



TREE HILL

• LEARNING CENTER •

Parent Handbook



Last Revised August 2024

Program Policies and Procedures

Admissions and Enrollment Policy

Tree Hill Learning Center serves children 12 weeks to 10 years of age. We provide high quality care for children in an age appropriate environment.

Upon enrollment it will be necessary for the following forms to be completed, signed and returned to Tree Hill before your child's first day:

- Pre-Registration Form
- Immunization Record
- Individual Health Plan (if applicable)
- Complete Registration Packet including:
 - Enrollment Form
 - General Permission Form
 - Medical Authorization Form
 - After Hours Policy
 - Billing Policy
 - Grievances Policy
 - Signed acknowledgment of Parent Handbook
 - Signed acknowledgment of Pesticide Policy
 - Before and After School Transportation Permission Form (if applicable)

Tree Hill Learning Center will request updates to your information at least annually, and for immunization records as needed. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide this updated information. Your personal information is private and will be treated as such, your records are kept in a locked filing cabinet and are only accessible by Tree Hill Learning Center employees, and legal parents/guardians to your child.

To ensure proper adjustment for all children, each child will be admitted to the program for a trial period of up to one month. At the conclusion of this time, parents and Director will decide if the program is suitable for your child. Please see our Expulsion Policy for more details on this process beyond the first 30 days of enrollment.

Hours of Operation

Our regular hours of operation are 6:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m., Monday through Friday. We are closed weekends, and on most major holidays. A list of closures can be found in the Holidays section of this Handbook. In case of emergency, you can reach our owner Dana after hours at 360-609-9823, or by email at dana@treehillkids.com.

Attendance: Regular attendance is important for children to receive the maximum benefit from the program. Many of our classrooms begin their instructional time by 9:00 AM, and if your child is regularly late they cannot benefit fully from this program. While we encourage arrival by 9:00 AM, we restrict drop off for the day after 11 AM.

In order for all staff to effectively plan for the day, we require families to notify the school when the child will be absent, arriving late or leaving early. Please inform us of an absence no later than 10:00 a.m. on the same day, or sooner whenever possible.

If your child is staying home sick, it is important that you inform us of their symptoms so that we can properly track the spread of Viruses and report to the Health Department if necessary.

Non-Discrimination Policy

Tree Hill Learning Center gladly welcomes and accepts children and families and staff from all backgrounds, regardless of race, creed, color, national and ethnic origin, sex, honorably discharged veteran or military status, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, or ability. We comply with the requirements of the Washington law against discrimination and the ADA.

We are dedicated to providing assistance to aid children and parents who have limited English language ability. If your child has special needs, the Director and classroom teachers will work with you to create an appropriate care plan. Tree Hill strives to provide a culturally and racially diverse atmosphere where everyone will feel welcome and included. We provide diverse learning opportunities for children that includes curriculum, activities and materials that are representative of many cultures and languages. Our teachers and staff work hard to create an inclusive environment and will intervene appropriately if they witness any situations or conversations that are racially or culturally biased.

Signing in and out

The state requires all parents to sign their child in and out daily. We use an electronic attendance system; each parent or designated pick up person must use their individual ID to check the child in and out. It is important for each pick up person to use their own timeclock ID as the child's attendance record will reflect the person who has dropped off and picked up. Tree Hill Learning Center employees may ask for the ID of a pick up person at any time, if that person is not on a child's authorized pick up list they will not be allowed to leave with the child regardless of their use of a check out ID. Children are not permitted to sign themselves in and out.

Our sign-in/out devices are always located on the counter at the front desk, and long-term attendance records can be provided by request.

If you need to pick up and return your child to the learning center during the day (e.g. for a doctor appointment, etc.), please be sure your child's teacher is aware that you are picking up your child and approximately when you will be returning.

You must sign your child in/out anytime they arrive at or leave the school. We do not allow any dropping off or picking up during our scheduled nap time, 12:00-3:00. If there is a special circumstance, such as a doctor's appointment, please make arrangements to pick up and drop off outside of naptime.

Children enrolled in our Before and After School program will be signed out by a staff member when they leave in the morning and signed back in when they return at the end of their school day.

Children are released only to persons for whom the staff has written permission from the parent/legal guardian. Families should be sure to update this permission when they wish a new person to pick up their child, as the child will not be released unless written permission has been granted. Teachers/staff will request picture identification from anyone not known to them seeking to pick up your child, so please advise your designated pick-up person to bring a driver's license or other photo identification.

If a person picking up a child appears to be under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or is otherwise altered or unprepared to safely transport a child, 911 will be called immediately.

After Hours Policy

Tree Hill closes promptly at 5:45 p.m. daily. All children must be picked up by that time. In the event that child remains at the center past closing, a teacher will stay with the child and follow the following procedures:

- Every effort will be made to contact the child's parents
- If a parent cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called. Identification will be required by this person, and it must match the name on your pick up list in order for us to release your child to them. Parent/legal guardian will be notified as soon as possible that the child has been released to one of their emergency contacts.
- If the staff have not been able to contact anyone by 8:00 p.m. to come for the child, the child will be considered abandoned and the police will be called*
- Late fees will be billed at a rate of \$35.00**

*Please note: We have to make these provisions in the event that this situation ever develops. Our sincere hope is that we never have to implement this procedure.

**Working together as a partner in your child's care will make your experience with Tree Hill Learning Center a pleasant one. Please try to notify us of any situation or emergency that occurs that may prevent you from picking up your child on time.



Billing Policies

Tree Hill Learning Center operates on a monthly tuition schedule. We offer full-day (under 10 hours per day) and half-day programs (under 5 hours per day). Please see our Rate Sheet for current tuition amounts.

Tree Hill bills one month in advance for space to be reserved in your child's class. Payment is due the 1st of each month. Late fees will be applied to any accounts not brought up to date by the 10th and 20th of each month.

You are welcome to pay your child's tuition in advance; however, we do not offer a discount for this option.

If you decide to withdraw your child from the Tree Hill, we do require at least 30-days written notice. Families failing to provide notice will still be responsible for 30-days tuition for each child enrolled, and no refunds will be given for unused time or tuition. We do not offer refunds or prorate tuition for any other reason.

We encourage payment by check, credit card*, debit card, ACH, or money order. However, in the event of an NSF check, there will be a \$50.00 NSF charge. Money order or cash must pay NSF charges. More than two NSF checks in a year will result in cash, money order or cashier check acceptance only. **Credit card payment will incur a processing fee.*

Payment methods will be saved in our secure billing system and automatically processed for the full balance of your account on the first of every month. If for any reason you do not want your saved credit card charged, you must notify us or provide alternate payment before the first of the month.

We reserve the right to re-evaluate our rates at any time. In the event that our tuition rates change, we will provide one month's notification.

If there is a billing problem or error, please contact the school director to resolve the matter.

For divorced and separated families: We have one account per child. We can bill parents separately based on percentages decided upon by the parents. The learning center considers account liability to rest with those signed as enrolling parent(s) /legal guardian(s), and if tuition is not paid in full by one or both parties your child will be at risk of expulsion. We will ensure that only individuals authorized in writing are picking up your children. It is not the responsibility of Tree Hill Learning Center to follow or enforce any other parenting plan schedules or arrangements. Any documents requested by parents such as invoices or attendance records will be equally provided to both parents and/or legal guardians.

Vacation billing and sick days: Tree Hill Learning Center does not credit accounts or issue discounts for vacation time or sick days, or days that Tree Hill is closed. Make-up days may be used after a missed day occurs, within the same month, if classroom space allows. Make-up days are not guaranteed. If an additional attendance day is needed, you may request a drop-in day at the daily rate for your child's age group.

Ten Hour Policy: State law dictates that children may not be in child care for more than 10 hours per day. At Tree Hill we enforce this policy by charging a \$25 fee per day for each child present at Tree Hill for over 10 hours.

Siblings: There is a 10% discount on the lowest tuition rate for siblings enrolled in our program.

School-age extra attendance days: In the event of a non-school day, we will bill one week in advance based on projected attendance. We will provide sign-up sheets so families can schedule their child to be at Tree Hill during any non-school days. If your child is scheduled for any of these days, but do not attend for any reason, you will still be billed for this day.

Transportation

Children enrolled in our School Age Program will be transported to and from their local elementary school on one of our 14-passenger busses.

Tree Hill Camas provides bus service to and from the following schools:

- Prune Hill Elementary
- Dorothy Fox Elementary

Tree Hill Camas is within the **Grass Valley Elementary** boundaries, and will **walk children to and from the bus stop** located directly across the street from Tree Hill.

Tree Hill Vancouver provides bus service to and from the following schools:

- Emerald Elementary
- Fisher's Landing Elementary
- Burton Elementary

Tree Hill Vancouver is within the **Harmony Elementary** boundaries, and will **walk children to and from the bus stop** located nearby Tree Hill.

It will be necessary for the learning center to have on file a signed and completed Transportation Authorization form in order for us to transport your child to and from school. Our bus drivers are fully licensed and insured and have current first aid and CPR training. Our drivers are required to ensure that each child's safety belt is fastened before starting the vehicle and our busses are always kept in safe operating condition.

Ensure that any changes to your child's monthly schedule is submitted in writing to our office, as well as the office of your child's elementary school. Any last minute, time sensitive changes, to your child's schedule must be reported by phone to both schools.

Should we arrive at your child's school to pick them up and they are not there as scheduled, a **\$20 fee will be charged to your account**. Our drivers are not permitted to leave the site until all children on our schedule are accounted for.

Holidays and Celebrations

Tree Hill Learning Center celebrates all culturally relevant holidays to the children in our program. Please remember to inform teachers of which holidays your family celebrates. Please also let us know if there is a holiday that you don't wish your child to partake in. We will make arrangements to provide alternate activities.

We are closed or have altered hours for the following holidays:

- New Year's Eve: close 3:00 P.M.
- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- President's Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- July 4th and 5th for Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Halloween: Close at 4:00 P.M.
- Veteran's Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day
- Day after Christmas

Please consult the annual Tree Hill Calendar for specific closure information each year as holidays that fall on weekends will be observed on the closest weekday.

There are no tuition discounts or make-up days for closure dates.

Families who wish to share birthday celebrations may bring simple refreshments to serve at lunch or snack time. Please let classroom teachers know in advance when you would like to bring treats to avoid scheduling conflicts. We encourage you to choose healthy options such as fresh fruit, yogurt, or 100% fruit popsicles. Refreshments must be store purchased and must be **peanut/tree nut free**.

Parent Code of Conduct

Tree Hill believes in the importance and value of a mutually supportive relationship between the teachers and parents. The care and education of a child is most successful when the school and parents share a commitment to collaboration, open lines of communication, and mutual respect. Parents shall always model positive and responsible behavior and communicate in an ethical manner. In doing so, they not only show their children how to appropriately express and address issues and concerns, but they ensure that there is no disruption to the educational process.

Parent expectations include:

- Recognize that the education of each child is the joint responsibility of the parent, student, and teacher
- Both parents and the school, work in cooperative interest of the child, and in the best interest of the staff, in a professional and respectful manner
- Exhibit a good example for students in their conduct, language, and behavior while on campus or at school sponsored activities
- Refrain from negative gossip or unsubstantiated criticism that disparages the reputation of the school or its employees, including on social media sites
- Seek to clarify a child's version of events with the teachers view to avoid misunderstanding and to bring about a successful resolution to any dispute.
- Seek to clarify understanding of curriculum goals and objectives and understand the school's curriculum goals, philosophies and policies. Attend curriculum night and parent conferences.
- Contact the school directly when you have a question or need clarification of a school matter rather than depending upon the interpretation of other parents or other non-official school sources
- Ensure that children arrive to school and are picked up on time.
- Refrain from planning pick up or drop off during nap time (12:00-3:00), please discuss alternate arrangements with the front desk if there will be a need to pick up during this time frame.
- Communicate with the school when your child will be late or out by calling the school by 10:00 AM. If the child is ill let the school know their symptoms.
- Abide by our Illness Policy. Knowingly bringing a sick child to school may result in termination.
- May not threaten or approach any student or teacher in an abusive or intimidating manner
- Refuse to comply with any reasonable request from a school employee in the performance of his/her duties
- Communicate with teachers in person, or with Tree Hill accounts (email or Procare), there is no need to contact a teacher on their personal phone or accounts to discuss school matters.
- Refrain from making arrangements for any Tree Hill staff to provide outside services (babysitting) while they are on the clock.

Anyone not respecting the above guidelines may be asked to leave school premises and, in some cases, may be prohibited from access to the school or have care terminated.

Classrooms & Curriculum

Our curriculum, which has been exclusively developed by our teaching team of professionals, has many influences. As a staff, we have looked to the latest research and information to guide us in the development of this unique and creative curriculum. We begin the year with a theme-based learning approach as our staff observes the children's individual interests and developmental needs. From there, our teaching teams consult with one another to create a network of ideas that are based on these observations of the children's interests. From there the teaching team will bring in resources and develop activities that are relevant to the children and their success as they move through our whole program.

The project approach is another way we develop curriculum. In the project approach children have the opportunity to define what they already know about a topic of interest as well as what they are interested in learning about the topic. From there extended amounts of time are given to help facilitate this emerging interest and sustain it to new levels of thinking and understanding.

We believe that the classroom is the child's workshop. There a child develops skills in making decisions, acquiring knowledge of the world, making friends, and learning to cooperate in a group. The child is given opportunities to exercise curiosity, initiative, critical thinking and creativity. We believe in a Whole Child approach, supporting children in their academic, social, emotional, and physical development.

Our daily activities include those that support a child's total well-being. Some will be teacher-directed, while others are child-initiated. Children learn through their play and learn more quickly when their environment is relative and consistent. By combining what we know about healthy development and the individual needs of the children enrolled in our program, we are able to offer a relevant curriculum which provides ample opportunities for comprehensive and meaningful learning.

School readiness is an important long-term goal of our program. School readiness preparation begins as early as our infant and toddler classes and is carried through the pre-kindergarten class. Activities focus around literacy skills, math skills, and cooperative social skills. Our private accredited kindergarten program builds on these foundations and provides instruction in literacy, math, science, social studies, health, art, and music in alignment with the Washington State Common Core Standards.

Curriculum and activity plans are prepared in advance by our teaching team and posted on the Parent Information Board outside your child's classroom, along with any program changes.



Classrooms and Transition Policy

Child transitions into new classrooms will be overseen by the classroom teachers, curriculum director, and center director. Transitions will be discussed with parents and a transition date will be set. Transition readiness can vary from child to child. The entry requirements that must be met are as follows:

Seedlings: Infants must be at least 12 weeks of age before entering the Seedlings classroom. Individual schedules and needs will be attended to.

Acorns: Toddlers must be at least 11 months of age before entering the Acorns classroom. They must be nearing readiness to have only one nap a day, be weaned off of bottles and drinking out of sippy cups. Breast milk and formula will be replaced with cow's milk or an appropriate substitute. If accommodations are needed, please speak to the director.

Oak Leaves: Children may transition to the Oak Leaves at 18 months. Children must be ready to nap only once per day after lunch, feed themselves independently, and be ready to build self help skills.

Willows: Children may transition to the Willows class after 30 months of age. They should have an appropriate level of self help skills to aid in potty training such as pulling up and down their pants, hand-washing, and other skills such as putting on their own shoes and jackets.

Maples: Children may transition to Maples after 3 years old. Typical classroom makeup is children who turn 3 before September 1st of the school year. Children must be fully daytime potty trained and have appropriate self-help skills including wiping, dressing self, and hand washing. Children should be able to self-regulate their behavior in order to participate in developmentally appropriate group activities, circle time, and clean up time. While age appropriate comfort items are encouraged; pacifiers should be left at home.

Evergreens: Children may transition to the Evergreens classroom after 4 years old. Typical classroom makeup is children who turn 4 before September 1st of the school year. Children should be showing some academic readiness skills including but not limited to letter and number recognition and early writing skills. Children should be able to participate appropriately in circle time and group activities. Kindergarten readiness is a main goal of our Evergreens program.

Cedars: Children may transition to the Cedars classroom at 5 years old. Children should be showing kindergarten readiness skills including but not limited to letter name and letter-sound recognition, knowledge of sight words, writing own name, counting to 20, and basic addition and subtraction. In some cases, children who turn 5 before October 15th of the school year may be admitted into Cedars.

Redwoods: Children in the Redwoods classroom must be 6 years old and in first grade, up to 11 years old in fifth grade. Once children enter their sixth grade year, then are no longer eligible to be enrolled at Tree Hill Learning Center.

New to Tree Hill: At any age, we encourage you to consider a transition plan into care that supports your child. Start with a visit of one to two hours, and slowly increase that time until your child is comfortable with their new surroundings.

Routines

Cubbies: Cubbies are a perfect place for children to keep their personal supplies, however please remember that this space is limited and bringing oversized items may not be manageable. Children are encouraged to remove their own coats/jackets and place them up in their cubbies. Assistance will be given when a child is unable to help him/herself - by showing how and by reminding them that they can do it, and by encouraging the child to be self-reliant. Teachers will see that all children are appropriately dressed before going outdoors - with coats/jackets fastened, and hats and boots on if needed.

Restroom Use: In preschool classes, teachers are prepared for bathroom accidents and treat these occurrences matter-of-factly. The child will be changed to dry clothing and the wet articles are placed in a bag to take home. In this routine, children are encouraged to help themselves as much as possible. The child is reminded to flush, wash hands and dry them well. All children are required to wash their hands upon entering the classroom, after using the bathroom, before and after eating, and after any “messy” activities.

Meal/Snack time: All children help clean up the room and then wash their hands. Children are encouraged to remain seated until they are through eating. Children are also encouraged to help themselves as much as possible during snack times. Children clean up after themselves, placing cups, napkins and trash in the wastebasket, and wash their hands. If a child is regularly refusing food served, we will ask parents to provide a supply of alternatives.

Circle time: Group times are planned to introduce children to peer experiences and familiarize them with teacher-directed activities. Songs, games, stories and finger-plays, meetings, curriculum or event planning are used to provide pleasant, proactive group interactions, and allow children time to talk about home experiences, ideas or articles they have brought. All children are encouraged to join group time; however, children who strongly resist or disrupt the group may sit with an adult or choose a quiet activity until circle time is over or until they choose to rejoin the group.

Cleanup: At specified times during the day children help put away play materials. Teachers help to ensure that equipment is placed on shelves in attractive, usable order. At the last cleanup time, the room should be left in readiness for the next day. The same is expected for outdoor play time.

Resting: In accordance with Washington State WACs, rest times are provided daily for all classrooms through 5 years old. During naps or rest periods children are provided an individual mat and sheet, and can bring special blankets and/or stuffed toys to make this time more comfortable and secure. Lighting is dimmed and music or white noise is played in the background. We follow children’s sleep cues, inviting them to rest their bodies after lunchtime, and refrain from actively waking children from nap. Infants follow their individual nap schedules.

In alignment with best practices, children who are not behaving restfully after 30 minutes may be invited to engage in various quiet activities on their mat or away from resting children. If a child is continually and excessively disturbing children who are resting, we will implement a Behavioral Plan with the parents that may include a schedule adjustment.

Tree Hill prohibits any child drop-offs or pick-ups during scheduled nap times; 12:00-3:00 for toddler and preschool classes.

Indoor Environment

Children may select from various interest/learning centers during free choice time. Materials and supplies are available for children to use in expressing creativity, and classroom teachers have special projects and learning activities planned for children to participate in. Children are encouraged to solve their own problems, with a teacher present to guide the problem-solving process and prevent episodes of physical aggression.

- Tables, chairs and shelves are not for climbing.
- Running is not allowed indoors - children are reminded to use “walking feet” and that running is for outdoors.
- Yelling and screaming is not allowed indoors - children are reminded to use their “inside voice” and save loud voices for outdoors.
- Materials and equipment should be kept in the areas in which they are stored. The classroom environment is arranged into areas with quiet activities separated from more active areas. An appropriate flow in a classroom encourages safe, engaging learning and playtime.
- Children are to remain in the classroom at all times, unless the Director approves a supervised excursion, such as field trips or nature walks. Sometimes a child may accompany a teacher on a quick errand, such as to help fetch supplies. The co-teacher must always be notified that the child is leaving the room for a quick errand, and children must be properly supervised and classrooms will remain in ratio at all times.

Outdoor Environment

Outdoor activities are not just a “recess” but an important part of the child’s development and the program’s curriculum. Outdoor play provides opportunities for loud and active play that is unsuitable for indoor play. Outdoor time is a time for free play as well as special organized outdoor activities.

- All children go outdoors during the specified time. If a child is considered too ill to participate outdoors, it is recommended that the child remain at home until able to fully participate at school.
- During the rainy season; children should come prepared wearing a jacket with a hood, and appropriate shoes.
- All climbing equipment is closely supervised by our teaching staff, with at least one adult near the slide whenever it is in use.
- Children go down the slide feet first, always supervised by an adult.
- Children stay in their own outdoor activity area unless on a supervised walk.
- Teachers supervising the outdoor environment keep their eyes on the children at all times, even while engaged in necessary brief conversations with other adults or children. Teachers will move into areas where children are gathering to observe and will be ready to intervene in unsafe behavior if necessary.



Learning Centers

Art Materials: Children are given daily opportunities to explore and experiment with many different art materials and mediums in the art area. Teachers are on hand to help the children learn how to use various tools and materials. Assistance is provided for young children who may need help in learning to use scissors, or guidance with glue. Children are encouraged to wear aprons/smocks to paint. Teaching staff provide assistance when needed with holding and using paintbrushes. Teachers show interest and encourage children to describe their work. Creativity and written descriptions of paintings are encouraged.

Clay/Dough: Modeling clay is used with a variety of tools for cutting and rolling. Play dough is used with cookie cutters, rolling pins, and scissors. Teachers guide and encourage children in using materials, but do not make things for them.

Dramatic Play: Dramatic play materials and props are provided in each classroom and we encourage children to participate in a variety of dramatic play activities.

Library: Books are used in the library area. Teachers model for children how to appropriately use and care for books, how to turn pages without tearing, and return books to shelves when finished. Teachers are available to read to children when they wish to listen to or engage with a story.

Music: Music is encouraged throughout the day, such as CDs, singing and dancing, and musical instruments. Teachers supervise the use of CD players and other personal devices with headphones.

Sensory Table: Water, sand, and other materials are introduced frequently as sensory play is an activity that many children enjoy. Children are encouraged to wear aprons/smocks to protect their clothing. There are numerous water/sand toys and objects for measuring and pouring. Sponges and mops are kept close at hand for spills. Water activities are limited to water tables or sprinklers, water play will never take place in a pool, bucket, or open body of water.

Manipulative Materials: Puzzles, beads, peg sets, small blocks, games, etc. - are always available to children during free choice time.

Block area: Block building is done on the floor near the block shelves. Teachers provide constant supervision to see that the constructions are kept at a safe height - below the child's shoulder level. Adults show the children where and how to build, not what to build.

Electronics: Tree Hill limits screen time in the classroom to 20 minutes per week, unless otherwise pre-approved by families for a special event. Screen time is only used to support the curriculum and facilitate learning. We do not allow children to bring electronic devices from home, unless it is necessary for a health reason or other individual need as pre-arranged between parents and administration.

Getting messy is a part of play! Make sure your child has extra clothes in their cubby, and do not send them in any items that would be upsetting if they were to become stained.

Classroom Enrichment

While enrolled at Tree Hill Learning Center your child will have many opportunities to explore the world in which they live. As part of our program, your child will be introduced to the various cultures that are a part of the Tree Hill Learning Center family. Visits from special guests from our community - including police officers, firefighters, dentists, magicians and parents will be planned to broaden the scope of their world and enhance your child's classroom experience.

Consistent Care Policy

Tree Hill believes in the importance of consistent care. We strive to create teaching teams that compliment each other as equal partners. Teaching teams will work in consistent classrooms to provide routine and stability for the children in that classroom. In the event a substitute teacher is needed, we will do everything in our power to assign a teacher who is familiar with the classroom to maintain stability.

In the event a teacher parts ways with Tree Hill, we will notify parents of the change and the continued staffing plan when we are able to provide that information. We will inform families ahead of time whenever possible, but please know that individual circumstances may preclude that possibility. While we know these situations are difficult for families, they are also sensitive for our staff and we reserve the right to release information as we see fit.

Visitors and Volunteers

Parents or other family members are welcome to help out and volunteer in our program. Regular volunteers must complete a background check and submit proof of negative TB test results at their expense. All visitors and volunteers are expected to uphold our program's health and safety standards at all times.

Tree Hill does reserve the right to ask any family members or other volunteers to cease visits if it becomes problematic for any reason.

Before entering any of the classrooms, all visitors and volunteers are expected to sign in at the front desk and to wear a visitor's badge during their stay. Remember to stop by the office after the visit to sign out and return your badge.

While we appreciate our parent's contribution to our school, volunteer time cannot be exchanged for tuition.

Field Trips

School-Age children in supervised groups may participate in age-appropriate field trips (e.g. pumpkin patch, zoo, library) only if the parent has given written permission. Children younger than six-years-old and not in first grade are not eligible for off-site field trips, with some exceptions for specially arranged trips for the Cedars class. Families will be informed about each field trip (including destination, purpose of trip, method of transportation, additional fees, etc.) at least one-week before the trip. Please make sure you (if you plan to attend) and your child are signed up for the field trip by the due date indicated on the permission slip. Children will travel by foot or be transported on one of our buses.

Safety is of the utmost importance to our staff and we will ensure that all safety precautions are in effect when field trips are taken.

“Early release” field trips for our school aged children occur frequently throughout the school year. We will provide a list of regular destinations at the beginning of the school year and reserve the right to change the location of the trip as needed. Weather is the primary factor in determining the location and duration of an early release field trip.

Personal Items

It is necessary for each child to have at least one complete change of clothing, including shoes, at school in the event their clothing becomes wet or soiled.

Please clearly label all coats, boots, extra clothing, blankets, pillows, or any other personal belongings with your child’s name. It is sometimes comforting for children who are feeling anxious about being at school to bring along a special item (doll, blanket, etc.) and we encourage them to do so. However, because we are concerned about the loss or damage of children’s belongings, we ask that parents understand that the toys children bring may be broken or otherwise damaged at school. ***Tree Hill Learning Center is not responsible for personal items that are lost, broken or damaged while at school.***

Your child should come to school with appropriate clothing for play:

- Weather appropriate clothing
- Raincoats with hoods for rainy day play
- Closed toe sneakers or sandals
- Flip flops, open toe sandals, dress up shoes or shoes with high heels are prohibited

Your child should not bring to the program:

- Toys from home unless it is a scheduled sharing day
- Toys that are defined as being fragile or of high personal value
- Any object that represents a weapon (i.e. toy guns, knives, swords, etc.)
- Any item that presents a safety concern (choking hazards, etc.)
- Umbrellas
- Money in pockets, wallets or purses
- Tablets or similar electronic devices

Depending on the age and needs of your child, you may be expected to provide:

- Diapers, diaper creams, or other ointments
- Additional foods such as infant purees, or food alternatives for special diets
- Alternative wet wipes or sunscreen if the type provided is causing irritation or allergy

Items brought from home must be labeled with child’s full name, have an Authorization form signed, and/or include list of ingredients, as applicable.

Family Engagement and Partnership Communication Plan

We recognize that time constraints can often make daily communication difficult and we hope to provide options that will accommodate each family's schedule and needs. Our infant and toddler teaching staff will provide communication each day to parents indicating the details of daily routines such as feeding and diapering as well as any significant incidents that may occur during the day (i.e. your child's overall mood, exciting discoveries, injuries, etc.).

Daily communication for all classrooms may occur via written reports, electronic (email or other software), or verbally in person or by phone. Any and all occurrences of injury or illness will be reported to parents by way of an Injury/Incident Report, or a phone call as needed. A conference can be requested by a parent or teacher at any time to provide the time and space for more detailed discussions.

Upon enrollment, we ask that parents provide us with as much insight about their child as possible, please discuss with your child's teachers any relevant developmental information, health history, social, emotional and verbal skills, and any other information you feel is important to share with us. We will revisit these conversations annually, or when your child graduates to a new classroom. This information helps us work as partners in your child's education. .

We encourage teachers and families to frequently discuss their child's developmental progress which may include; areas of strength, special needs, health issues, or other concerns. We also request that you share with us information about your child's home life such as routines and family events, any major changes in routine, other members of the household, parenting styles, cultural practices, and special services your child may receive. We invite you to please share with us any special traditions you have in your home, and cultural practices or events that we can honor with your child at school.

Religion

We do not teach or follow any religious doctrine. Any religious traditions shared with the classroom will be treated as cultural or historical education.

Mealtime at our school is an important social and learning time. Classrooms may choose to follow our tradition of singing the "Tree Song" before meals and snacks. We will not force any child to partake in this saying it simply acts as a starting point for our meals, signaling to the children that all of their friends have been served their food and it is now time to eat. We feel this tradition encourages respect for their peers, and the meal that has been prepared for them. Our mealtime saying is as follows:

"Tree's up!"

For trees so tall, (*Sign Tree*)

and skies so blue, (*Sign Sky*)

For friends and food, (*Sign Friends and Food*)

We thank you! (*Sign Thank You*)



Infant and Toddler Program

At Tree Hill Learning Center, we understand that in the first years of life, infants and toddlers are beginning to create a picture of who they are, what they can do, and what they think and feel. During this special and significant stage, learning occurs at a rate unmatched by any other phase of life! Establishing trusting relationships with the infants and toddlers in our care is of utmost importance to us. We show them they are important, interesting and competent as we share pleasure and excitement in their accomplishments and discoveries. Our primary goal is to provide a warm atmosphere where your little one will feel safe, secure and cared for. Each day we provide enjoyable and engaging opportunities for learning and growth while maintaining a consistent routine for each child to aid in smoothing the transition from home to school.

With these goals in mind, we have created a nurturing program where we hope your young child will thrive. At this young age, children learn about themselves, their feelings and the people around them during each and every interaction and activity. While we plan fun, developmentally appropriate activities and learning opportunities for our infants and toddlers, we also allow the children to learn and discover at their own pace, encouraging individual exploration as well as group interaction. We recognize the importance of the relationship between infants and their parents. We welcome parents to come in and visit their infants any time during the day, whether it be for a feeding or just for snuggles!

Infant Meals and Routine

We realize the importance of a consistent home to school schedule and will work with parents in order to maintain individual schedules for infants. Parents are expected to supply bottles, nipples, formula and/or breast milk, jarred baby food and any other feeding supplies. All feeding supplies must be clearly labeled with the child's name. Our staff will label perishable items with the date they were opened in order to avoid spoilage. We never re-heat or re-use formula or breast milk that isn't finished at the time of initial feeding. We always hold babies while feeding them and never prop their bottles. We delight in taking our time while rocking, talking, singing and interacting with your baby during feeding times.

In consultation with the child's parent or healthcare specialist, semi-solid foods will be introduced to babies four months and older. We will take the same time and care during these meal times that we do for bottle feeding. We hope to ensure pleasurable and relaxed mealtimes for all children. We will work with parents on an individual plan for introducing solid foods. We ask that all new foods are tried at home first to limit the chance of allergic reactions at school.

Toddler Meals and Routine

Toddlers are served the same menu as our older children, but we may adjust how the foods are served so they are appropriate for younger children. For example, if raw veggies are served to the older children at snack time, we would serve steamed vegetables to our toddlers. Toddlers will not be served any foods that can be considered a choking hazard, and/or foods are cut up in a manner that makes them safe.

We work hard with our staff and parents to transition toddlers to whole milk in a sippy-cup. Breast milk is only allowed in our infant program. Children must be drinking whole milk or an appropriate alternative by the time they are fully transitioned to Acorns.

We are required to serve whole milk to children 23 months of age or younger unless written permission from the child's parent states otherwise.

Our Acorns and Oak Leaves classes run on a group schedule, meaning that the class eats, naps, and play all at the same time. A consistent schedule helps to make for a predictable routine that the children can count on.

Safe Sleep

We follow infant cues for sleep schedules and will assist children in going to sleep with strategies consistent with their home care whenever possible.

In alignment with Washington State Safe Sleep guidelines, infants will only be placed on their backs to sleep in an empty crib with a well fitted sheet. If an infant rolls to their stomach in their sleep, teachers will adjust them to their back until it has been documented that the infant can roll from back to front and front to back while awake. We cannot sleep infants with blankets, but can use sleep sacks as long as the child's arms have free movement. We cannot swaddle infants or allow them to sleep in swings, bouncers, or car seats.

Starting in our Acorns class, we begin transitioning children to naptime after lunch, from 12:00 to 3:00. We understand that not all children will be ready for this sleep schedule at 12 months and will work towards it while accommodating each child's needs.

During rest times, lighting may be dimmed in the infant and toddler classrooms but is sufficient that the child's skin color can be easily seen.

All Tree Hill Learning Center staff receive annual Safe Sleep training.

The Diapering Process

When diapering children, we:

- Wear nitrile gloves
- Never leave the child unattended
- Place all necessary equipment on the changing table first
- Check and wipe all creases and folds
- Wipe girls from front to back
- Use diaper cream as necessary (when provided by parent)

After diapering the child, we:

- Always wash the child's hands before placing him down to play
- Dispose of the plastic gloves, diaper and used wipes in the garbage
- Wipe down the changing area with a disinfectant solution and dry thoroughly
- Always wash our hands after completing all of the above

Tree Hill cannot accommodate cloth diapers.

Toilet Training

Toilet training will be initiated when the child indicates readiness. Parents will be consulted regarding schedule and technique to maintain a consistent routine from home to school. Parents will need to supply and launder any training pants or pull-ups.

On average, children are developmentally ready to begin potty training between 30 and 36 months of age when they are in our Willows class. If you are interested in potty training earlier, please discuss with your classroom teachers beforehand. Children must be fully potty trained before moving into the Maples class.

Classrooms may implement an incentive program such as a sticker chart, and we are open to collaborating with parents on individual incentives. However, we do not encourage the use of candy or food items as incentives for potty training.

Health & Safety

Tree Hill Learning Center is licensed by the State of Washington Department of Youth, Children and Families. Tree Hill will maintain the highest standards of cleanliness for a healthy environment. Washington State Licensors visit the site annually to make sure that all health and safety requirements are met.

Our staff make every effort to maintain a safe and healthy environment for the children so that a minimum of absences occur due to illness. Health habits taught at home are reinforced at the center including frequent hand washing, especially before meals and after restroom use, proper use of tissues for wiping noses, wearing appropriate clothing for weather conditions and rotating active and quiet activities with opportunities for the children to rest.

All of our staff members hold current CPR/First Aid certifications and undergo regular training to maintain the health and safety standards of our program. All staff members and classroom volunteers are further required to obtain TB clearance, maintain current immunizations, and HIV/AIDS & Bloodborne Pathogens Awareness and Prevention training.

Safety

We ask that families closely supervise their children in the parking lot, lobbies and elsewhere in the school. It is recommended that families who have more than one child have children who have already exited from the car keep one hand on the car until all are ready to cross the parking lot to the building. Please have children hold your hand or hang on to an article of your clothing you are wearing (e.g. a shirt tail or purse/diaper bag) while crossing the parking lot. When departing from the school, please do not allow children to run outside while you are signing them out or speaking to school staff and other families. Please keep your child with you at all times except when they are signed into their classrooms.

No child is ever to be left alone or unsupervised. At arrival, families are expected to walk their children into class and help them settle into play. Be sure to let a teacher know when you are ready to leave the classroom so the teacher is aware that you have left and the child is in the teacher's care. This process will help with transition to the school environment, we understand that this process may look different for different families depending on your child's personality and needs. Likewise, let a teacher know when you are taking your child at the end of class, so that the teacher is aware of the child's departure.

Families whose children are enrolled in the program are permitted access at all times to all parts of the center where children are cared for, including nap areas, although we ask that you please respect naptime spaces and avoid entering during these times as not to disrupt sleeping children. Families with children in the program are encouraged to drop in to visit with their children (i.e. have lunch with their child). Please pre-arrange your visit with the Director whenever possible so we can arrange a day and time that is least disruptive to the classroom. We will ask parents to avoid visits or pick-ups during naptime out of respect for all the children in the room who are napping.

To maintain a safe classroom, our program uses the following minimum staff-child ratio:

Infants: 1:4 (maximum group size of 9 with a third teacher)

Toddlers (Twelve months to Thirty months): 1:7 (maximum group size of 15 with a third teacher)

Thirty months-to-Five years: 1:10 (maximum group size of 20)

School-Age (Five years and up): 1:15 (maximum group size of 30)

These ratios are set by Washington State licensing requirements and are the minimum allowed by law.

Use of tobacco products or vape pens can take place **ONLY** outside and away from the building where children cannot see you. Tobacco use is never allowed when children are present - on the play space, on walks, on field trips, on the bus or in the classrooms. Alcohol, cannabis, and illegal drugs are not allowed on Tree Hill Learning Center Property. Any adult coming into the classroom who appears under the influence of any drug or alcohol will be asked to leave. Firearms are strictly prohibited on Tree Hill Learning Center property.

Sanitation Policy

Tables, sinks, countertops, and toilets are sanitized with a bleach solution as needed during the day. Toys and shelves are cleaned on a weekly basis and as needed. Floors are vacuumed and mopped daily.

Mouthed toys are sanitized with a bleach solution and thoroughly washed and dried before being returned to shelves.

Sheets provided by Tree Hill are laundered at least weekly. Nap mats are sanitized daily. Blankets and other sleep items brought from home should be taken home to launder once a week. Bottles or cups brought from home must be taken home daily for cleaning. Dry bags provided by Tree Hill are the responsibility of the family to clean.



Hand Washing Policy

All children, staff, and parents must wash their hands:

- Immediately upon entering classrooms
- After toileting
- After helping children with toileting
- After diapering a child
- After helping a child with nose blowing, coughing or any sign of illness
- Before getting trays from kitchen or handling any food service
- Between activities (e.g. wash before and after using play dough)

Children will be supervised as often as possible to promote proper hand washing procedures, and will be taught proper hand washing techniques.

Illness Policy

We understand the fact that many family members who enroll their children at the center are working full time and it is difficult to have their schedules interrupted. However, your cooperation is needed in stopping the spread of contagious illnesses. Children who have the following symptoms cannot be admitted to the school until the contagious period has passed and for at least 24-48 hours after the symptoms have subsided.

We cannot serve children with:

- **Temperatures 100.4 degrees or above**
- **Severe cough**
- **Sore throat**
- **Green/yellow thick discharge from the nose/eyes**
- **Diarrhea**
- **Vomiting**
- **A skin rash that has not been identified by a physician**
- **Evidence of head lice or other parasites**
- **Conjunctivitis (pink eye)**
- Lethargy*
- Runny Nose*
- Headache*
- Watery eyes*
- Swollen glands*

** Secondary symptoms that are exclusionary when present with a primary symptom*

Staff members conduct daily health checks of children when they arrive at the facility and any symptoms of illness are recorded in our Illness and Injury Log. If a child is found to be ill or becomes sick while at school, the parent/legal guardian will be notified. The child will be isolated in the front office if possible and the parent/legal guardian will be expected to pick the child up within an hour.

If there is an outbreak of a contagious disease, such as chicken pox or COVID-19, this information will be posted on the front door (and/or emailed), handouts will be available with information on the disease so that parents may take appropriate action to protect their children or seek medical attention.

All outbreaks of communicable diseases will be reported to the local Health Department. In the case of an outbreak of an illness that has a vaccine, any children not up-to-date on that vaccine according to the DOH Child-care schedule may be excluded from Tree Hill at any point during the outbreak. **Tree Hill Learning Center does not accept Vaccination Exemptions.**

Outbreak of a contagious disease may result in temporary changes to any of our policies, changes to our school hours, closures of specific classrooms, or a total building closure. Tuition cannot be refunded due to any illness isolations, classroom or building closures.

Medical Emergencies

In the event of a life threatening emergency, one staff member will stay with the injured/ill child. 911 will be called for any major medical emergency that could be life threatening or extremely dangerous. Severely injured children will not be moved before the ambulance crew arrives unless we are otherwise instructed by a 911 operator. For a child who is choking, staff trained in using infant and child CPR shall follow appropriate procedures.

Parents will be contacted as soon as possible. If the parents cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency contacts listed on the child's Medical Authorization form.

All staff members are trained in first aid and infant/child CPR. In the event of minor emergencies, our trained staff will take appropriate steps to aid the child. Parents will be contacted as soon as possible, and asked to pick up if the accident might possibly require medical care.

When accidents and minor injuries occur that are unlikely to require further medical attention (such as minor cuts, scrapes, bruises), parents are not called but will be informed of the incident when they arrive to pick up the child and be given a Childcare Injury/Incident Report.

All injuries (both minor and major) and illness are recorded in the Illness and Injury Log.

Child Abuse Reporting Requirements:

Our staff is mandated by Washington State Law and licensing requirements to immediately report any instance when there is reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect or exploitation to the police or Child Protective Services. We may not notify parents when the police or Child Protective Services are called about possible child abuse, neglect or exploitation, except on the recommendation of Child Protective Services or the police when they are called.



Medications

Medication may be administered to a child only with a signed Medication Authorization form from the parent. We may only administer medication when the dose, duration, and method of administration is clearly specified on the manufacturer's label for the age or weight of the child; as specified on prescription labels; or as authorized in writing by a physician. All medication must be in its original container and properly labeled with the child's full name, date prescription was filled and/or medication's expiration date, and legible instructions for administration.

Parents must give all medication directly to the front desk team. Medication may not be given to children to hand over to staff. All medication will be kept in a locked medicine cabinet out of the reach of children. Children are not allowed to keep medicine in their pockets, lunch boxes or cubbies. Medication will be administered only by a Director or Lead Teacher. We will record the administration of any medications on the child's Medication Authorization form. Any unused medication will be returned to parents or properly disposed of. All Medication Authorization forms must be renewed every six months.

Children who have been given a prescription medication for a contagious illness must be on that medication for at least 24 hours before they may return to Tree Hill.

The following are considered medications and require signed Medication Authorization forms from a parent and may only be administered at the dose, duration and method of administration specified on the manufacturer's label for the age or weight of the child needing medication:

- Antihistamines
- Non-aspirin fever reducers/pain relievers
- Non-narcotic cough suppressants
- Decongestants
- Anti-itching ointments or lotions
- Diaper ointment and powders
- Sun screen
- Cough drops/throat lozenges

If you wish for your child to be given any non-prescription medication that is not included in the above list: is to be taken differently than indicated on the manufacturer's label; or lacks labeled instructions, a written authorization from a physician will be required. For example, some labels indicate that for children under 2 years of age, you are required to consult a physician. In that case, a physician's written authorization would be required. It is our policy never to give aspirin to a child except with written authorization from a physician.

Medications for chronic conditions and allergies:

For chronic conditions (such as asthma), the parent's written consent must be renewed every six months. An Individual Care Plan must be provided that lists symptoms or conditions under which the medication will be given, this may require a physician's signature.

Disaster Plan

Parents are required to review our complete disaster plan upon enrollment and annually thereafter. Staff will review it annually. It can be found in the information binder at our front door.

Preparedness: Tree Hill Learning Center is prepared to care for your child in times of critical situations. Please make sure all contact information, emergency contacts, and authorized release forms are up to date and correct. In the event of an emergency that leaves our school safe and intact, parents will be called as soon as possible and children will be dismissed to authorized persons.

The staff at Tree Hill Learning Center conducts monthly emergency evacuation drills and/or earthquake drills with the children. Though we have never experienced a major disaster, we want to take precautions should an emergency state occur while your children are in our care. The most likely disasters identified for our site include: fire, earthquake, windstorms and winter storms.

In the event of a disaster requiring children and staff to remain at the facility, we will have a 72-hour supply of food and water for children and staff in case of emergency.

Fire: In the event of a fire, building alarms will sound and the emergency lights will come on. Staff will enact rehearsed evacuation procedures with the children.

Evacuation Process: In the event of fire or natural disaster that will require us to evacuate the premises, Tree Hill Camas will evacuate to **3400 SE 196th ave Camas, WA 98607**, and Tree Hill Vancouver will evacuate to **16315 NE 23rd St, Vancouver WA 98684** (Kelly Chiropractic). Each teacher will be responsible to account for every child on their class' attendance roster and then it will be double checked by the Director. Staff will stay with evacuated children continuously until such a time as the children are in the care of their families or other guardians. Parents will be notified as soon as children are safe and comfortable.

Power Outage: In the event of a power outage while school is in session, the following will occur:

- After one-hour Infant and Toddler parents will be called for dismissal
- After two-hours the rest of the children' s parents will be called for dismissal

Inclement Weather: Tree Hill Learning Center will be closed when weather conditions become too dangerous for travel. We will send information out by email or our messaging software as soon as possible, we also post closures or late openings on our Facebook page which is often the quickest way to get information out. When schools are delayed we will do our best to open our school at the earliest possible time. Our first concern is the safety of staff and students.

Lockdown: In the event of an emergency lockdown staff will gather children safely in their classrooms and lock doors until clearance is given by the Director.

A disaster plan for children with special needs will be developed individually and approved by the parents and staff.

Out of Town Contact: If a disaster does occur, parents will be notified by phone as soon as possible. Parents may call the Camas school at (360) 833-1230, and Vancouver at (360) 952-8023. If the emergency disrupts local phone lines, Tree Hill Learning Center has designated Megan Peck as the out-of-state phone contact in case of an emergency. Her phone number is (503) 936-0788.

Pesticides

Increasing concern about the impact of pesticides on children's health has led to a law dealing with pesticide use in schools and licensed child care centers. We are dedicated to using the least amount of chemical control of pests in our program in order to provide the healthiest environment possible for our children.

Tree Hill Learning Center will notify staff and families at least forty-eight (48) hours before application in writing and we will post a pre-notification letter prominently on our parent information board and on the front door of the school. Available for your review at our front desk is a copy of our complete pesticides policy.

Meals and Snacks

At Tree Hill Learning Center we strive to provide well-balanced, nutritious meals and snacks to the children enrolled in our program. Our menu is planned two-weeks in advance by our cook and copies are available on the Classroom Information boards and at the Front Desk. All of the food we serve to the children is prepared here in our kitchen or purchased from a store. To ensure a healthy mealtime environment, all staff members who prepare and serve food are trained and qualified in the safe and sanitary administration of food preparation and all dishes are washed and sanitized after each use.

The cost of breakfast, lunch and two snacks is included in your child's tuition costs. However, we will not be providing any discount if you choose to send a packed lunch to school with your child.

Please remember to keep the staff informed of any restrictions or modifications to your child's diet. We must obtain from the parent or health care provider a written list of foods that your child cannot consume due to allergies, personal health requirements or religious restrictions. An Individual Health Plan may be required for allergies.

We may not provide nutrient concentrates or supplements, a modified diet, or any allergy diet, except with written permission from a child's health care provider. Parents are responsible for the cost of any special diet and will be asked to bring appropriate substitute foods. **All meals and snacks brought from home must meet the nutritional guidelines outlined below. If they do not meet these guidelines, then Tree Hill will supplement as needed.**

If you wish to bring a special food for all children to eat (e.g. a birthday treat), please check with the staff at least one day before you plan to bring it. Please keep in mind that we are not able to serve food cooked at home to children in the program (unless written permission is received from all parents in the classroom). We are only able to serve commercially prepared foods in their original packaging, or foods cooked on-site.

We are a nut free facility. All foods brought into the building must be peanut and tree nut free, including milk alternatives.

Breakfast

Children who arrive before 8:00 a.m. will be offered breakfast providing at least one-quarter of the recommended dietary allowances (WAC 110-300-0180) .

Typical breakfast: Choice of cereal, organic milk, and fruit

Snacks

Two snacks (mid-morning and afternoon) are served daily. Additionally, all school-age children arriving at our facility after their school day will be served a snack as soon as they arrive.

Snacks shall consist of, but are not limited to, two or more of the following items: organic milk or milk products; fruit and /or vegetables; whole grain or enriched breads and /or cereal products; and protein food (such as turkey or tofu). A fruit or vegetable will be served with at least one snack each day. (WAC 110-300-185) .

Typical snack: Apple slices, whole grain crackers and water.

Lunch

All of our lunches contain adequate nutrients for a meal that is well balanced as well as delicious. Our lunches are served in portions that are appropriate for the age and size of the children who are being served.

Typical lunch: Chicken, steamed rice, mixed vegetables, pears and organic milk.

Ensuring that children are well fed and nourished is one of our highest priorities. We make every effort to provide meals and snacks that are both nutritious and appealing to children. If for any reason you should decide to pack your child's lunch yourself, please do your best to follow the nutrition guidelines developed by the State Department of Health. A satisfactory lunch should provide at least 1/3 of the day's nutrient needs. For the child 3-5 years of age, the following pattern will meet those needs:

- Organic milk (3/4 cup)
- Meat or alternate protein (1.5 ounces)
- Vegetables and fruits (1/2 cup)
- Bread, whole wheat or enriched (1/2 - 1 slice)

Foods to avoid:

Salty foods (make chips a treat, not the norm)

Foods with high sugar content (cookies, candy, and juice)



Discipline and Guidance Policies

Our program subscribes to a disciplinary policy built on mutual trust; with teachers and children working together to help the children grow and mature. Teachers value and respect the children; children trust their teachers' patience, understanding, and friendly firmness in guiding behavior.

In helping to direct the child toward self-discipline, the following guidance techniques are used:

- Positive statements are used in giving direction to behavior
- Redirection consistent with the child's needs and appropriate for their age group
- The child is given opportunities to make choices and solve problems
- Suggestions are given in time to prevent conflicts
- Comparisons between children are avoided
- Unacceptable behavior is clearly explained and the child is told what is acceptable. Approval of acceptable behavior is clearly expressed.

Discipline of children shall primarily be the responsibility of the teacher and classroom assistant in accordance with the individual child's age, stage of development and the knowledge that the teacher has of the child's needs. We view guidance as a team effort and an ongoing learning process.

Disciplinary methods used shall be based on guidance to help the child develop inner control, self-responsibility, and respect for the rights of others, as they learn to cope with the daily experiences of living and working with others.

Under no circumstances will corporal punishment be used or tolerated by anyone, including parents, on school grounds. This includes biting, shaking, slapping, hitting, kicking, or any other means of inflicting pain on a child.

Verbal abuse is not allowed. This means no yelling, no obscene language and no put downs between adults or between adults and children. Spanking, threatening, or withholding food cannot be used to discipline children.

The staff shall accept and respect each child for who they are as a unique individual. If a child's behavior becomes unacceptable, this shall be explained to the child in a positive way without humiliation, fright, or physical harm. The child shall then be helped to find a better way of resolving problems or meeting their needs. Respect for the child's feelings shall be maintained. If the teaching staff feels that parent involvement is necessary, the parents will be contacted and a meeting will be set up to discuss further options.

Extreme Behaviors Policy

Extreme Behaviors are defined as any behavior that causes physical or emotional harm to another party that is outside of the developmental norm for a child, or occurring at a level that is unmanageable for the classroom. The threshold for what constitutes an Extreme Behavior will vary for different age groups.

When Extreme Behaviors continue despite appropriate intervention, they can require a level of attention from staff that is unreasonable, and unfair to the other children in the classroom. Tree Hill Learning Center is not an Early Intervention program, and does not have special education resources.

Extreme Behavior includes but is not limited to:

- Biting
- Hitting
- Kicking
- Spitting
- Choking
- Screaming/temper tantrums
- Verbal Abuse
- Escaping/running away/hiding from group

All children start with a daily “Three Strike” Policy: If a child engages in an Extreme Behavior three times in one day, they will need to be picked up. Or, if a child is engaging in Extreme Behavior that requires one-on-one staff attention for 30 minutes or more, they will need to be picked up. Parents should have a plan in place to be able to pick up their child within 30 minutes when called (due to behavior or illness)

- Parents will be notified of first and second incidents via Parent App or email, at which point they should prepare their plan for pick up.
- After the third incident, parents will be notified via phone call and the child must be picked up immediately.
- If behaviors persist for two or more weeks, that child will move to a “Two Strike” Policy: If two incidents occur in one day, parents will be called and expected to pick up immediately
 - At this stage, a Behavioral Plan will be implemented, as outlined in our Expulsion Policy.
- If behaviors persist for two or more weeks, that child will move to a “One Strike” Policy: If one incident occurs in one day, parents will be called and expected to pick up immediately

If the behaviors still persist for two or more weeks, then parents can opt to pay for a one-on-one aide for an additional tuition cost of \$600 per month as part of their Behavioral Plan. If they are unwilling or unable, then the child’s enrollment at Tree Hill will be terminated.

Restraint Policy

Pursuant with WAC 110-300-0335 Tree Hill staff will employ all situationally appropriate interventions before implementing a physical restraint. Children will only be physically restrained if they pose an immediate safety concern to themselves or others. Only staff who have been trained in proper restraint techniques will implement restraint; staff will restrain as gently as possible for the minimum amount of time necessary to control the situation. If a child has been restrained for more than 5 minutes and the situation is not de-escalating then we will call a parent/guardian to pick up the child. If restraint is used, an incident report will be written and the family will be informed, as well as Tree Hill’s Licensor.

Expulsion Policy

It is our deepest hope that we never have to make the choice to expel a child from Tree Hill. Unfortunately, sometimes Extreme Behaviors result in an expulsion decision.

Tree Hill administration will meet with the family to discuss the concerns at hand at least once before deciding to expel. During the meeting we will review our expulsion policy, review the records of events that have led to the meeting, steps that have already been taken to avoid expulsion, and create a Behavioral Plan that includes reasonable modifications to eliminate safety concerns.

The Behavioral Plan may include:

- Follow up actions for the teachers, parent, child, or all of the above
- Temporary or permanent schedule modifications
- Request for outside early intervention services such as Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Behavioral Support, or other screenings or services as recommended by your child's pediatrician
- Recommendations for other community resources that could be beneficial to the child or family
- A timeline for improvement, and for resources to be implemented

If the behavioral concerns persist despite all our efforts, or if parents do not complete the actions agreed upon within a reasonable window (up to 30 days), then we will make the decision to expel the child.

The following items may result in immediate expulsion:

- Instances of repeated violence, or other safety concerns that could harm that child or others
- Parent violation of any of our policies
- Parent refusal to seek outside resources when recommended
- Parents who create a hostile or dangerous environment for children or staff (behaving in a disrespectful, intimidating, abusive, or threatening manner)

Other Policies

The following policies are kept in an information binder near the front door:

Complete Disaster Plan

Health Policy

Staff Policies

A current menu can be found at the front desk.

The following can be provided upon request:

Liability Insurance

Inspection reports and notices of enforcement actions



Signature Page

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the most current version of Tree Hill Learning Center's Parent Handbook.

I have read this document in its entirety and understand the policies within. I agree to abide by the Parent Code of Conduct, and all other policies within.

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

