

# Grace Tabernacle Christian Learning Center

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## Parent Handbook

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# **OVERVIEW**

## **Welcome!**

Welcome to the Grace Tabernacle Christian Learning Center (GTCLC)! As a new family to the center, this handbook is designed to provide you with helpful information about the operation of our center. This reference will be very useful as you and your child get to know your way around. It will also be a handy reference if you need to review key policies and procedures on our day-to-day operations.

As you are reading, please don't hesitate to ask any staff member if you have questions about any of the content. We are all on the same team and we stand ready and willing to help in any way necessary. We strongly believe that clear, frequent, consistent communication with parents, helps ensure that our program runs smoothly and your child has a wonderful experience here.

Additional copies of this handbook are available from the Director. You may also download a copy on the website at [www.gtcllearningcenter.org](http://www.gtcllearningcenter.org)

## **Mission and Purpose**

The mission and purpose of the Grace Tabernacle Christian Learning Center of Philadelphia, is to provide a well-designed, quality, Christian academic education to children in the West and Southwest Philadelphia communities. Southwest Philadelphia, where the Learning Center is located, is an area struggling to combat crime and drugs in the community so that children can grow to be healthy, productive contributors to society. Our school embraces the opportunity to teach these children and develop them for great things. We also support parents in the process of applying for subsidized child care.

We believe that significant change can occur through Christian education. Christian education changes children's hearts because they come to know and love God. Christian education changes children's minds because while they are growing academically, they also grow in their appreciation and respect for others around them. Additionally, through Christian education, children learn the value of service and sharing which prepares them to practice generosity and give back to society. We are committed to the mission to impact as many children in Southwest Philadelphia as we possibly can – one at a time.

Our mission is to provide an environment of learning, acceptance, approval, recognition, kindness, and security. When we have the opportunity to impact the parents of the children we serve, we will offer support and training to reinforce the teachings of our school.

## **Our Philosophy**

GTCLC offers child care services and an educational curriculum for children ages 18 months to 5 years old. We are a Christian, family-oriented facility designed to focus on the most important learning and development needs of your young child.

Most children spend a full day at GTCLC. For this reason, we strive to provide an atmosphere of comfort and security for each and every child. Our philosophy is based on serving the whole child – meaning every aspect of the child’s life – intellectual, physical, spiritual, emotional, and social.

We offer an educational program that does not ignore the value of play, but instead emphasizes learning through play. We recognize that the ability of children to solve problems, communicate effectively and develop social relationships, is greatly enhanced when they are allowed to explore through play.

The preschool curriculum offers a variety of developmentally appropriate activities designed to engage, stimulate, and prepare them for school. These activities also incorporate the introduction of the disciplines, including science, mathematics, language arts, reading, and social studies.

Every child at GTCLC will be allowed to advance at his or her own pace with gentle guidance from the teacher and from YOU the parent. This goal will be made possible by instructing children in small groups utilizing a variety of learning tools, as well as computers, and employing various observations and recording techniques to assess the progress of each child.

Welcome to the Grace Tabernacle Christian Learning Center!

# OPERATIONS

## Admissions

Students are admitted into the GTCLC on a first come first serve basis. As a result, there is no guarantee that we can hold spots open for children. We routinely distribute applications to nearby churches, schools, and community centers to make our services available. If you are interested in enrolling your child in the center, we encourage you to apply. The Director will confirm space availability and discuss your child's placement.

Interested parents should schedule an appointment to visit the GTCLC and review center policies that pertain you and your child. During the visitation, the staff will record information about the child's developmental history. You will also receive a copy of the Parent Handbook. The staff will walk you through our policies and handbook to ensure clarity.

After reviewing the policies you may decide to proceed as an applicant. The Director will answer any questions and provide a tour of the facility. When a decision has been made to enroll your child, you will complete an application packet including the following:

- Pre-Admission Health Assessment (signed by a physician)
- Proof of Immunization Records
- Emergency Contact Form
- Medical Emergency Consent Form
- First Aid Consent Form
- Medication Treatment Consent Form
- 1 Visitation Day for parent **and** enrolling child (2 hours)

When the application has been approved by the Director, and there is a vacancy, your child is accepted into the center. If there is no vacancy, your child is placed on a waiting list until a space is available. The Director will contact you when the child's name is the next name on the waiting list.

**Daily Schedule**

7:00 – 9:00 am	• Children Arrive; Breakfast is served; Free Play
9:00 – 9:15 am	• TV time (no more than 20 minutes)
9:15 – 10:30 am	• Lesson Review; Planned daily lesson
10:30 – 11:30 am	• Free Play
11:30 – 12:00 noon	• Clean Up and Wash
12:00 – 12:30 pm	• Lunch
12:30 – 1:00 pm	• Story Time
1:00 – 3:30 pm	• Nap time
3:30 – 4:00 pm	• Snack Time
4:00 – 4:30 pm	• Today's Lesson Review
4:30 – 5:30 pm	• Free Play

The above schedule provides a guide only and can or will be modified to meet the needs of the children in care on any given day.

**Schedule of Operations**

The GTCLC is a full-year facility. The center is open daily from 7 am to 6 pm Monday through Friday with the exception of the holidays listed. No child is permitted to be brought to the center before the scheduled opening time (7:00 am), and all children must be picked up by close (6:00 pm). The center is closed on weekends.

Any person dropping off a child to the center must sign the child in at the time of drop off. In addition, any person picking up a child from the center must sign the child out at the time of pick-up.

In the event of adverse weather conditions (snow/ice days), the center will be closed when Philadelphia Public schools are closed.

### **Child-Staff Ratios**

There are many regulations that govern the operation of a licensed child care program. Below is a list of the child-staff ratios required by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare:

1 staff person	to every	4 infants
1 staff person	to every	5 young toddlers (ages 1-2 years)
1 staff person	to every	6 older toddlers (ages 2-3 years)
1 staff person	to every	10 preschoolers (includes kindergarten)
1 staff person	to every	12 young school age
1 staff person	to every	15 older school age (grades 4 and up)

When the groups are mixed the child-staff ratios are as follows:

1 staff person	to every	4 children (infant/young/older toddler)
1 staff person	to every	4 children (infant/preschool)
1 staff person	to every	5 children (young toddler/preschool)
1 staff person	to every	6 children (older toddler/preschooler)
1 staff person	to every	10 (preschool/young/or older school age)

While children are napping, the ratios are as follows:

1 staff person	to every	4 infants
1 staff person	to every	10 young toddlers (1-2 years)
1 staff person	to every	12 older toddlers (2-3 years)
1 staff person	to every	20 preschoolers (includes kindergarten)

Staff members make every effort to ensure that the staff-child ratios are in compliance. Staff will take immediate action to correct any incorrect staff-child ratio as quickly as possible. The Director is also available to make immediately adjustments so that extra coverage can be arranged when necessary.

### **Special Needs**

Children with special needs are encouraged to attend GTCLC. We commit to making every reasonable accommodation for children with special needs.

For students with disabilities, academic accommodations may include adaptations in the way specific lessons are taught, or the use of auxiliary equipment and support staff, and modifications in academic requirements. Such aids and services will be considered in consultation with the Director, parent, and student who need them.

The Director and staff of the GTCLC will consider options like, preferential seating (seating in front, by door, helps reduce audio/visual distractions), providing a coach/mentor/buddy, or having someone (another student, or a staff member) to

accompany a student to class and/or stay in class with the student, or assigning a classmate as volunteer as an assistant to the student.

If, in partnership with the parent, we determine that the special needs of your child are outside the scope of the care and service we can offer, we will be happy to provide referrals to support a child's placement in a suitable facility in the area.

Parents of special needs children are required to provide copies of the child's IEP or IFSP, written plans, and or special needs assessments completed by professionals to inform us of the most appropriate classroom practice and instruction techniques.

### **Trial Period**

All families are entitled to a 2-week trial period. This ensures that our center is a good match for you and the child. It also allows us to confirm that you and your child are a good match for our center. Either party can cancel this agreement at any time during the first 2 weeks without written notice.

A withdrawal can result after a trial period for several reasons including:

- 1) difficulty with adherence to drop off and pick up times;
- 2) a child is having difficulty adjusting to the setting and learning our approach;
- 3) our center is unable to meet the need of the child;
- 4) the parent's approach and interaction with the children or staff cause a significant conflict and unpleasant experience for the child or staff.

### **Discipline Philosophy**

Our philosophy is that discipline is simply teaching. We teach children structure. We teach children their boundaries. Teaching children what is and what is not permissible. Discipline is learning to respect teachers, classmates, and one another. Discipline means eliminating disrespectful, abrasive, abusive, violent, angry, uncontrolled, or profane behavior. These kinds of actions will not be allowed in our center.

Parents are held accountable to this standard as well. Staff members will hold parents accountable to this standard. If you have a concern or question, we require that they address it calmly, clearly, and professionally with a teacher or Director. When parents model the way for a child, they learn the appropriate way to handle conflict.

No pushing, kicking, hitting, biting, put-downs, or other intentional bodily harm will be tolerated. When children demonstrate these kinds of behavior, staff may handle the situation by separating the child, giving the child some quiet time to regroup, and in serious situations, parents will be called to pick up the child from the Center.

We are prohibited by law to spank or physically discipline any child. Instead, we will do our best to teach a child the right way to handle their conflicts and emotions.

**Non-Discrimination Policy**

GTCLC is an equal opportunity employer. We also admit children regardless of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, or religion.

**Attendance**

Children must arrive no later than 9:30 am. It is an uncomfortable situation for students and teachers when children arrive later than 9:30 am for class, because it is a disruption to the educational process that is underway. It also takes away from their learning time. Parents, please be on time so that you do not deprive your child of valuable learning time.

Parents must escort the child into the center and sign him/her in. Parents must also sign your child out every evening.

**Release of Children**

Staff are only permitted to release a child to a parent or another person designated in writing by the enrolling parent or guardian. The center must have documentation signed by the parents designating an authorized caregiver. Only, in the event of an emergency, may a child will be released to another individual upon the verbal request of the parent or the guardian. However, the individual verbally authorized to pick up the child must have a current photo identification. Any person picking up a child from the center must sign the child out at the time of pick-up.

Any unauthorized person attempting to pick up a child or requesting custody of a child will not be permitted by staff to take the child. Parents will be notified of the situation immediately. If the unauthorized person poses a safety risk, or threatens staff or children, police (911) will be called.

**Fees**

When you have questions about fees and enrollment, please speak with a Director. For your reference, an attachment of the fee schedule for the current year is provided upon request. GTCLC does enroll subsidized children.

**Payment Process**

Weekly child care rates as listed on the fee schedule are payable in advance and in full regardless of attendance, holidays, illnesses or vacation days. Fees will be collected every Monday morning by certified check or money order only, at the time of drop off. No cash, personal checks, or credit cards will be accepted.

**Late Fees**

Payment is required every Monday morning when the child arrives at the center. No late fee will be charged if payment is made by the close of business on Monday. However, a late fee of \$10.00 will be charged for each day and for each child if payment is not made on Monday.

If a child's account is not current and fully paid by the close of business on Monday, the child will not be permitted to attend on Tuesday. Readmission to the center will not be granted until the account balance(s) are fully paid. If a past due account is not fully paid by the end of the week, the child's slot will be forfeited. Re-enrollment requires completing the application and selection process again. Re-admission will be determined by the waiting list, a review by the Board of Directors, and the discretion of the Learning Center's Director.

Parents who are late picking up their child(ren) will be charged \$10.00 for every 15-minute segment they are late. Parents will be required to pay late pick up fees every Monday. Late fees must be paid promptly in order for a child to return to class on Tuesday.

Please familiarize yourself with the Late Fee policy in the event you have questions.

**Financial Assistance**

If you are unable to pay the tuition fee due to some emergency, alert the Director immediately to make arrangements. For financial assistance, parents should contact Philadelphia Child Care Resources or the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare. For more information on these resources, consult the Director or administrator. There is no variation in fees for parent vacations or missed days due to short illness. Consult Director about prolonged illness and hospital stays. Parents are required to continue regular weekly payments in the full amount, unless the absence has been excused by the Director.

**Absence Policy**

Parents must immediately notify the center of an extended absence (more than 5 consecutive days). Children who are absent for more than 1 week without notice will forfeit their space at the center and will be expected to pay for that week. Parents are required to notify the teacher of any planned absence as soon as possible.

**Withdrawal Policy**

If a parent needs to withdraw a child from the center, a 2-week prior notice is requested.

**Dismissal Policy**

A child may be dismissed from the center for the following reasons:

- ❑ Failure to pay fees. (If a child's account is not current and fully paid by the close of business on Tuesday, they child will not be permitted to attend on Wednesday. Readmission to the center will not be granted until the account balance(s) are fully paid. If a past due account is not fully paid by the end of the week, the child slot will be forfeited.)
- ❑ Excessive late pick ups
- ❑ Parents failure to cooperate with staff and center requirements
- ❑ Child exhibits harmful or threatening behavior toward himself, classmate, or staff
- ❑ Failure to submit and complete required forms

When a parent or child demonstrates behavior listed in the dismissal policy, the staff and Director will document the violations. At the appropriate time, the Director will recommend dismissal to a member of the Board of Directors and present the supporting documentation. With approval, a dismissal or termination letter will be prepared and presented to the parent on the next available day.

# **CURRICULUM & CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

## **Open Door Policy**

GTCLC has an open door policy. Parents are encouraged to visit the classroom at any time. Parents are more than welcomed to come and see a child as he/she participates in the learning process. You may show up unannounced during the day to observe or volunteer. We welcome volunteers! No appointment is needed to see a child. You may also pick up the phone or stay a few extra minutes at pick-up time, or even send us an email to ask a question or to make a comment. Parents may email us at [gtclc@live.com](mailto:gtclc@live.com). Parents are also always welcomed to schedule a conference with a teacher by calling ahead to make an appointment.

## **Curriculum**

The GTCLC uses a very well-known program called Creative Curriculum to design and develop lessons and activities for children. The Creative Curriculum ensures that the content we teach is age appropriate and that it's presented in such a way that help children learn best. Our curriculum is also evaluated against the Pennsylvania State Learning Standards to ensure each child is ready for school when the time comes.

The curriculum includes educational components on math, science, reading, and other topics. Our curriculum also includes a component on Health Education when we teach children fundamental self help skills that relate to their own health (nutrition, personal hygiene, exercise and more).

## **Lesson Planning**

Teachers are required to spend 1 hour per day (usually between 1:00 and 3:00 pm) designing and developing lesson plans. During this time teachers must not have responsibility for the children. Teachers will move to a location with minimal noise and distractions (social hall or office). Teachers will select themes for the month and specific topics for each day. Teachers will then design and select relevant activities to support the day's topic. In many instances, the children's interest will drive the topic and activity for the day.

### **Assessing the Learning Environment**

The Director will conduct a routine assessment of the learning environment and the overall program. The assessment tool used is called the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS). The tool helps us ensure that classrooms are set up/arranged properly and that children have an abundance of various resources to support their learning. Each member of the staff is trained on the proper use of the ERS tool.

In addition, the Learning Center will conduct an annual survey of parents to collect your feedback on the program, the environment, and your experience with the Center overall.

The findings and actions taken based on the ERS Assessment and Parent survey will be communicated to parents during Parent Teacher meetings.

### **Child Observation and Assessment**

Effective teachers must observe a child performance frequently. These observations help teachers gather a wealth of information about each child's strengths and opportunity areas. The information gathered from these observations enables the teacher to accurately assess your child's performance and growth. Because of the importance of observing and assessing children, teachers are required to observe and document what they see each and every day. Written notes are required.

The Creative Curriculum also provides excellent templates for capturing observations and for writing assessments. Teachers are required to document observations daily – during free play and during structured activities. These observation notes will be retained in the child's file so the teacher can refer to them when constructing the assessment. In addition, these observation notes and assessments will be used if a child or family needs a referral to a specific community resource.

### **Classroom Supervision**

Staff are not permitted to leave the work area for personal matters other than lunch or breaks without permission from the group supervisor. Supervising the children is the primary responsibility of our staff.

### **Playground Supervision**

During free play time in the playground or in an indoor play area, staff are not permitted to leave the play area for personal matters. Before taking lunch or breaks staff must gain permission from the group supervisor or the Director. This helps us ensure that the correct staff-child ratios are maintained at all times. Supervising the children is the primary responsibility of our staff and when they are working they must provide them with their full attention.

**Promotions**

When a child's performance has passed the necessary requirements of the current level, that child will be promoted to the next higher level or classroom. To facilitate a child's adjustment to the new classroom and teacher, the staff will develop a special schedule which permits the child to spend 1/2 days in the new classroom for a period of 1 week. These ½ day sessions in the new room will minimize any abrupt change and will help the child become more quickly integrated into the new environment.

**Transfer of Records**

At the end of each school year, every child will be evaluated to determine his/her readiness to move up to the next higher level classroom. Teachers will complete the promotion report and provide copy of summary to new teacher with a copy of the child's record. A copy will also be provided to parent(s). If the child is leaving the learning center to attend another school, and a parent would like the records sent to the new school (recommended), the parent will be required to sign a consent form for the records to be forwarded to the principal of the new school.

**Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Communication between teacher and parent is critical to any child's success. To ensure regular communication with parents on a child's progress, parent-teacher conferences are scheduled 2 times per year. Fall conferences are held in October. Spring conferences are held in April. Parents will be notified of conference schedule and times by way of an announcement flyer.

Teachers will prepare by gathering all observation notes and assessments since the last conference. Teachers will also provide examples of the child's work. A folder will be prepared for the parent to review during the conference. Parents who do not attend will receive the folder of conference materials will be encouraged to schedule an individual appointment with the child's teacher.

**Staff and Employees**

At GTCLC, the staff members are qualified, caring, and trained. All employees have passed the required state criminal background check, are certified on CPR and First Aid, and have Fire Safety Training. All staff members are also tested and cleared of TB as mandated by the Department of Social Services. If you ever have any question about the credentials or work requirement of staff members, please contact the Director immediately.

## **Toys**

Children are permitted to bring a toy in on scheduled show-and-tell days only. We are not responsible for any lost, broken, stolen, or traded toy. Children may bring a comfort toy for nap time.

## **Pets**

In the event that the GTCLC elects to incorporate a pet into the program, the Director and staff will determine the most appropriate pet for the classroom(s). Staff members will be responsible for cleaning and maintaining a healthy/safe living environment for the pet. All products required for the safe and healthy upkeep of the pet will be non-toxic, including pet food.

## **Plants**

Class room plants are required to be non-toxic. The staff and Director must be prepared to provide proof that any classroom plants are non-toxic. Staff may use plants to teach children responsibility and caring for living things. Staff will teach children and assist children in the care (pruning and watering) of classroom plants.

## **Meals and Snacks**

Meals and snacks are planned according to the USDA approved Child Care Food Program guidelines. SafeServe procedures are applied any time food is being prepared. This ensures appropriate safe food preparation, as well as clean, sanitized dishes, utensils, and surfaces.

We provide breakfast, lunch and healthy snacks as well as juice and milk. Children will sit at the table to eat food. Children will not be forced to eat the food that is served. If a child chooses not to eat at a mealtime, he/she will not be served food again until the next scheduled time. Children will wash their hands before meals and after using the bathroom, and learn proper hand washing techniques.

Children are not allowed to bring candy or gum to school. No gum or candy allowed on the premises. Staff members, please remind parents of this rule.

We recognize that some children have special dietary needs. As a result, upon request, parents are permitted to send snack/lunch foods from home. However, parents are required to provide healthy snack/lunch foods for adequate daily nutrition. Parents must bring any special requests to the attention of the staff. Staff will do our very best to accommodate a child's special dietary needs. **Note:** Children are not forced to eat the meals on the planned menu.

Drinking water is available all day while children are at the center. Children are served water (as well as milk or juice) with their lunch meal. Children are also permitted to go

to the water fountain to get drinks of water. During gross motor play and on warm days when the children are outside, water is also provided for adequate cooling and hydration.

### **Diapering and Toilet Training**

Diapers are changed at the changing table. The table is routinely wiped down with disinfectant after each diaper change. Any soiled clothing will be placed in a plastic bag and sent home with parents to be cleaned.

Toilet training will be incorporated into the child's activities when the child is ready to begin. The success of potty training also requires parents' support and consistency at home. When you see signs that your child is ready to begin toilet training please discuss toilet training with the head teacher immediately. For children who are not fully toilet trained, parents must provide supplies (pull-up pampers, powder, and wipes).

### **Exposure to Blood and Potentially Infectious Materials**

Staff members are required to use Universal Precautions whenever there is exposure to blood and other potentially infectious materials. Universal precautions are infection control guidelines designed to protect people from diseases spread by blood and certain body fluids. Always assume that all "blood and body fluids" are infectious for blood-borne diseases such as HBV (Hepatitis B Virus), HCV (Hepatitis C Virus) and HIV (Human Immuno-deficiency Virus).

When it is difficult to identify the specific body fluid or when body fluids are visibly contaminated with blood, then universal precautions are **ALWAYS** to be applied. To prevent exposure to blood and body fluids, staff members use gloves during diapering. Staff members also cleanup and sanitize according to instructions and dispose of soiled diapers/pampers properly.

### **Hand-washing**

Frequent hand-washing is a critical component of maintaining a safe, clean, healthy environment. Staff members are required to wash hands frequently during the day. After nose-blowing, both child and teacher are required to wash their hands. Before and after diapering, both child and teacher are required to wash their hand. Before and after preparing and serving meals/snacks, both child and teachers are required to wash their hands.

Hand-sanitizer is not an acceptable alternative to hand-washing. In addition, hand sanitizer is flammable and can cause injuries to children and teachers.

### **Sanitization**

A bleach and water sanitizing solution is used in our center. It contains 1 TB of household bleach to 1 quart of water (or ¼ c. bleach to 1 gallon of water). If bleach water

solution is used, it must be mixed fresh daily. If another sanitizing solution is used, it must be an “EPA-registered” sanitizer and should be used according to the manufacturer’s instructions to properly sanitize surfaces.

### **Trips**

We will take occasional scheduled field trips. Some of the trips will be on SEPTA. Other trips will be taken via school bus. If a child is not participating on the trip, parents must provide their own child care coverage for that day. Children will not be permitted to participate in the scheduled field trip unless a permission slip has been signed and submitted by the parent in advance of the trips. Parents will be given ample notice of upcoming trips for planning purposes.

If a child arrives to school on a field trip day, and the parent has not submitted a permission slip, the child will be sent back home because staff coverage will not be available at the center for the day.

### **Communications**

We want to keep parents informed of the events in the program and of a child’s progress. Parents are encouraged to check the child’s cubby daily for any notes, materials, or announcements. Notices will also be posted on the bulletin board for parents’ information. Formal conferences will be held twice per year in the fall and spring. Parents may request additional conferences as needed. During parent conferences, staff will review observations and assessments with parents. Throughout the year, staff maintain developmental checklists about each child’s progress. These assessments help staff plan learning activities that are age appropriate.

### **Clothing**

Parents are required to ensure each child is dressed appropriately for school each day. Parents should choose clothing that are loose and made of comfortable fabrics. Avoid clothing with strings at the neck, waist, or ankles, because these can be tripping hazards. Remember, because young children learn best through play, the children will paint, play outside, and they will get dirty. Shoes are required to be worn at all times, in case of emergency. No sandals without heel straps are permitted, for safety reasons. Please check the child’s cubby from time to time to make sure extra clothing are available. Extra clothing should include at least 1-2 complete changes of clothes. Please keep the child’s fingernails short. Also do not style girls’ hair with small beads or barrettes because they are choking hazards.

### **Indoor/Outdoor Play**

When the weather permits, children will be taken outdoors to play for 30-60 minutes daily. In adverse weather, extreme cold or rainy days, the staff will coordinate indoor play instead.

**Nap/Quiet Time**

After lunch, there will be quiet time. During that time, all children will be expected to rest quietly or sleep, if they choose. Quiet time begins between 12:30 and 1:00 each day, and ends at approximately 3:00 pm each day.

Each child is provided with their own assigned cot. According to regulations, cots are spaced 24" to 3' apart to allow adequate sleeping room for each child

Parents are required to supply linens, in the form of a towel or small blanket. Parents are also required to launder their child's sleeping linens once per week.

# **HEALTH & SAFETY**

## **Safety is #1**

Our Learning Center makes safety and security a top priority. This means your child's safety, as well as the safety of the staff members who work here. Staff members are expected to perform their duties in a safe manner and follow established safety rules at all times. As staff move through the center, they are expected to demonstrate leadership by correcting any safety hazards immediately and report any more significant hazards to the Director right away.

Staff members must visually identify on the monitor anyone who comes to the door before opening it. The center must conduct monthly fire drills so staff members and children know exactly what to do in the event of an emergency. Employees must follow posted emergency procedures for evacuating children. At the end of each day, the Director is required to set the building alarm if no other authorized persons are on the premises.

Site Safety inspections are a routine part of the day. As staff members move through the day, all are required to watch for, and take immediate action on any safety hazards that are identified. Teachers are required to conduct a visual inspection of their classroom every day.

Once per month, the Director will conduct a formal site safety inspection of each classroom, kitchen, dining hall, hallways, and bathrooms. Over the year, the Director and staff will evaluate any areas of the center that cause repeated safety problems and take corrective action right away.

Emergency telephone numbers are posted in the classroom for easy reference. An additional copy is posted in the Administrator's office.

## **Safe Routes**

Safety is our #1 concern. If parents and children are arriving by public transportation, get off at the corner and cross only at the corner on green light. Parents are also expected to model safe behavior for the children. Parents are to walk a child to the entrance of the center at 1517 S. 52<sup>nd</sup> street. Parents must sign a child in before leaving.

If arriving by car, park your car. Parents are not permitted to double-park. If parents park across the street, they are required to walk the child to the corner, cross on a green light and enter the center at 1517 S. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street. Parents must sign a child in before leaving.

If arriving by foot, parents must cross only at the corner on a green light. Walk the child to the entrance of the center at 1517 S. 52<sup>nd</sup> street. Parents must sign a child in before leaving.

### **Illnesses**

Our purpose is to care for and teach children who are well. Sick children pose a risk to other children as well as staff members. When should a child stay home? Here are several important considerations.

- ❑ A fever of 100 degrees or higher
- ❑ Excessive coughing
- ❑ Very runny nose (green mucous indicates infection)
- ❑ Very miserable from teething congestion, etc.
- ❑ Unexplained rashes or contagious skin disorders
- ❑ Vomiting
- ❑ Difficulty breathing or wheezing
- ❑ Yellow or green discharge from the eyes (conjunctivitis or pink eye)
- ❑ Contagious diseases/infections
- ❑ Head lice
- ❑ Communicable diseases, infections or parasites
- ❑ Blisters in the mouth or throat

If a child becomes acutely ill while in the care of the center, staff will immediately separate the child and notify the parent or guardian. Symptoms listed above will require that the parent pick up the child as soon as possible.

If staff members notice symptoms in a child, they will privately alert the head teacher and Director. Immediate action is required if staff believe a child has been exposed to chicken pox, head lice, intestinal parasites, or ringworm. Parents will be called to pick up a sick child if the illness or symptom prevents them from participating comfortably in activities or in our judgment the illness requires more sophisticated/comprehensive care or poses a risk to the other children.

Any observed illness or injury will be documented. One copy of the note will be given to the parent and one copy will be kept on file at the Learning Center. If an illness or injury requires medical or dental care, parents will be notified immediately. If the illness or injury is serious or life threatening staff will contact 911 and have the child transported for hospital care immediately. If the illness or injury requires prompt follow-up by the parent, a call will be placed to the parent and the illness/injury will be documented with recommended follow-up.

In the tragic event of death, 911 and parents will be called immediately. The incident will be documented and reported to appropriate authorities. All parents in the center will be informed of the incident through a letter from the school. Additional counseling support will be brought in as need to assist children and staff.

If a parent attempts to bring a child to school who is obviously ill (symptomatic), staff members are required to deny admittance.

Parents will be permitted to bring the child back to the Center with a physician's note.

### **First Aid Kit**

Each classroom will maintain a well-stocked first aid kit. These kits will be kept in an easily identifiable location so anyone can find it. Teachers have placed a prominent sign directing adults to the location of the kit. Kits include bandages, peroxide, cotton balls, gauze, tape, and other common care items for small injuries. The kits are inspected monthly. Any missing items are replaced immediately.

### **Medication Log**

If a child is taking medicine (over-the-counter or prescription) that must be administered while the child is at the center, that medicine must be labeled, and in its original container. Parents must provide the center with a physician's note to administer both OTC and Rx medications. In addition, a signed parental consent form is required to authorize the staff to administer a child's medicine. Give any medication directly to a staff member who will ensure it is logged with the Director.

Children's medicines are kept in locked cabinet in the classroom. When a child requires his/her medicine, the Head Teacher is responsible for obtaining the medicine, confirming that it belongs to the appropriate child, administering the medicine (only with a parental consent form on file), and immediately returning the medicine to its secure location. Medicines that must be refrigerated are kept in the locked refrigerator in the kitchen. Any dose of medicine that is provided to a child while in the care of the Center must be recorded in the Medication Log.

Diaper ointments (Desitin, etc.) will be applied for diaper rashes without a parent or doctor note being required.

### **Student Medical Emergency Procedures**

In the event of a medical emergency, the following will take place.

1. First aid will be administered as needed
2. If emergency medical services are required, we will call 911
3. Parents will be notified to come to the center or to the hospital (depending on severity of situation)
4. An ambulance will transport the child to the nearest hospital facility
5. A staff member will accompany the child in the ambulance or follow the ambulance to the hospital
6. Staff members will follow procedures in reporting the incident according to state law.

### **Other Emergencies**

In the event of other types of emergencies (for example, an intruder or a threatening parent), staff members will use their best judgment and call 911 and notify another staff members, the Director, and parents as needed. The prompt response of staff members often determines the successful outcome of an emergency situation.

### **Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

In the event of other emergencies during child care hours, the children will be cared for here in the center unless we are required to evacuate. If the emergency requires evacuation, we will relocate the children to the Comigees School at 51<sup>st</sup> and Greenway. Parents will be notified immediately as to the location site for the children.

Some emergencies require that the school be closed, like a water main break, heating problem or electrical program, or power failure. In the event of fire or explosion, the children will be evacuated to a safe location in the Comigees School at 51<sup>st</sup> and Greenway. In the event of flood, tornado, hurricane, earthquake, blizzard or other catastrophe, if the day care site is determined to be the best and safest location, the children will remain in the center. Otherwise, they will relocate to Comigees School at 51<sup>st</sup> and Greenway. In emergency school closures, parents will be contacted immediately to pick up children.

### **Field Trips**

Occasionally the children in the center will be invited to participate in field trips. Several weeks in advance of the field trip, a permission slip will be sent home for parents to sign. Additional fees may be required and parents will be given a deadline by which to grant permission and pay the fees.

For most trips, children will depart from the center, travel on a school bus to the event, and return to the center via school bus. Vehicles and drivers meet required state and safety regulations. Children will be taught safe traveling tips prior to each field trip.

### **Lost or Missing Children**

If a child is missing or lost, staff members will call 911 immediately to report the situation and get police help. Next, staff will notify the child's parents. Remaining children will return to a safe location with the required staff coverage. Extra staff members will scout the area in an organized search for the lost/missing child. When the child is located, police and parents will be notified immediately. The incident will be documented and placed in the child's record.

**Health Consultations**

Occasionally, the GTCLC will partner with area health care providers to bring education and resources into the center for children and parents. These special programs are designed to promote good physical, mental, social and emotional in the children who attend our center. Guests will provide education on topics ranging from dental hygiene to exercise and nutrition.

**Community Service Referrals**

There are times when children and families need help for other resources. The staff of the GTCLC is always prepared to point parents in the direction of help from the community. Many organizations, churches, and agencies in the Southwest Philadelphia area can provide support when families need food, counseling, health care, housing, heat, clothing, and other support. A table with numerous valuable resources (brochures, flyers, and pamphlets) is located just outside the door of the main classroom.

Parents, please access the resource center for referrals to health services for children. In addition, parents will receive information on community support services during enrollment, open house, back-to-school night, parent-teacher conferences, and periodically throughout the year. If you and your child need additional help with these kinds of human services, our staff respond supportively with available information.

**Facility Maintenance**

At the beginning and end of each day, the classrooms, hallways, and bathroom are properly tidied for childrens' use. Staff members are required to properly sanitize their classroom as well as play equipment. In addition, each week, a cleaning team services the facility to clean rest rooms, classrooms, and hallways.

# **OTHER IMPORTANT POLICIES**

## **Expectations for Professional Behavior**

As a part of our team, you are held to a high standard of professionalism. As a Christian day care, we hold ourselves to a high standard of ethical, professional behavior in all that we do.

You are expected to demonstrate professional courtesy and respect to all teachers, students, parents, and visitors. Disrespectful, abrasive, abusive, violent, angry, uncontrolled, or profane behavior will not be allowed in our center. It is grounds for disciplinary action and possible termination.

Parents are held accountable to this standard as well, however, as a staff member, you are required to remain professional, even when a parents' behavior is not. We require you to model the way for the children in our center, so they learn the appropriate way to handle conflict. No pushing, kicking, hitting, biting, put-downs, or other intentional bodily harm will not be tolerated. Harsh language, like "shut up" or "get over here" is not permitted.

You also held to a high standard as it pertains to attendance or absences, adhering to your schedule, personal hygiene, professional and appropriate dress, following regulations and policies at all times, and keeping your priority focus on the children you are assigned.

## **Ethical Code of Conduct**

Standards of ethical behavior in early childhood care and education are based on commitment to the following core values that are deeply rooted in the history of the field of early childhood care and education. We have made a commitment to:

- Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle
- Base our work on knowledge of how children develop and learn
- Appreciate and support the bond between the child and family
- Recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture,1 community, and society
- Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, and colleague)
- Respect diversity in children, families, and colleagues
- Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect

These principles have been taken from the National Association of the Education of Young Children (2006).

**Mandated Reporting**

GTCLC is a legally mandated reported according to the State of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia. This requires any of our staff to report any knowledge of or observations of a child who we reasonably suspects has been a victim of child abuse or neglect. We are required by law to report suspected instances of child abuse to a child protective agency. In the event that at staff member suspects child abuse, it must be immediately report to the Director of the Center. The Director will collect required information from the staff member and contact the appropriate authorities.

**Holidays**

Christmas Eve  
Christmas Day  
New Year's Day  
Martin Luther King's Birthday  
President's Day  
Veteran's Day  
Columbus Day  
Good Friday  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day  
Thanksgiving Thursday  
Thanksgiving Friday

Staff members who are scheduled to work on the holidays listed are paid for those holidays. Staff members who are NOT scheduled to work on the holidays listed are NOT paid for those holidays.

The center is closed on weekends. In the event of adverse weather conditions, the center will be closed when Philadelphia Public schools are closed. No child is permitted to be brought to the center before the scheduled opening time (7:00 am), and all children must be picked up by close (6:00 pm).

**Drug/Alcohol Policy**

The unlawful possession, use, distribution, sale, or manufacturing of illicit drugs and alcohol on Center property is strictly prohibited and will result in immediately termination.

**Smoking Policy**

Smoking is prohibited in all areas of the Center. This includes vehicles owned by the Center.