing problem is critical to your child's learning and well-being. We welcome additional screening or assessment from your school district or private practitioner.

### **PRESCHOOL MEDICAL RELEASE**

School policy requires each student to have a current signed Medical Release, Well Child Exam and updated immunization record on file prior to attending school.

The submitted Preschool Medical Release will expire one year from the date of the Well Child Exam listed on the form. An updated Medical Release (Well Child Exam and updated immunization records) will be due within 30 days of the expiration date.

Any student who is not in compliance with both immunization and physical exam requirements will not be permitted to attend school.



## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Each enrolled child must meet applicable immunization requirements according to their age, as specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services. You can access the requirements at [www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize) or you may obtain a copy from the school nurse.

While we continue to support immunizations for young children, we know there are exceptions to the rule. State licensing policies state that a child may be exempt from immunization requirements for a medical reason or reason of conscience, including a religious belief. COTW accepts the state affidavit, signed by a parent and notarized, without the additional letter signed by a physician.

For more information regarding the Department of State Health Services' exemptions, go to <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunizations>, scroll down to click on "Vaccine requirements for school and childcare", and then "Texas Immunization Exemptions". This link will show you how to request an affidavit.

Any student exempt from some or all immunizations will be excluded from school if a vaccine-preventable disease is present in the school, or an outbreak of vaccine-preventable illness occurs in the community as declared by the Montgomery County Health Department. The school nurse will notify the parents when exclusion from school is necessary and when it is safe for the student to return to school. If the student is at school at the time of the outbreak, the parent must pick up the student from school immediately.

## **MEDICATIONS**

COTW staff do not administer any medications except those medications required for life threatening emergencies or chronic health conditions. All medications are stored in a locked cabinet in the school clinic and can only be administered by a school nurse or administrative staff member. Medication requirements are listed below:

- A physician must complete a Physician Request for Administration of Medication form for the nurse to administer prescription and nonprescription medications at school. These forms are available in the clinic or on our website at [www.childrenofthewoodlands.org/clinic.html](http://www.childrenofthewoodlands.org/clinic.html). The parent/guardian must also sign this form.
- Prescribed medication must be in the original prescription container and must include the student's full name, medicine name and dosage, student's date of birth, doctor's name and instructions.
- Over the counter medication must be in the original, unopened container. Label it with the student's full name, student's date of birth, and the date the medication was brought to school.
- The student must receive the initial medication dosage outside of the school setting with exception of medications given for life threatening conditions.
- Medication is administered only in amounts according to the written orders by the physician.
- Medication is not administered after its expiration date. If your child has medication for life-threatening emergencies or chronic health conditions stored in the clinic AND those medications are past the expiration date, your child will not be allowed to attend school until an unexpired prescription medication is provided to the nurse from the parent/guardian.

## **ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION POLICY**

COTW will take precautions to provide a healthy environment for all children. This includes refusing to admit sick children into the classroom and isolating children who become ill while in our care. If a staff member suspects that a child is ill, the child will be assessed by the nurse, including taking the child's temperature and a visual assessment to identify any potential concerns about the child's health.

If a child becomes ill while in our care, we will contact the parent immediately. We will care for the child apart from the other children with proper supervision and give extra attention to hand washing and sanitation practices. Parents are asked to pick up their child within 1 hour of initial notification. An illness notification form indicating symptoms and treatment of the child will be completed by the school nurse or administrative staff and will require the signature of the adult to whom the child is being released.

A child should not be brought to school if they have experienced or are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Illness that prevents the child from participating in preschool activities, including outdoor play.
- The illness results in a greater need for care than teachers/caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of other children.
- A current temperature over 99.9 or has had a temperature over 99.9 within the last 24 hours.
- Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, upset stomach, uncontrollable diarrhea, 1 or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours.
- Severe sore throat or cold symptoms, heavy nasal discharge, dry, productive or uncontrollable cough, or frequent sneezing.
- An unexplained and/or contagious skin rash or communicable disease.
- Pink eye, inflammation of the eyes, or persistent eye drainage.
- Head lice or presence of nits.
- A child will not be brought to school with an injury and/or broken bone(s) without a physician's release and instructions.

A child who was kept home by parents/guardians or sent home from school due to illness may only return to school when the child is free of symptoms of the illness for 24 hours (without the use of medication) OR a health-care professional's statement is received that the child no longer has an excludable disease or condition.

Parents are asked to contact and inform the nurse should their child have a communicable disease such as, but not limited to, chicken pox, strep throat, pink eye, fifth disease, ringworm, pinworm, impetigo, influenza, or head lice. COTW will follow THHS Child Care Regulation reporting procedures and will establish the appropriate return to school timeline for your child. Parents/guardians will be notified via email from the COTW nurse if their child has been exposed to a communicable disease. Confidentiality is important to us. The name of the infected individual will not be shared in any communications with the classroom. COTW reserves the right to determine when an individual who has been diagnosed with a communicable disease can return to school.

### **ABSENCES**

If your child is going to be absent, please email the nurse at [preschoolnurse@twmc.org](mailto:preschoolnurse@twmc.org) and reception desk at [preshool@twmc.org](mailto:preshool@twmc.org) prior to the start of the class day. In your email, please include your child's name, age group/class, and reason for absence.

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL PROCEDURES**

Permission to Treat information, completed at the time of enrollment, will be kept on file in the event your child should need emergency medical attention.

### **STAFF HEALTH POLICY**

COTW has implemented the following immunization policy for all its employees, to be in compliance with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Minimum Standards Rule # 746.3611, which requires a policy for protecting children from vaccine-preventable diseases. While the safety of our employees and children in our care is paramount, all immunizations for vaccine-preventable diseases for the employees are optional. We recommend employees consult with their medical providers on which vaccines would be most beneficial.

### **MEDICAL ASSISTANCE AND DEVICES**

If your child requires specialized medical assistance and/or devices while at school, a written note from the health care provider with the diagnosis and directions for school must be submitted to the school nurse prior to your child's attendance. Medical assistance is defined as any necessary medical device or assistance other than medication that the child needs (i.e. casts, splints, walker, wheelchair, crutches, orthotics, hearing aids, etc.) According to TX House Bill 434, the written diagnosis and directions must be signed and dated by a healthcare provider and kept up to date as changes occur.

**INCIDENT REPORT FORM**

Minor accidents sometimes occur. Parents/guardians will be notified of scrapes, bumps, and bites with a Minor Incident Form which will be sent home with your child.

**BEHAVIOR REPORT FORM**

The Behavior Report Form will be utilized when a child intentionally hurts another child or when a child's behavior(s) becomes persistent and maladaptive to a level that impedes the child's learning process or a child who is exhibiting severe/significant aggression towards self or others. Aggressive behavior includes but is not limited to; biting, pinching, punching, kicking, spitting, scratching and hair pulling.

The parents will be notified on the day of the event. If necessary, a phone call will be made to the parent in addition to the notification via email or paper form.

**FIRST AID AND CPR**

COTW employees maintain current pediatric first aid and pediatric CPR certifications. COTW employees will provide reasonable first aid to cuts, scratches, bruises, etc. with the appropriate first aid materials. First aid kits are accessible in every classroom, outdoor play space, and large, multipurpose room.

**WEATHER AND OUTSIDE TIME**

COTW assesses many factors to determine whether an outdoor play experience is healthy for our children. The Child Care Weather Watch chart combines both temperature and humidity to determine the heat index/wind chill factor and is a primary resource. Additionally, COTW monitors the air quality index using The Air Quality and Outdoor Activity Guidance for Schools chart. Employees also closely monitor the children while outside for signs of over-heating and/or breathing issues. Teachers, the nurse, and the director use their professional discretion in determining how long the children remain outdoors. Children's water bottles or water pitchers and cups are brought to the playground to ensure hydration during physical activities.

As part of our daily activities, state standards require us to go outside daily. For children who are in good health and properly dressed, going outside provides an alternative learning environment for stimulating thoughts, ideas, and social interaction. If your child is unable to participate in the classes' daily activities, including outside time, please have your child stay at home. COTW does not have adequate staff for supervising children who are unable to play outside.

We ask that you send your child with appropriate outerwear, including athletic, close-toed shoes. In the event of inclement weather, excessively hot weather, or poor air quality, the teachers, under the guidance of the director and the nurse, will use their discretion on the amount of time outside and may choose to keep the children inside. If you wish for your child to wear sunscreen or insect repellent, please apply at home.

**NURSING/BREASTFEEDING**

An area near the preschool is available for nursing moms. Nursing mothers are welcome to bring refrigerated breast milk for their children, if necessary, following the procedures below:

- COTW accepts, stores, and serves expressed breast milk for feedings.
- COTW only accepts breast milk in ready-to-feed sanitary containers.
- Breast milk should be labeled with the child's full name and date that the milk was expressed. It is stored in a refrigerator for no longer than 24 hours.
- COTW will gently mix, not shake, the breast milk before feeding to preserve special infection-fighting and nutritional components in breast milk.
- COTW will discard any unfinished and unrefrigerated breast milk after two hours.

## **PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF CHILDREN**

Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas. If you suspect a child has been abused or mistreated, you are required by law to report it to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or a law enforcement agency. You are required to make a report within 48 hours of the time you suspected the child has been or may be abused or neglected. Your report is confidential, and your identity is kept confidential. Parents of a child who is a suspected victim of abuse or neglect are encouraged to obtain assistance and intervention as well as report the abuse or neglect.

Employees of COTW are mandated by law to report any incident of suspected child abuse or neglect. If circumstances warrant suspicions or questions, an employee is to notify the director immediately.

### **Definitions**

Abuse is the mental, emotional, physical, or sexual injury to a child or failure to prevent such injury to a child.

Neglect includes (1) failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter and/or medical care; and/or (2) leaving a child in a situation where the child is at risk of harm.

### **Contact Information**

To report abuse, neglect, or exploitation please call the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, toll-free hotline at 1-800-252-5400 or file an on-line report at the TDFPS website, <https://www.txabusehotline.org>.

### **Making the Report**

Be specific. Provide the name, age, and gender of the child; brief description of the child; current injuries, medical issues or behavioral problems; parents' names and names of siblings living in the home. Tell exactly what happened and when. Be sure to record all injuries and incidents you have observed, including the dates and time of day. Provide any information you have about the relationship between the child and the suspected abuser.

### **Abuse Assistance and Intervention**

You may contact the following agencies to obtain assistance and intervention for cases of abuse:

- Children's Safe Harbor 936-756-4644
- Yes to Youth Montgomery County Youth Services 281-292-6471
- Montgomery County Women's Center 936-441-7273
- CASA Child Advocates of Montgomery County 936-441-5437

### **COTW Training**

All employees of COTW are required to receive training which address different aspects of abuse, neglect, and the exploitation of children. These topics include:

- Prevention of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children
- Warning signs and contributing factors of abuse, neglect, and exploitation
- Reporting incidents of abuse and neglect

## FOOD SERVICE PRACTICES

COTW requests that you send a healthy snack and lunch with your child each day, as well as a non-breakable, reusable bottle filled with water. We are unable to refrigerate or reheat any foods and ask that you refrain from sending convenience foods with hazardous packaging.

Every effort will be made to contact parents in the event a lunch is not sent to school with their child. If COTW is unable to make contact with a parent or a parent is unable to bring a lunch for their child, COTW will provide emergency lunch items for a fee that will be added as an incidental charge to your FACTS Family Account. These items are an emergency back-up option and should not be considered an alternative to sending lunch with your child.

### **CHOKING HAZARDS**

In order to reduce the dangers of choking in children less than 4 years old, the following foods are not allowed in Pre-K Threes classrooms and younger based on the recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education:

- Nuts (peanuts, walnuts, cashews, pecans, almonds, corn nuts, etc.)
- Popcorn
- Seeds (like pumpkin or sunflower)
- Hard, gooey, or sticky candy
- Gummy fruit snacks
- Marshmallows
- Raw green peas
- Hard pretzels
- Rice cakes
- Large chunks of meat or cheese
- Chewing gum

The following foods are considered choking hazards in their original form and will only be allowed with the noted modifications:

Type of Food	Required Modification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hot dogs or sausages</li> </ul>	Cut hot dog or sausage in half lengthwise and then cut into bite-size pieces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole grapes</li> </ul>	Grapes should be cut into quarters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole grape tomatoes</li> </ul>	Tomatoes should be cut into quarters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raw, baby carrots</li> </ul>	Must be cut lengthwise and then into bite-size pieces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celery sticks</li> </ul>	Cut entire celery stick lengthwise and then into bite-size pieces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole string cheese</li> </ul>	Cut entire piece of cheese lengthwise and then into bite-size pieces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spoonful of peanut butter Or other types of nut butter</li> </ul>	Only creamy peanut or nut butter, must be thinly spread on bread or crackers

Any of the above-mentioned foods described as choking hazards that are either not allowed or not properly modified for your child’s consumption will be sent back home uneaten in your child’s lunch container. Occasionally a food item not included on these lists may raise a choking concern. If this occurs, the teacher and school nurse may choose to send the food item back in the lunch container uneaten with a note to the parent.

### **SPECIAL OCCASION FOODS**

Throughout the school year, students will have the opportunity to consume food items that are not sent from home. Some of these occasions include, but are not limited to, birthday celebrations, school-wide special events, and classroom cooking opportunities.

Food allergies are a very serious matter, and the safety of all students is our top priority. Except for classroom cooking food items, all food items consumed in the classrooms or at school events must

be prepared in a commercial kitchen—no homemade treats are permitted. Classroom cooking food item ingredients will be cross checked with all student allergies on file with the nurse and email notification with pertinent information will be sent home to the families.

## **FACILITY SAFETY AND SECURITY**

### **BUILDING SECURITY**

COTW takes the security of children seriously. All exterior and interior doors that lead directly to COTW are magnetically locked and only accessible by approved staff members' badges. During arrival and dismissal times, COTW staff monitor all open doorways. Montgomery County Sheriff's Office deputies are present on the TWMC campus during its operating hours, including but not limited to, the school day.

### **RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

COTW students will only be released to a parent/guardian, or an adult (18 years or older) designated in FACTS Family Portal as an emergency contact/pick-up person by the parent/guardian. Please list at least two local persons who have your permission to pick up your child and who can be contacted in case of an emergency in the event a parent/guardian cannot be reached. Parents/guardians will always be contacted first, however, if they cannot be reached or the school does not receive a return phone call, we will begin contacting the designated emergency contacts.

In the event of a temporary pick-up by someone that is not listed in your FACTS Family Portal emergency contacts, an email must be sent to [preschool@twmc.org](mailto:preschool@twmc.org) at least one hour prior to dismissal time. The email must contain the name of the person picking up your child and the date you are authorizing the alternate pickup. This email will serve as a one-time written notification. A valid photo ID must be provided by the temporary pick-up person at the time of pick-up.

### **PARKING AT COTW**

Please be mindful of children when in the parking lots. This is especially important during the high traffic times of drop-off and pick-up. Drivers should reduce their speed significantly and watch closely for children and families. Children should be held by the hand or in a stroller when crossing the parking lot.

Do not leave children or personal belongings unattended in vehicles. Please respect designated handicap parking areas and refrain from parking in fire lanes. Additionally, please do not park or idle your vehicle in the porte cochere driveways near the Atrium or at the north entrance of the church during morning arrivals or afternoon dismissals.

Detailed information about Arrival and Dismissal procedures, including car line and walking in with your child, will be provided to each family prior to the child's first day of school.

### **SIBLINGS**

Siblings may not be left unattended in a classroom or within any other area of COTW. For their safety, please supervise and manage siblings during drop-off and pick-up procedures, as well as during special visits to the classroom.

### **ANIMALS**

No animals are permitted inside COTW licensed spaces without prior arrangement with the classroom teacher and the director. THHS Child Care Regulation requires parents to be notified in writing when animals will be present in the school. Documentation of the animal's most recent vaccine record, as well as a statement of health from a veterinarian, must be on file in the office. Animals are not permitted on the playgrounds or any other COTW outdoor space. Chickens, ducks, reptiles, and amphibians are never allowed at COTW.

### **WATER ACTIVITIES**

Preschool Splash Day scheduled in the month of May includes sprinklers and water play activities.

## **GANG-FREE ZONE**

House Bill 2086. This law adds §42.064 of the Human Resource Code and designates certain areas around childcare centers as “gang-free zones”. Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1,000 feet of COTW is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalties.

## **VISITORS**

Parents/guardians and other visitors are required to sign in at the reception desk and be screened and cleared by our Raptor Visitor Management System. Raptor is a visitor registration system used to protect the students, staff, and visitors at school campuses. It enhances school security by scanning the driver’s license or identification card, comparing information to a sex offender database, alerting campus administrators if a match is found, then (assuming no match was made) printing a visitor badge, which includes a photo.

Accepted forms of identification include: all US drivers licenses, state identification cards, concealed handgun licenses, consular ID cards, green cards, active military cards, and passports.

## **OUTSIDE THERAPEUTIC SERVICES**

Please contact the director if your child needs to be observed during school hours by a therapeutic professional. All therapeutic professionals will be required to present photo identification and be screened and cleared by our Raptor Visitor Management System prior to being admitted to the child’s classroom.

## **ARRIVAL AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

### **Arrival**

Families of all preschool students are welcome to walk children to their classes. Children must be escorted by an adult (18 years or older) to their classroom and left in the presence of a teacher. Children may not be left unattended in the classroom. The doors will open at 9:00 am and close at 9:15 am each day. Timely arrival is important to the child and to the class. To avoid your child missing valuable instruction time, we strongly encourage all students to be in class by 9:15 am. Should you arrive after the doors have closed at 9:15 am, your child will be escorted to their class by the first available administrative staff member.

Morning car line is available for all age groups. Children will be unloaded by preschool staff members beginning at 9:00 am.

### **Mid-day (Early) Dismissal**

A government issued photo ID is required to release a student to anyone, including parents/guardians and those persons listed on the FACTS Family Portal emergency contact list. Present your ID to the receptionist and a staff member will escort your child from the classroom to the reception area.

Early dismissal must occur at least 30-45 minutes prior to the beginning of your child’s corresponding age level car line. Failure to pick up your child according to these guidelines will result in an undetermined delay in staff delivering your child to the reception area.

- Toddlers/Twos early dismissal on or before 12:30 pm.
- Pre-K Threes/Pre-K Fours/Transition early dismissal on or before 12:45 pm.

### **Afternoon Dismissal**

Families of all preschool students are welcome to walk to the classroom to pick up their child at the end of the school day. The doors will open at 12:55 pm for Toddlers/Twos pick-up and then again at 1:25 pm for Pre-K Threes/Pre-K Fours/Transition pick-up. If you are picking up a child at both dismissal times, we kindly ask that you pick up your Toddlers/Twos child and exit the school through the front glass doors and then return when the doors open again for your older child.

Afternoon car line is available for all age groups. Children will be loaded by preschool staff members beginning at 1:00 for Toddlers/Twos and 1:30 for Pre-K Threes/Pre-K Fours/Transition.

### **Late Pick-up**

Children are to be picked up promptly at 1:00 or 1:30 as scheduled. In the event of an unexpected delay in your arrival, please call the receptionist at 281-297-5959. Families picking up after their student's dismissal has concluded, please check in with the receptionist and your child will be escorted by preschool staff to the reception area.

Late pick-up fees will be charged starting immediately after the car line has finished. The fee is \$10 for the first 10 minutes, then \$5 for each additional 5-minute increment thereafter. Late fees are per child.

### **CAR LINE PROCEDURES**

- During arrival and dismissal, please place car line sign in an easy to view car window and keep visible until you have gone through car line completely. This helps the staff greet the students by name and assists in efficiency. Additional/replacement car line signs can be requested by emailing [preschool@twmc.org](mailto:preschool@twmc.org).
- Please place car seats/booster seats on passenger's side of backseat. Staff members will only load and unload from the sidewalk and will not walk in between cars to load or unload a student.
- Put the car in park while children are loading or unloading. Do not allow children to exit the vehicle until a staff member opens the door.
- Staff members will open car doors and help your child enter or exit your vehicle. The driver is responsible for releasing and securing car seats and boosters. Staff are not permitted to load children into a car without an installed car/booster seat.
- Staff members are happy to deliver notes and small items to the office or classrooms.
- For the safety of everyone, please hold on to pets as children load and unload.
- Car line is a phone free zone. Your undivided attention and assistance are appreciated.
- Please be prompt. Some car lines are much faster than others. If car line is finished when you arrive, please park in a designated parking space and walk in to drop off or pick up your child.
- Please proceed straight ahead when exiting the car line; do not attempt to pass other cars that are still parked.

## **PROGRAMS AND CURRICULUM**

### **AGES WE SERVE**

#### **Toddlers/Twos:**

Activities in our Toddlers/Twos classes are based on Little Texans, Big Futures which was developed through a collaboration between the Texas Early Learning Council and Texas stakeholders. The Texas Early Learning Council is housed at the Children's Learning Institute, University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston.

Special care is given to the social and emotional development of our Toddlers and Twos.

- Teachers lovingly guide students as they work on separation from parents, awareness of others (empathy), self-control, making transitions, listening, and self-expression.
- We develop large muscles in daily activities such as jumping and dancing.
- Fine motor skills are developed through fun activities including puzzles, using play dough with various tools, painting, and drawing.
- Classroom activities are designed to foster creativity, imagination, problem solving skills, exploration, and experimentation.
- Children develop their language skills through singing, listening to stories, dramatic play, vocabulary development and speech enhancement. Starting with their own names, children begin to learn about letters and words.
- Basic and early math and science concepts are introduced through hands-on activities. We use our most portable manipulatives, our fingers, for "counting" songs.

- Children are learning about the world around them through play.

### **Pre-K Threes and Pre-K Fours**

Children in Pre-K Threes and Pre-K Fours classes follow the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. These guidelines support children's learning in all domains and align with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills used starting in kindergarten. The specific curriculum used is Learning Without Tears, which is a state approved curriculum aligning with the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines. By using Learning Without Tears, a smooth transition is provided from skills learned in a Pre-K Threes classroom to the more complex needs of a Pre-K Fours student and beyond.

#### **Pre-K Threes:**

- Handwriting Without Tears, a component of Learning Without Tears, materials are used to introduce correct handwriting strokes for letters in children's names.
- Supplemental literacy materials from the Neuhaus Education Center are used as well as many books, both fiction and non-fiction.
- Singing songs, finger plays, wordless books and class discussions add to oral language skills.
- Math skills are built by incorporating activities such as counting, sorting, graphing, shape and number recognition, and problem solving.
- Science and Social Studies concepts are introduced through exploration, experimentation, and observation.
- Through play, students develop the social and emotional competencies that are needed for school readiness. Building relationships is supported in the classroom and conflict resolution is modeled as children build self-control and personal responsibility.

#### **Pre-K Fours:**

- Letter/sound relationships are explicitly taught through hands on exploration, oral instruction, worksheets, and shared reading and writing.
- Handwriting Without Tears is used to learn correct letter formation for both capital and lower-case letters and number formation.
- Listening comprehension increases from what children hear both in conversations and stories that are read aloud. Conversations are becoming more complex with children describing their needs and wants, carrying on conversations and sharing information.
- Literacy is further supported by individual and class-made books, teachers taking dictation from children and reading aloud in the classroom.
- We provide opportunities for the students to express themselves through visual arts, drama and music.
- The mathematical domains of Number Sense, Joining/ Separating, Geometry/Spatial Sense, Measurement, and Classification/Patterns are learned through teacher-directed instruction as well as independent exploration.
- Students in our Pre-K Fours continue to develop their awareness of who they are and how to control their behavior and emotions. Sustaining attention and forming relationships with both their peers and with adults are facilitated in the classroom.
- A student's understanding that others may have perspectives that are similar or different from their own is supported throughout the year.

### **Transition**

The Transition class offers a unique experience for those students who are 5 years old by September 1<sup>st</sup> and will benefit from the gift of an extra year before starting the rigors of kindergarten. The goal of our transition class is to create confident learners. Our transition class is taught by a certified teacher and follows a blend of the state PreK Guidelines and the kindergarten TEKS (Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills). Low ratios enable us to meet each child where they are both academically and socially and support and challenge as needed.

- Our transition class supports the development of each child's cognitive, physical, social, emotional and language skills.
- Building literacy and math skills is a key component of our transition class.
- Guided readers are introduced and used with small groups of children as well as individually.



- Shared, or interactive, reading activities are used in the classroom to practice concepts about print, such as comprehension and fluency.
- Handwriting Without Tears continues to be implemented in the Transition class. Correct letter formation of upper- and lower-case letters are supported and writing journals are used.
- The mathematical domains of numbers and operations, algebraic reasoning, geometry and measurement, data analysis, and financial literacy are covered.
- Transition students explore concepts through the implementation of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) and practice problem solving, predicting, observing, exploring, risk taking, data gathering, communication and collaboration.
- Five-year-olds are continuing to build social and emotional skills such as how to work independently, cooperatively in a group and solve conflicts on their own.

## **OUR GOALS FOR EACH CHILD:**

### **Spiritual**

- To develop a knowledge of God's creation
- To learn about God Himself
- To begin to understand how God and Jesus love us

### **Social-Emotional**

- To develop a positive attitude toward learning
- To experience a sense of positive self-esteem
- To exhibit a positive attitude toward life
- To demonstrate cooperative, pro-social behavior
- To develop a sense of autonomy
- To acquire self-help skills

### **Physical**

- To enhance gross motor skills (large muscles)
- To enhance and refine fine motor skills (wrist and hand muscles)
- To aid in development of eye-hand coordination
- To use all senses in learning

### **Cognitive**

- To acquire learning and problem-solving skills
- To expand logical thinking skills
- To acquire concepts and information leading to a fuller understanding of the world
- To expand creative and imaginative abilities through make-believe play, art, and music
- To expand verbal communication skills
- To develop beginning reading and writing skills in a "print-rich" environment
- To acquire math and science skills through exploration of concrete and natural materials

### **Developmentally Appropriate**

All children, families and individual classrooms are different and should be responsive to those individual differences.

A developmentally appropriate classroom incorporates the following:

- Creating a caring community of learners
- Engaging in reciprocal partnerships with families and fostering community connections
- Observing, documenting, and assessing children's development and learning
- Teaching to enhance each child's development and learning
- Planning and implementing an engaging curriculum to achieve meaningful goals
- Demonstrating professionalism as an early childhood educator

*(NAEYC: Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP) Position Statement)*

## **MUSIC AND MOTOR**

All children participate in our Music and Motor program taught by staff from Boni's Dance and Performing Arts Studio. The teacher, assistant teacher, or another adult always attends Music and Motor with the class. Gross motor skills are enhanced through fun, age-appropriate movement activities. Children attend Music and Motor every day.

## **CHAPEL**

All children attend chapel each week. Each chapel time focuses on a Bible story and includes singing and praying. Monthly Bible verses are presented, and children are encouraged to memorize them. Families are invited to join us for the all-school Christmas and Easter Chapel services.

## **SCIENCE**

Pre-K Three, Pre-K Four, and Transition students attend a science class twice monthly. Texas prekindergarten guidelines are covered, and students explore, experiment, observe, hypothesize, and review. Literacy and Math are integrated into learning through data collection and data presentation. The class covers Physical Science, Life Science, and Earth and Space Science. Science exploration is also offered in all classrooms.

## **ACTIVE PLAY: INDOORS AND OUTDOORS**

Active play is an important component to a child's physical development. This type of play helps the child develop their coordination, balance, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, and body awareness. The physical activity associated with active play is also a health benefit to children. Research suggests that when adults allow children opportunities to participate in regular active play, these children develop healthier habits and are less likely to lead a sedentary lifestyle. Additionally, physical activity associated with active play (both indoors and outdoors) helps children use up their natural energy and promotes better eating and sleeping habits.

At COTW, all children engage in active play in indoor and outdoor settings. We have three playgrounds available daily to children. These spaces offer opportunities for structured and unstructured play for a minimum of 30 minutes each school day for all ages. Should the weather prohibit outdoor active play, COTW teachers have physical activity plans in place including music and movement, using hallway relays, active games and floor stretching.

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Children should bring an appropriately sized backpack to school each day. Please ensure the backpack is large enough to contain all the items that will travel between home and school each day. Children will wear their backpacks at dismissal, as we need their hands free.

Backpack contents should include (for all children):

- A full change of clothing, including socks, shoes, and disposable diapers and/or undergarments. Please label all items with your child's name. For ease of transport, items can be placed in a plastic, zip-top style bag. For your student to always be comfortably dressed, please ensure the clothing items are seasonally appropriate.
- A non-breakable, re-usable water bottle with a sipping lid.
- A healthy finger-food snack in an easy-to-open container.
- A healthy lunch, which must be ready-to-eat, unwrapped food in a divided, non-breakable lunch container. Lunch boxes are not permitted for Toddlers/Twos/Pre-K Threes.

## **Clothing**

Dress your child in clothing that is durable and comfortable. Your child will be active in school and will have opportunities to participate in messy activities including but not limited to painting, glue, and markers. The school will not be responsible for damage done to clothing during school activities. Weather permitting, children will have daily outdoor play and should dress accordingly. Please label all removable clothing with your child's name.

## **Footwear**

All preschool students must wear athletic shoes. Appropriate athletic shoes must include tongues and be fastened by either laces or Velcro straps or contain sturdy elastic material over the entire top of the foot. Athletic shoes must provide complete coverage for the toes, top, sides, and heel of the

foot. They also need to be well-sized to the child's foot and be designed for active play. Athletic shoes may be traditional or ankle height, but no higher.

### **Non-Permitted Items**

Please do not send the following items to school with your child:

- Toys from home as these items are easily lost and not easily shared
- Jewelry, including necklaces, bracelets and dangling earrings
- Medicine, lip balm, hand sanitizer, cough drops, or chewing gum
- Coins or paper money of any kind
- Party favors or Birthday party gifts
- Commercial or promotional materials
- Latex balloons

## **PARENT COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION**

### **Family Portal/FACTS**

COTW relies on email and parent text alerts to communicate with families. It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to update all information, including but not limited to, emergency contacts, address, phone numbers, and email addresses in the Family Portal.

### **Newsletters**

Monthly school newsletters are sent via email to provide parents/guardians with additional information concerning activities at the school. Just prior to the new school year starting, a comprehensive "Back to School" newsletter will be sent with the answers to many beginning of the year questions.

### **Website and Social Media**

Children of The Woodlands website: [www.childrenofthewoodlands.org](http://www.childrenofthewoodlands.org)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/COTWPreschool/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/cotwpreschool/>

### **Teacher to Family**

A strong school/home relationship is very important, and we encourage regular communication. Teachers communicate with parents/guardians through the class GroupMe, emails, newsletters, event updates, and photos. Please check your child's backpack and your email daily.

### **Family to Teacher**

Your relationship with your child's teacher is very important. An email, note, or a quick word about any changes at home (new baby, parent/guardian out of town, illness, even death of a pet) will allow the teacher to help your child deal with feelings.

Due to busy schedules during the class day, teachers may not answer phone calls or texts during class time. Please leave a message with the receptionist and it will be delivered to the teacher by the end of the day. You are also welcome to email your questions and concerns directly to your child's teacher.

### **Family Handbook**

The Family Handbook is updated annually before the beginning of each school year. Families will be notified in writing of any changes made to COTW operational policies and admissions agreements. Acknowledgement of all such changes must be signed and dated for each family.

### **TWMC to Families**

As an outreach ministry of TWMC, preschool families may be contacted periodically with information about TWMC programs and events.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

### **New Family Orientation**

All parents/guardians have the opportunity to attend orientation each fall. Although orientation is especially helpful for new families, returning families are welcome as well.

### **Curriculum Presentation**

An evening presentation is scheduled in September. Parents/guardians have the opportunity to learn about the specific age group's curriculum, visit their child's classroom and learn detailed information from their child's teacher.

### **Holidays and Special Events**

Families are invited to celebrate the holidays at our Pre-K Costume Parade, Thanksgiving Feast, Christmas Chapel, and Easter Chapel. We also invite families to attend our special holiday events, A Preschool Family Christmas, and our Easter Event, which will both be held immediately following the school day. Special events hosted by COTW throughout the school year include Rodeo, Splash Day, Spring Family Picnic, End of the Year Celebration, and others. Families will be notified with information regarding participation in these events.

### **Birthdays**

Families are invited to celebrate your child's birthday in the classroom. You may send a special treat for the class on the day of the celebration. Birthday treats need to be prepared in a commercial kitchen—no homemade treats are permitted. Summer birthdays are usually celebrated at "half birth dates" or during the month of May. Please do not bring party favors of any kind and do not send gifts to school for delivery. Party invitations can be sent for dissemination so long as an invitation is provided for each classmate.

### **Bring Your Family to School**

Every teacher has a plan for welcoming each child's family to school during the school year. Our Toddlers/Twos classes have the option to combine this day with the child's birthday celebration. All Pre-K Threes/Pre-K Fours/Transition classes will celebrate this special day separate and independent of your child's birthday celebration. Your child's teacher will coordinate a schedule for each family's attendance. When it is your family's turn to attend, everyone is welcome including siblings, parents, and extended family such as grandparents. Please plan on this visit lasting between 30 minutes and 1 hour.

### **Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Conferences are scheduled twice a year and include a review of your child's progress on their Developmental Checklist. Additional meetings with the teacher and/or administrators are easily arranged. Siblings are not allowed to attend conferences.

### **Family Volunteers**

There are opportunities for families to volunteer in the classroom, either as a reader, or to help with special projects. Check with your child's teacher for volunteer opportunities. Please plan for sibling care, when necessary, as the nursery is not available.

### **Book Fair**

COTW and The Woodlands Methodist School coordinate two book fairs during the school year and share all the proceeds. The book fair is filled with excellent preschool books and profits support the preschool library. Our library staff will organize the event and parent volunteers will be asked for assistance.

### **Outside Services by School Staff**

Occasionally, school employees offer outside services such as tutoring or childcare. While families are welcome to take advantage of these services, they are independent of and not sponsored by COTW or TWMC and may not take place in the preschool area. Additionally, during the time that a child is enrolled in the class of any teacher or assistant teacher, that child may not participate in any outside services by those individuals, including but not limited to tutoring and childcare.

## **GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE**

COTW staff maintain learning environments that are predictable, consistent, and harmonious. This type of learning environment allows children developmentally appropriate opportunities to make choices, play, and develop social relationships. It also provides children with clear boundaries and expectations for their behavior.

Discipline must be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child.
- Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.
- A positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, including the following:
  - Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior.
  - Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements.
  - Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
  - Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment.
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training.
- Grabbing or pulling a child.
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument.
- Putting anything in or on a child's mouth.
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child.
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language.
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet
- Placing a child in a restrictive device for time out
- Withholding active play or keeping a child inside as a consequence for behavior, unless the child is exhibiting behavior during active play that requires brief supervised separation or time out; and
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

*Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapter L, Discipline and Guidance*

### **BITING**

Biting is common behavior and often seen in young children. Biting behaviors typically resolve as children mature and develop better communication, self-regulation, and problem-solving skills.

While biting is a typical behavior for young children, it does not mean that it is acceptable. At COTW, our teachers, assistant teachers and staff implement the following procedures for incidents involving biting:

- The child who is bitten receives appropriate levels of first aid.
- Parents/guardians of the child who was bitten will be notified by teacher and/or staff and will receive a written Incident Report Form. Please note, the name of the child presenting with the biting behavior will remain confidential.
- Parents/guardians of the child who bit will be notified by teacher and/or staff and the incident will be documented.

**ABUSE OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

COTW teachers and staff will work to address confusion or misunderstanding of stated COTW policies and procedures with families. Communication and conversation will be documented. Detailed explanations and timelines will be utilized to help families understand and meet COTW policies and procedures. If all possible interventions/adaptations to help the family meet policies and procedures have been utilized and there is no growth toward positive outcomes, exclusionary measures will be considered. Additionally, if the family utilizes aggressive, threatening, or abusive behaviors toward COTW teachers and staff, exclusionary measures will be considered.

**EXCLUSIONARY MEASURES**

COTW strives to limit the use of exclusionary measures such as suspension or dismissal. However, if COTW cannot adequately meet the needs of the child, or if stated policies and procedures are abused, the child may be suspended or dismissed from COTW. Any child who is frequently disruptive to the learning process, destructive, causing deliberate bodily injury, using abusive language, referred to the director repeatedly without obvious positive results, or in need of individual assistance or care which cannot be provided in our school setting may be subject to suspension or dismissal. Please note, exclusionary measures are not considered until all other possible interventions/adaptations have been utilized and there is a general consensus that exclusion (suspension or dismissal) is in the best interest of the child. If exclusionary measures must be taken, applicable federal and state civil rights laws are followed. Additionally, information about access to services and alternative placement will be offered to families.