



# *Caring Hearts Academy*

Open Arms. Open Hearts. Open Minds.

420 Bracey Lane  
South Hill, VA 23970  
(434) 447-3616  
caringheartsacademy@gmail.com

## PARENT HANDBOOK ON CENTER POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Parents are responsible for maintaining a current copy of the center policies, found on our website,  
[www.caringheartsacademy.com](http://www.caringheartsacademy.com).

Printed copies are available at the center, upon request.

Updated 8-11-23

### Table of Contents

<b>Welcome</b>	<b>2</b>	Administration of Medication	<b>23-24</b>
Mission Statement	<b>3</b>	<b>Enrollment &amp; Money Matters</b>	
Philosophy & Goals	<b>4,5</b>	Registration/Tuition/Payments	<b>24</b>
Hours of Operation / Scheduled Closings	<b>6</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subsidy</li> </ul>	<b>25</b>
<b>Classroom Details</b>		Early Arrival/Extended Pick Up/After Hours Fees	<b>25</b>
Assignment/Assessment/Transition	<b>7</b>	Pre-Registration, Withdraw & Dismissal Policy	<b>26</b>
Grouping & Staff/Child Ratios	<b>8</b>	Waiting List, Expectant Mothers	<b>26</b>
Diapering	<b>8</b>	Forgotten Items	<b>27</b>
Infant Room	<b>8-11</b>	<b>Other Things You Need to Know</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breastfeeding Support</li> </ul>	<b>10-11</b>	Conferences/Transportation	<b>27</b>
Wobbler Room	<b>11</b>	Inclement Weather	<b>27-28</b>
Toddler Room	<b>12</b>	Year End Programs	<b>28</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toilet Training</li> </ul>	<b>13</b>	School Website	<b>28</b>
Preschool Rooms	<b>14-15</b>	Donations & Fundraising	<b>28</b>
Daily Teacher/Parent Communication	<b>15</b>	Grievance Procedure	<b>28</b>
Behavior Management	<b>15,16</b>	Information Changes	<b>28</b>
Managing Aggressive Behaviors	<b>16,17</b>	Open Door Policy for Enrolled Families	<b>29</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behavior Support</li> </ul>	<b>17-18</b>	Volunteers/Non-Discrimination Policy	<b>29</b>
Clothing/Outdoor Play	<b>18</b>	Students with Disabilities	<b>29-30</b>
Personal Belongings/Toys	<b>18</b>	<b>Safety First</b>	
Meals	<b>18-20</b>	Emergency Contact/Emergency Preparedness	<b>31</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peanut Free Policy</li> </ul>	<b>19</b>	Pandemic Emergency Response Plan	<b>31-32</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allergens/Plan of Action</li> </ul>	<b>19</b>	Drills & Emergency Relocation Plans	<b>32</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treats</li> </ul>	<b>19-20</b>	Pesticides	<b>32</b>
<b>Coming &amp; Going</b>		Child Accident & Incident Forms	<b>32</b>
Arriving & Leaving the Center	<b>20</b>	Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter	<b>32</b>
Authorizing Individuals to Pick up Children	<b>20</b>	<b>Forms &amp; Other Helpful Information</b>	
Attendance Policies & Absences	<b>20 -21</b>	Handbook Acknowledgment Forms	<b>33-35</b>
<b>Germs, Germs Go AWAY!</b>			
Illnesses/Guidelines for Exclusion	<b>21-23</b>	School Calendar	<b>36</b>



Dear Parents,

We are sincerely grateful for the confidence and trust you have placed in us by entrusting us with the care of your most precious asset – your child. At Caring Hearts Academy, we embark on this journey together, united by the shared goal of building a strong foundation for your child's future.

This handbook has been thoughtfully created to serve as a guide, offering you comprehensive insights into our academy and its practices. It is designed to address the many questions that may naturally arise about our policies and procedures. Our intention is to ensure transparency and clarity, enabling you to make informed decisions about your child's early education and well-being.

Within these pages, you will discover the core values that underpin our approach, our commitment to fostering a safe and nurturing environment, and the educational philosophy that drives our curriculum. We believe that every child is unique, and we are dedicated to providing personalized attention to cater to their individual needs and interests.

As you read through this handbook, we encourage you to reach out to us with any inquiries or uncertainties you may have. Your active involvement in your child's educational journey is paramount, and we highly value the partnership between our academy and your family.

Together, we strive to create a warm, inclusive, and stimulating atmosphere where your child can flourish, develop a love for learning, and build the essential skills to thrive in the world beyond our walls. We believe that every milestone achieved, every discovery made, and every joy experienced will be a testament to the wonderful partnership between Caring Hearts Academy and your family.

Once again, we express our heartfelt appreciation for choosing us as your child's early education provider. We are eager to nurture and guide your child's growth, celebrating their achievements every step of the way.

Welcome to Caring Hearts Academy!

Warm regards,  
Shannon K. Facchina  
Owner/Director

## OUR MISSION

At Caring Hearts Academy, we believe that positive change begins with caring hearts and compassionate minds. We are driven by the words of Dr. Seuss, 'Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing's going to get better. It's not.' Today's society may be overwhelming, but as parents and educators, we are committed to making a difference.

Our mission is to create a nurturing and safe environment where children and families can flourish together. We understand the significance of building independent, confident, and spiritually driven children who genuinely CARE about themselves, others, and the world around them. Through strong and loving teacher/parent partnerships, we aim to sow the seeds of empathy, resilience, and a lifelong love for learning.

Our child care program is not merely a place for care and education; it is a sanctuary of growth, love, and support. We foster a culture that embraces individuality, celebrates diversity, and empowers children to find their unique voices. Our dedicated team of educators is committed to igniting the flame of curiosity in each child and guiding them through their educational journey.

We take to heart the responsibility of shaping compassionate learners who will embrace the challenges of the future with open minds and open hearts. Together, we strive to make our world brighter, **one hug at a time**. We believe in the transformative power of kindness and empathy, and we are determined to pass on these values to the next generation.

At Caring Hearts Academy, we know that caring isn't just an option; it is the driving force behind everything we do. With our unwavering dedication, we are paving the way for a more compassionate, inclusive, and hopeful society. Join us on this journey of love, learning, and positive change. Together, we can make the world a better place, one child at a time.

## **OUR PHILOSOPHY**

***“A person’s a person, no matter how small” ~ Dr. Seuss***

At Caring Hearts Academy, our philosophy is rooted in the belief that each child is a unique and precious gift from God, deserving of love, respect, and individualized care. We recognize that children come to us with diverse temperaments, developmental rates, and learning styles, and it is our mission to provide quality, reliable, and affordable childcare while building meaningful, healthy relationships.

Our primary focus is on meeting the developmental needs of every child in our care. We understand that each child's journey of growth encompasses physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. Therefore, we tailor our approach to cater to their specific learning styles and support their progress holistically.

To achieve this, our well-qualified staff actively engages with each child, offering personal attention, guidance, and a nurturing environment. Through thoughtful educational activities and consistent schedules, we strive to create an atmosphere where children feel safe, secure, and valued.

At Caring Hearts Academy, we believe in the power of meaningful relationships between caregivers and children. We prioritize fostering healthy, positive, and relaxed interactions, allowing our children to thrive emotionally and intellectually.

To maintain continuity and consistency, we promote cooperative staff planning, training, and collaborative activities involving children from various groups. We celebrate the diverse educational strengths of our caregivers, encouraging them to share their expertise with one another and with the children.

Our curriculum is designed to be flexible and responsive, catering to individual interests, needs, and abilities. We see the learning journey as a joint venture between the child, the caregiver, and the family, and we actively involve parents in their child's growth and development.

At Caring Hearts Academy, we are committed to creating an inclusive and supportive community where children can explore, discover, and learn at their own pace. We cherish the privilege of being part of each child's early years, and we strive to make a lasting, positive impact on their lives.

With love, dedication, and respect as our guiding principles, we endeavor to provide a nurturing foundation that will empower children to embrace their uniqueness, to care for others, and to grow into compassionate, responsible, and confident individuals who contribute meaningfully to the world around them.

## OUR GOALS

Caring Hearts Academy is dedicated to achieving the following goals:

- ***Affordable, Convenient, and Dependable Childcare Services:*** We aim to provide parents and families with accessible, reliable, and affordable childcare solutions. Our commitment to convenience ensures that parents can confidently entrust their children to our care, knowing they are in a safe and nurturing environment.
- ***Educationally Based Environment for Holistic Development:*** Our focus is on creating an educational childcare setting that nurtures the spiritual, social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth of each child. Through thoughtful and engaging activities, we encourage well-rounded development and foster a love for lifelong learning.
- ***Nurturing Healthy Relationships and Spiritual Growth:*** At Caring Hearts Academy, we strive to cultivate an atmosphere of love and compassion, where children can develop meaningful relationships with others and their faith in Jesus Christ. We believe in supporting their spiritual journey while embracing a culture of respect and understanding.
- ***Open-Ended Learning Experiences and Discovery:*** We are committed to providing open-ended learning experiences that encourage curiosity, creativity, and exploration. Our approach fosters a sense of wonder and empowers children to discover the world around them at their own pace.
- ***Preschool Program for Lifelong Learning Readiness:*** Our goal is to offer a preschool program that prepares children for a lifelong journey of learning. Through age-appropriate activities and experiences, we equip children with essential skills and a positive attitude towards education.
- ***Building a Sense of Community and Service:*** Caring Hearts Academy believes in building a strong sense of community among children, families, and caregivers. We promote the values of kindness, empathy, and service, inspiring our young learners to positively impact society and make a difference in the lives of others.

In pursuit of these goals, we remain steadfast in our commitment to provide the highest quality of care and education, ensuring that each child at Caring Hearts Academy is nurtured, cherished, and empowered to reach their fullest potential.

## **DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION**

Caring Hearts Academy, LLC is open year round, Monday through Friday, from 6:30am to 6:00pm.

## **HOLIDAYS, SCHEDULED CLOSINGS & ADJUSTED HOURS**

- 8/25: **12:00 Dismissal** for 2023 - 2024 open house meet teacher prep
- 8/28 - 29: **CLOSED** for open house/meet the teacher & Staff Development
- 9/04: Labor Day, Center **CLOSED**
- 10/20: **Early Dismissal (12:00 p.m.)** Parent/Teacher Conferences, Staff PD
- 11/22 - 24: Thanksgiving break, Center **CLOSED**
- 12/25 - 1/1 : Christmas break, Center **CLOSED**
- 1/15: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Center **CLOSED**
- 2/19: President's Day, Center **CLOSED**
- 3/15: **Early Dismissal (12:00 p.m.)** Parent/Teacher Conferences, Staff PD
- 3/29: Good Friday, Center **CLOSED**
- 4/1: Easter Monday, Center **CLOSED**
- 5/27: Memorial Day, Center **CLOSED**
- 7/4: Independence Day, Center **CLOSED**
- 8/23: **12:00 Dismissal** for 2024 - 2025 open house/meet teacher prep
- 8/26: **CLOSED** for 2024 - 2025 open house/meet the teacher & Staff Development
- 8/27: **CLOSED** for 2024 - 2025 open house/meet the teacher & Staff Development

Please note that Caring Hearts Academy operates year round. During the typical public school breaks, such as Spring break and Christmas break, we will only observe the closings posted above; however, our staff with children in other schools will observe these breaks. In order to accommodate this, we will utilize seasonal/substitute staff.

## Classroom Details

### CLASSROOM ASSIGNMENT, ASSESSMENT AND TRANSITION

At Caring Hearts Academy, we recognize that transitions are an essential part of a child's development and growth. Our goal is to ensure that each child's transition into a new classroom is a smooth and positive experience. We follow a thoughtful and inclusive approach to placement and transitions, taking into account both chronological age and developmental capabilities.

- **Classroom Placement and Assessment:** Upon enrollment, your child will be placed in a classroom based on their chronological age. We also consider their developmental readiness to ensure they are in an environment that supports their growth and learning. Our classroom staff regularly observes and documents your child's developmental progress, using tools such as developmental checklists. These assessments help us understand each child's strengths and areas for growth.
- **Parental Consent for Assessment:** By enrolling your child at Caring Hearts Academy, you grant permission for our teachers, staff, and Director to use developmental assessment tools to track your child's progress. The findings of these assessments will be shared with you, enabling you to stay informed about your child's development. Additionally, these assessments aid the Director in planning for transitions.
- **Addressing Developmental Concerns:** If any concerns arise regarding your child's progress in reaching age-appropriate milestones, we will schedule a meeting with you to discuss the matter. We value open communication and collaboration with parents, and if necessary, we may recommend outside resources to support your child's early childhood education and development.
- **Transitions Process:** Transitions are exciting milestones in a child's journey, and we approach them with care and attention. When a child is ready to move to an older classroom, the transition process begins several weeks before the actual move. This period allows the child to get acquainted with their new teacher, classmates, and the daily routine of the new classroom.
- **Communication and Timing:** The Director will keep you informed about upcoming transitions to ensure you are well-prepared for the change. In most cases, transitions occur at the beginning of the academic school year, but we will make every effort to ensure that each child's move aligns with their developmental readiness and age.
- **Considerations for Transitions:** While we strive to facilitate transitions based on developmental readiness and age, there may be instances where transitioning into an older room is delayed. This delay could be due to classroom availability, staffing, and consideration of the "rightness of fit" with regard to the ages, stages, and behaviors of the children in the older room.

At Caring Hearts Academy, we are committed to providing a nurturing and supportive environment that fosters each child's unique journey of growth and development. Transitions are handled with sensitivity and care, allowing children to flourish as they embrace new challenges and opportunities for learning and socialization.



## **GROUPING AND STAFF/CHILD RATIOS:**

Infant Room (12 wks to 16 mo) 1:4  
 Wobblers Room (16 mo to 24 mo) 1:5  
 Toddler Room (24 mo to 36 mo) 1:8  
 Pre-K 3 Room\* (3 yrs to 4 yrs) 1:10  
 Pre-K 4 Room\* (4 yrs to 5 yrs) 1:10  
 Afterschool (6yrs to 12 yrs) 1:12

***\*Children must be toilet trained and out of pull-ups in order to move to this room as well as 3 years old by September 30<sup>th</sup> of the current year. Children in the PreK classes utilize the bathroom unaccompanied and therefore must be able to use the bathroom independently, unless additional support measures are implemented. Refer to the Behavior Support section for more details.***

Please note that due to staffing arrangements and scheduled child drop-off and pick-up times, your child may be combined with other age groups for short periods of time, particularly at the start and the end of the day as well as rest time.

## **DIAPERING:**

Teachers check children for signs of wetness/bowel movements at least every two hours and when children awaken from their nap. Parents must supply at least 6 disposable diapers each day. Although we endeavor to notify parents well in advance via Procure and in person, ultimately ***it is the parent's responsibility to check each child's cubby or bag daily to ensure enough diapers, wipes and clean clothes are available.*** Clothing/underwear soiled by urine or feces will be immediately placed in a plastic bag and sent home that day.

- Infants must be in a dry diaper when they are left in the care of our staff. If a child soils his/her diaper on the way to the center, parents are welcome to use our diapering facilities.
- Should your child run out of diapers while in our care, **there will be a charge of \$2 per diaper.** Should they run out of wipes, **there will be a charge of \$3 per pack.**

## **INFANT ROOM** (12 weeks - 16 months)

In our infant room we support our youngest learners by surrounding them with love and consistency. In addition to an abundance of snuggles, our teachers will engage with your infant and introduce them to stimulating activities that will support their mental and physical development. This will include the opportunity for tummy time and the introduction of simple sign language.

We will keep a record of each child's activities during the day in each of the following areas:

1. the amount of time the infant has slept
2. tummy time
3. diaper changing and any irregularities in the child's bowel movement
4. bottle feeding, times and amounts

5. “table” food and/or baby food feeding, times and amounts
6. achievement towards any developmental milestones.

***Other Important Infant Information:***

- Infants must accept formula or breast milk from a bottle prior to enrollment in order to ensure that proper feeding can be provided by our staff.
- Infants must be brought in the clothing that they will be wearing for the day.
- In order to keep the infant room sterile, parents and staff are asked to remove their shoes before entering the room. In addition, we ask that you wash your hands immediately upon entering the room and before interacting with any children. No other siblings are allowed to enter this room for the safety of the other infants.

**SIDS Policy:** No toys, heavy blankets, pillows or boppies are allowed in cribs. Your infant will always be put to sleep on his/her back and supervised while sleeping. No infant will be placed in a car seat, boppy, swing or bouncy seat to sleep. If a child medically needs to be placed on their abdomen to sleep, a written note from the doctor needs to be brought to the center. Included in the doctor’s note needs to be the reason why this is necessary and the ending date for this process.

**DIAPER BAG POLICY**

Due to space limitations, we kindly request that parents **do not** bring a diaper bag daily. Instead, a small canvas bag will be provided for each child to use each day in the infant room. You may keep additional changes of clothing, bottles, and other daily items in these bags. Please refrain from putting any medicines, ointments, or sprays in the bags.

***What to bring for your infant:***

**Please be sure to label your child's belongings with his/her first and last name.**

- Prepared infant formula\* or breast milk (breast milk may be frozen) ***Formula and/or Breastmilk must be labeled with the child’s name, date and ounces.***
- Bottles/liners
- Baby food\* and cereal\*
- Disposable diapers (at least 6 each day)/wipes/ointments (***Please note that we will charge \$2/diaper and \$3/pack of wipes if your child runs out***)
- Blanket \*\* (***Please ensure that you take the blanket home over the weekend as it will be a \$5 charge to cover the cost of laundering. Also, if the school has to provide the blanket for the week it will be an additional \$5 charge***)
- Pacifier (if needed, please provide a labeled container)
- Several changes of clothing.
- In order to comply with our centers Emergency Preparedness Plan, you will need to bring a SEPARATE one day’s emergency supply of:
  - disposable bottles
  - disposable nipples

- commercial formula appropriate for your child.

\*Caring Hearts Academy participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). If your child is on formula, then you will have the option of utilizing the formula, baby food and cereal offered on campus. When your infant has begun consistently eating cereal and/or baby food at home, then please notify your child's teacher so that we can support you by mirroring his/her feeding schedule at school.

\*\*Blankets should only come to school when your child can roll over from back or front without assistance

## **BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT POLICY**

Because breastfeeding provides the healthiest start for babies, providing ideal nutrition and a multitude of health benefits for both infant and mother, it is important for the Caring Hearts Academy to support and encourage breastfeeding.

We will ensure that:

- We provide a breastfeeding-friendly environment. We invite mothers to come to the center and nurse their babies or express breastmilk at any time during the day, and there is a comfortable place for them to do so. We display culturally appropriate posters of mothers nursing their babies.
- All breastfeeding families are able to properly store and label milk for child care center use. There is always refrigerator space available for daily storage of breastmilk. We do provide freezer storage for breastmilk. We have written guidelines that we share with our families, and all milk at our center is properly labeled.
- All new staff receives training in storage and handling of human milk, developmentally appropriate infant feeding practices, breastfeeding promotion and the support of exclusive breastfeeding.
- We inform women and families about the importance of breastfeeding. We provide families with culturally appropriate information about the risks/ benefits of different feeding choices and about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding (no infant formula, water, juice or solid food is served.) We discuss breastfeeding with potential families and share breastfeeding materials and resources with our families.
- We support breastfeeding employees. Employees have access to a clean, private location to nurse their babies or express milk and are able to break as needed to do so.
- We develop a feeding plan that supports best feeding practices with each family and share a daily breastfeeding/infant feeding plan with our families. We work with each family to encourage practices that will help maintain breastfeeding.

This includes nursing on demand when with their babies, responding to feeding cues rather than feeding on a schedule, and the developmentally-appropriate introduction of complementary foods.

### **WOBLERS ROOM (16 – 24 months)**

We provide a relaxed and loving atmosphere for our Wobblers. Our consistent daily routine will help these young children become familiar with their surroundings. Our day starts out with a small group circle time, which consists of singing and dancing, stories and language rich conversation.

The Wobblers do engage in messy play and art. This will stimulate the children while they explore their senses. Children also experience a lot of active play with their peers. Socialization starts to occur more often at this age and children start communicating with each other.

Wobblers are very active so appropriate gross motor play is always available on a climber in the classroom. Wobblers also experience our outdoor playground to help build motor skills.

After a long day of fun activities, an afternoon nap is necessary. All children will be taking their nap on a center provided cot that is a few inches off of the ground. A fitted sheet is utilized to cover the cot. Children should bring in a lightweight blanket to sleep with. No oversized pillows or stuffed animals will be allowed. A staff member will supervise your child while they sleep. Your child is not required to take a nap while at the Center. If they choose not to nap, then your child will be able to play quietly while the other children sleep.

#### ***What to bring for your wobbler:***

- Backpack (Due to space limitations, **no** diaper bags are permitted. Please be mindful that they may not contain medicines, ointments and sprays)
- Several changes of clothing
- Blanket (***Please ensure that you take the blanket home over the weekend as it will be a \$5 charge to cover the cost of laundering. Also, if the school has to provide the blanket for the week it will be an additional \$5 charge***)
- Diapers/wipes/ointments (***Please note that we will charge \$2/diaper and \$3/pack of wipes if your child runs out***)
- Pacifier (if needed only at rest time, *please provide a labeled container*)

**Please be sure to label all of your child's belongings with first and last name.**

### **TODDLER ROOM (24-36 months)**

The children in the Toddler room are beginning to develop social skills, enlarge their vocabulary and focus on developing more independence. Children will be exposed to an age appropriate circle time, which will include topics such as calendar, weather, colors, numbers and shapes.

Children are also introduced to learning centers. Learning centers provide your child with many different activities to promote growth with their large and fine motor skills. There are opportunities for your child to learn to count, identify colors, identify shapes, work with puzzles, play with blocks, string beads, and play with play-doh, paint and color. Children at this age are also starting to engage in play pretend in the dramatic play area.

Other activities that occur in this room are music and musical instruments, finger-plays, dancing, flannel board stories, and other games. Our toddlers have time to stretch their muscles either inside or outside with large motor activities. In addition to daily outdoor activities, Caring Hearts Academy has partnered with local businesses that support the development of gross motor skills, such as yoga and dance studios. These offerings are based on the studio's availability and are conducted on site at no additional cost to the student.

Children will be able to rest or nap within their classrooms on a Center provided cot. A fitted sheet is utilized to cover the cot. Children should bring in a lightweight blanket to sleep with. No oversized pillows or stuffed animals will be allowed. A staff member will also supervise your child while they sleep. Your child is not required to take a nap while at the Center. If they choose not to nap, then your child will be able to play quietly while the other children sleep.

#### ***What to bring for your toddler:***

- Backpack (may not contain medicines, ointments, or sprays)
- Several changes of clothing (especially if potty training)
- Blanket (***Please ensure that you take the blanket home over the weekend as it will be a \$5 charge to cover the cost of laundering. Also, if the school has to provide the blanket for the week it will be an additional \$5 charge***)
- Diapers/wipes/ointments (***Please note that we will charge \$2/diaper and \$3/pack of wipes if your child runs out***)
- Pacifiers are **not** permitted in the Toddler room (an exception will be made for rest time, but we will actively wean them off by December, *please include a labeled container*)

**Please be sure to label all of your child's belongings with first and last name.**

## **TOILET TRAINING:**

Toilet training for an individual occurs over a period of time that can range from a few weeks to several months and includes several stages of development. Daytime control may occur earlier than nighttime control. Girls tend to develop complete control of the elimination process earlier than boys. Regressions are not unusual during the process, particularly if the child is affected by such things as illness, a move to a new home or childcare center or a new baby in the family.

In general, children rarely have the physical control, understanding of the process and the emotional maturity to **successfully** and **consistently** use the toilet prior to reaching 18 months of age, and on average, not until the child is 2 ½ to 3 years old.

***Prior to beginning toilet training at school*** parents and teachers will meet to discuss the child's readiness. To begin training at school, the child must show the following 5 signs of readiness at both home and school:

1. ***Interested*** and eager to learn
2. Possesses ***self-help*** skills to manage clothing
3. ***Language skills*** to express self
4. ***Stays dry*** for periods of hours during the day consistently
5. Stays ***dry overnight*** consistently

Our Staff will keep parents informed of any signs of readiness observed at the center. Parents should keep center staff aware of a child's movement through the developmental stages at home and should request a conference in order to plan the transition from diapers to underpants. This will help ensure that staff is supportive and consistent with parental efforts in potty training.

Our staff will be supportive of parental efforts to assist the child with toilet training and will never show disapproval when accidents occur. Success will be met with encouragement. After the switch from diapers is agreed upon between staff and parents, parents are responsible for always maintaining at least 3 pairs of underpants and changes of clothes in the child's cubby. ***Clothing should be easily removable***, such as elastic waist pants, to help eliminate frustration when the child attempts to use the toilet without help. Since accidents will occur and regression is possible, patience is necessary as the child learns to use the toilet.

***Children are required to be toilet trained before being promoted to the Pre-K 3 and 4 classrooms, unless additional support measures are implemented. Refer to the Behavior Support Section. This means no pull-ups/diapers during the active classroom times. (The use of pull ups at nap time in the PreK3 classroom is permissible)***

## **PRESCHOOL ROOMS (3-5 YEARS)**

Our Preschool Program will ensure that your child is ready to go off to Kindergarten! At Caring Hearts Academy we strive to provide your child with the best possible learning environment. Preschoolers want to establish themselves as separate from their parents. They are more independent than toddlers. They can express their needs through the use of communication.

These children also thrive for routine in their classroom setting. Each day consists of music, small and large motor activities, calendar time and learning centers. At this age, these children learn by doing. New skills are being developed every day. They like to spend a lot of their time pretending. Dress-up clothes, pretend "props" and puppets are a few of their favorites.

In addition, Caring Hearts Academy uses the *StreamIN3* & *The Investigator Club* curriculums. These curricula are based on research that demonstrates the importance of teacher-student interactions, immediate and regular access to the best literature available, and the need for social-emotional development instruction. These programs introduce children to math, literacy, science, and the arts in a way that feels like play and inspires joyful engagement. The Virginia Kindergarten Readiness assessments are also utilized in order to provide teachers with the data needed to purposefully guide instruction for optimal learning outcomes.

Children at this age are generally very energetic and active. That's why large motor activities inside or outside are an important part of their day. In addition to daily outdoor activities, Caring Hearts Academy partners with local businesses that support the development of gross motor skills, such as dance and yoga studios. These will be offered based upon studio availability and conducted on site for not additional cost to the student.

***Children will be required to be toilet trained before being promoted to the Pre-K 3 and 4 classrooms, unless additional support measures are implemented. Refer to the Behavior Support Section. This means no pull-ups/diapers during the active classroom times. (The use of pull ups at nap time in the PreK3 classroom is permissible)***

### **Things needed for the Preschool room:**

- Extra changes of clothing (we suggest 2 sets of underpants and 2 sets of socks)
- Blanket if staying all day (***Please ensure that you take the blanket home over the weekend as it will be a \$5 charge to cover the cost of laundering. Also, if the school has to provide the blanket for the week it will be an additional \$5 charge***)

**Please be sure to label all of your children's belongings with first and last name.**

Our full day preschoolers will be able to rest or nap within their classrooms on a Center provided cot. A fitted sheet is utilized to cover the cot. Children should bring in a lightweight blanket to sleep with. No oversized pillows or stuffed animals will be allowed.

Your child will be supervised while they sleep. Your child is not required to take a nap while at the Center, but will be able to read or rest quietly.

### **DAILY PARENT/TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

Keeping our families involved with our daily activities is a priority at Caring Hearts Academy. To do this, we use the ProCare parent app which is an electronic daily classroom communication tool.

The parent app allows our teachers to capture special moments, take photos, and videos of the children in action, as well as send you classroom information. You'll get daily reports and notes right in your email or through the app on your smartphone.

We consider all information captured using the program to be a private communication between our center and our families. No personal information is shared with any external parties, and as a parent, you will only receive information specifically about your child.

We will be using the email address we have on file to communicate via the program, so it is important to keep this current.

### **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT**

Caring Hearts Academy uses positive guidance techniques such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirection, and setting clear limits. With the goal of promoting self-control without squelching the child's spontaneity and child-like behavior, our teachers do the following:

- Intervene in situations that can develop into conflict
- Offer words/teach strategies to replace hitting and other negative behaviors
- Recognizing hunger, tiredness, boredom and frustration as behavior triggers
- Give the children positive behavior models

In order to promote your child's physical, intellectual, emotional, and social well-being and growth, our staff is committed to interacting with your child and one another in such a way that provides needed help, comfort, and support. This includes a commitment to following:

- A respect of personal privacy
- Respect for differences in cultural, ethnic, and family backgrounds
- The encouragement of decision-making abilities
- Promoting ways of getting along
- Encouraging independence and self-direction
- Using consistency in applying expectations

The following measures of discipline are considered unacceptable at Caring Hearts Academy and forbidden to be used by any member of our staff:

- Physical punishment



- Enclosure in a small confined space
- Punishment by another child
- Separation from the group so that the child is away from the hearing and vision of a staff member
- Withholding or forcing food or rest
- Verbal remarks which are demeaning to the child
- Punishment for toileting accidents
- Punishment by applying unpleasant or harmful substances

## **MANAGING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIORS POLICY**

At Caring Hearts Academy, we are committed to providing a safe and nurturing learning environment where each child can flourish emotionally, socially, and academically. We recognize that managing aggressive behaviors is essential to maintaining this environment. This policy outlines our approach to addressing and preventing aggressive behaviors while promoting a positive atmosphere for all children.

***Definition of Aggressive Behaviors:*** Aggressive behaviors are actions that compromise the physical and emotional safety of others. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, biting, throwing objects with intent to harm, invading personal space to intimidate, spitting, screaming, kicking, and throwing furniture.

***Understanding the Causes:*** Aggressive behaviors can stem from various reasons, such as teething, cause-and-effect exploration, seeking attention, imitation, stress, frustration, dysregulation, and a desire for increased independence. We recognize that these behaviors can arise, but we are committed to helping children understand and manage their emotions in a healthy way.

### **Addressing Aggressive Behaviors:**

- ***Incident Reporting:*** Whenever an aggressive behavior occurs, an incident form will be completed for both the aggressor and the victim. This documentation ensures clear communication among caregivers and parents regarding the incident.
- ***Empathy and Compassion:*** We believe in fostering empathy and understanding in children. When appropriate, the aggressor will be engaged in activities to support the victim, promoting emotional connection and empathy.
- ***Communication and Education:*** Compassionate discussions, age-appropriate literature, and engaging activities will be used to educate children about the impact of their actions and alternative ways to express themselves.

### **Preventive Measures:**

- ***Shadowing Period:*** If a child exhibits frequent aggressive behaviors, we will implement a shadowing period for up to 10 days. During this time, a designated

caregiver will closely monitor the child to identify triggers and provide redirection and support before an incident occurs. We will collect data during this period of time in order to formulate an actionable support plan for the student.

- **Data Collection and Individualized Support:** During the shadowing and support period, we will diligently collect data to gain insights into the patterns and circumstances surrounding the aggressive behaviors. This data will serve as the foundation for creating personalized and effective support plan tailored to the child's unique needs. Our goal is to collaboratively develop strategies that help the child manage their emotions and interactions in a more positive manner.
  - By integrating data-driven insights into our approach, we strive to foster a safer, more harmonious environment that nurtures the well-being of all children while empowering each child to thrive socially and emotionally.
- **Collaboration:** We value open communication with parents and caregivers. Regular meetings will be scheduled to discuss strategies for supporting children displaying aggressive behaviors and finding effective solutions.

### **Escalation Protocol:**

- If a child attempts to harm others three times within a single day during the shadowing period, they will be sent home for the day.
- If aggressive behaviors persist despite our best efforts, we will discuss with parents the possibility of additional support, such as a 1:1 personal aide. If needed, parents can arrange for this support at their cost to closely monitor the child's behaviors and provide guidance.
- If there is no significant improvement in a reasonable timeframe, enrollment termination may be considered in order to maintain a safe and harmonious environment for all children.

### **Confidentiality:**

We understand the sensitive nature of addressing aggressive behaviors. Therefore, we maintain a high level of confidentiality surrounding the parties involved, ensuring privacy and respect for all individuals concerned.

By implementing these measures, we aim to create a positive and safe environment where children can learn, grow, and develop essential social and emotional skills while respecting the well-being of their peers.

### **BEHAVIOR SUPPORT**

At CHA we realize that each child is unique and occasionally children may benefit from additional support, whether it be due to social/emotional needs or other developmental needs. As a private facility, primarily funded by parent-paid tuition, we want to be transparent about the limitations we face in providing one-on-one supervision to meet specific, individual needs in areas such as assisting toileting in classrooms that are "toilet independent", managing special meal needs, and supporting aggressive

behaviors. If, after careful observation and consideration, we have identified your child as having certain needs that require additional staff support, then we will request a meeting with you to review a proposed plan of support. These support services will be offered at an additional cost which will be calculated by estimating the number of additional staffing hours needed throughout the course of the week and multiplying it by \$15.00 per hour. This contribution from families will help cover the costs associated with the additional staff support.

### **CLOTHING AND OUTDOOR PLAY**

Please dress your child in appropriate clothing daily so that he/she feels free to participate in all activities. Remember, children learn from their environments. They get messy! Also, outdoor play is an integral part of your child's daily agenda, so please make sure that he or she is ready to have some fun!

**Your child will additionally be required to wear closed-toe shoes or sneakers at all times. Flip flops are not permitted.**

During winter months, please be sure to dress your child according to the weather with appropriate hats, mittens, and coats. On warmer winter days, children will take short walks around the center and play in the snow. We encourage rain boots or an older set of shoes that can get wet on days like this.

**Please mark all items** with your child's first and last name. Caring Hearts Academy is not responsible for lost, misplaced or damaged clothing.

### **PERSONAL BELONGINGS/TOYS**

***Please do not send toys from home*** as they may get lost or broken. In addition, bringing toys from home can be a difficult distraction during circle, center, and rest time.

Books and CDs/DVDs that a child wishes to share with the class should be marked with the child's name and given to the teacher.

If your child's class has a show & tell or "sharing day", you will be notified.

Although we love our police, military personnel and hunters, guns and weapons have "a time and a place" – school is not one of those places, that being said, please be aware that **toy guns and weapons are never allowed at Caring Hearts Academy, at any time.** Rest assured that we will plan for our children to have positive conversations/interactions with our local law enforcement officers and hunting experts with regard to safety and appropriate uses.

### **MEALS**

***Caring Hearts Academy participates in the CACFP meal reimbursement program. The goal of this program is to provide healthy meals and snacks for groups such as child care centers, day care homes and adult day care centers.*** This program

affords us the opportunity to provide **all beverages, snacks and meals** for our students free of charge. A menu is posted on our parents page each month and in the lobby. Each year at enrollment and re-registration, parents will be required to fill out an updated CACFP form in order to maintain our enrollment in the program. For questions or more information, please see Mrs. Facchina.

Nutritious meals are provided by the school for each child in care. This includes a morning snack, lunch and an afternoon snack. If your child arrives prior to 7:45 a.m. then breakfast will be provided as well.

Monthly menus will be posted in the lobby.

Please be aware that we do not believe in requiring children to eat particular foods should they decline, nor do we believe in withholding food as a punishment.

Parents are welcome to pack breakfast or lunch or a substitute item for a meal being served for their child, should they so choose; however we ask that the meals meet the following criteria:

Parents will pack a nutritious lunch that includes a drink. **(No candy, soda or sugary drinks) Must be labeled with the child's name and the date.**

***Please do not bring cups and food items to the classroom, unless it is a packed lunch, which should be in a closed lunch box.***

### **PEANUT-FREE POLICY**

Caring Hearts Academy will select food items that are peanut-free and have not been processed in a peanut factory. We ask that families who pack lunches with items containing peanuts CLEARLY mark the item so we will be able to plan appropriately for students with peanut allergies.

### **ALLERGENS**

***Please be aware that Caring Hearts Academy is a peanut-free environment.*** With this being said, our center cannot guarantee an environment that is free of any allergen. We do proactively try to minimize the risk of possible allergen exposures once we are aware that an allergy does exist. It is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian at the time of enrollment to notify Caring Hearts Academy of any allergies that your child may suffer from, so that an allergy action plan can be created.

In order for classroom staff to properly accommodate all children with peanut allergies, all classroom snacks and treats brought into the center must be store bought and contain an ingredients label. Labels indicating that products may have come into contact with, or were processed among peanuts, then it will not be served.

### **TREATS**

Birthday, holiday treats, or special treats are permitted, provided they are store bought

treats and contain an ingredients label. Please check with your child's teacher so you know how much to bring, and what is considered an acceptable treat. **Remember that we strive to be a peanut-free center.**

## **Coming & Going**

### **ARRIVING AND LEAVING THE CENTER**

The entrance into the building through the main door will remain locked at all times. A camera system will be utilized to identify individuals who should be given access to the building and then these individuals will be granted access via a remote lock device.

Parents and guardians who are regularly scheduled to pick-up/drop-off a child will have their fingerprints scanned at initial enrollment. Once parents/guardians scan their fingerprints they will be given access to the classrooms.

It is required that all children be escorted inside the center and that you scan your fingerprint. This will log your child in and out of the Procure System.

In order to maintain a safe and secure facility for all children, staff and parents, ***please do not hold the entrance door for any unfamiliar person wishing to enter the center.*** Thank you for being courteous, ***but we must remember safety first,*** if you are unfamiliar with the individual, then allow a staff member to handle the door. Allowing us to go through the appropriate process will ensure that proper visitor procedures take place as well as reduce the risk of danger.

### **AUTHORIZING INDIVIDUALS TO PICK-UP YOUR CHILD**

On the enrollment form you will find space asking for the names of the individuals who are authorized to pick-up your child. You may authorize as many individuals as you wish in writing on your form. The individuals that you authorize to pick up your child may do so at any time, with or without prior notice to the Director. As a courtesy, please let the Director know, either in writing or verbally, if such a situation arises where an individual from your authorized list will be picking-up your child. We will not allow your child to leave with an unauthorized person. We will check the ID of the person listed to pick-up your child. A copy of the ID will also be taken and added to your child's file. Please remember to keep this form updated with current phone number and address changes.

In shared custody or divorce situations, parents should provide a mutually agreeable list of persons authorized to pick-up. If a parent does not have authority to pick up their child, the custodial parent/caregiver must provide appropriate court documentation to be kept on file.

### **ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

All parents are required to check their child in and out via the parent kiosk each day. Additionally, parents must make verbal contact with a staff person upon arrival and departure to assure that the transfer of responsibility for the child has taken place. Attendance will be monitored as part of compliance to DSS regulations, as well as to

determine compliance with enrollment contracts.

Full-time enrollment is defined as 5 full days per week. Part-time contracts will be for specific days and times and may be for 2 or 3 days. ***Part-time contracts will only be offered in such circumstances that it does not create an enrollment vacancy.***

***Staff schedules are based directly upon the indicated pick-up and drop-off times of each child. Therefore, it is imperative that you verify with the Director that space is available should you need your child to arrive before, or leave well after the times you have indicated for your child at the time of enrollment. Advance notice of early drop-off or late pick-up will help Caring Hearts Academy ensure appropriate staffing.***

The switching of days for a part-time child will not be permitted.

The adding of days will be permitted if prior requests to do so are approved by the administration to ensure availability of space and staff. Once space and availability have been confirmed, and tuition charged, you will be responsible for the added day's fee regardless of attendance.

## **ABSENCES**

***Please call by 8:30am if your child is going to be late or absent.*** Curriculum activities, as well as staff schedules and food preparation are based upon the amount of children scheduled each day. It is extremely important that you communicate with us about any schedule changes so that we can appropriately plan for the day - including staffing needs. ***Children not in attendance by 9:00 a.m. will be marked absent, and they will be unable to attend, unless prior arrangements have been made with the director for late arrival.***

## **Germs, Germs, Go Away!**

### **ILLNESS**

We strive to prevent the spread of illness, therefore, at times the center may require those dropping off children to take the child(ren)'s temperatures prior to entering classrooms. Most commonly this will occur during peak seasons of viruses or when something is going around the facility.

Please use the following guidelines when deciding if your child should attend childcare:

**Please keep your child home if your child has:**

- A fever of 100 or greater (without the aid of fever reducer within the past 24 hours)
- Any behavior changes
- Any signs or symptoms of illness
- Frequent and/or uncontrolled coughing, irritability, persistent crying, unusual lethargy, wheezing, or other unusual signs

- Frequent and/or constant runny nose
- Strep throat, until 48 hours after antibiotic is started and fever free without the aid of fever reducer for 24 hours
- Diarrhea; runny, watery, or bloody stools within the last 24 hours. The child must be excluded for a minimum of 2 school days, they should return to a normal diet and have one formed stool before returning.
- Vomiting two or more times in the last 24 hours. The child must be excluded for a minimum of 2 school days, return to a normal diet and have no more occurrences nor other symptoms of illness before returning.
- Rash with fever or behavior changes
- Scabies or other infestations
- Impetigo or other skin infection until 24 hours after treatment has begun
- Chicken pox until all blisters appear “crusted over”
- Pertussis (Whooping Cough) mumps, rubella, shingles, herpetic gingivostomatitis (Mouth Sores)
- Hepatitis A- until 1 week after onset
- Sore throat with fever
- Eye discharge (white or yellow) or pink eye; until 24 hours after starting treatment; if treatment is not sought then when the discharge clears
- Head lice (please note we have a no nit policy)
- Bed bugs
- Respiratory illness, or probable flu-like symptoms
- COVID-19 - Should your child test positive, please notify the school immediately. Exclusion periods will be based on the most current guidance from the Virginia Department of Health; however, the general exclusion policy is parallel to Influenza & RSV
- Influenza - your child must stay home for 5 days and is eligible to return at that time if he/she has been fever free for at least 24 hours without the aid of any fever reducer and has not vomited or had a loose stool for at least 24 hours.
- RSV - your child must stay home for 5 days and is eligible to return at that time if he/she has been fever free for at least 24 hours without the aid of any fever reducer and is no longer experiencing any breathing difficulties.
- Hand, Foot & Mouth - your child must remain home for 5 days

Caring Hearts Academy health guidelines are provided by, but not mandated or limited to, the VA Department of Health and the VA Department of Education

If your child becomes ill while at the center, you will be called to pick-up your child. It is expected that you will pick-up your child as soon as possible. If you are unable to pick your child up within 30 minutes, then you will need to make arrangements for your emergency contact(s) to pick up your child. ***If you are unable to be reached, the center will then call the first person on your child's emergency contact list.***

Exposure to communicable diseases and any infectious illness should be reported promptly to the center so that staff can look for any early symptoms among all children. The center will notify parents when a child has been exposed to an infectious disease.

Parents are required to update immunization records when a new vaccine is given to their child. Failure to immunize your child and update records within one month of required immunizations may result in temporary suspension of childcare services at our center, until the time that the child has been properly immunized, unless proper exemption paperwork is on file.

### **NO-NIT POLICY**

Should you discover that your child has lice, please notify the center director immediately so that the appropriate sanitation measures can be taken at school. The director will discuss helpful tips and reminders in order to make your “homework” easier. Your child will need to remain at home until you have treated the infestation and removed all nits from your child’s hair. Prior to reentry, you will need to meet with the director so she can verify that we are nit-free. Any time a case of lice is discovered/reported, all parents will be notified and we will check all students in the building to ensure that there are no other cases that need to be addressed.

### **MEDICATION AND TOPICAL OINTMENT ADMINISTRATION**

Certain Caring Hearts Academy’s employees are certified to administer over-the-counter medications, prescription medications, as well as topical ointments, with the proper written medication consent paperwork.

Over-the-counter topical ointments such as diaper rash or first aid creams, sunscreen or insect repellent may be applied to your child with written parent permission.

All other medications will be administered to your child only when the following procedures have been fulfilled:

- \* Completed Written Medication Consent form is filled out in its entirety by both the parent and child’s physician, and submitted to the center for review. *Please note that a separate form is needed for each individual medication. Medication names must match the form EXACTLY for example if you provide a generic brand of Tylenol, the generic brand name must be listed, it may not be referred to as Tylenol.*
- \* **All medication, both prescribed and over-the-counter, must be supplied in the original packaging and must be accompanied by the original package insert or printed pharmacy instructions.** These instructions must indicate the correct method of administering the medication, dosage limitations, possible side effects, and any other significant warnings.

**Issued Written Medication Consent Forms must be updated at least every six months.** It is the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian to update your child's Written Medication Consent Forms. You may not receive a reminder notice from the Director



that your child's form will be expiring.

\* **For infants:** If any over the counter medication instructions or any medication states "See doctor for dosing", then a written statement with appropriate dosing, signed by the doctor, must be provided.

## **Enrollment & Money Matters**

### **REGISTRATION**

At the time of enrollment, a non-refundable enrollment fee of \$175, along with a tuition deposit of one week's tuition is due. Prior to your child starting, a technology/resource fee of \$100 is due for each child enrolled.

Additionally, the following forms must be completed and submitted prior to your child's first day of attendance at Caring Hearts Academy:

- Application for Enrollment
- Commonwealth of Virginia School Entrance Physical Form/Immunization Form
- Signed Tuition Agreement
- Parent Information Card
- Emergency Medical Form
- Infant Feeding Schedule (if applicable)
- Handbook Acknowledgement Form
- Photo/Video Authorization Form
- Blanket Field Trip Form
- CACFP Annual Enrollment Form
- Birth Certificate for review only

### **TUITION & PAYMENTS**

Our billing period is from Monday to Friday. Payment is expected in full on Friday by closing time ***for the following week's tuition***. No exceptions to this deadline will be made for absences due to illness, vacation, or other reasons. ***A late fee of \$35.00 will be charged to accounts not paid in full by the close of business on Friday.*** If payment is not received by the start of business on Monday of the following week, children may not attend care until payment is received. This includes payment of the late payment fee assessed to your child's tuition account.

Caring Hearts Academy uses automatic drafts made to your checking/savings account or credit card as acceptable forms of payment in addition to cash or money orders.

Tuition payments can be made weekly, bi-weekly or monthly, as long as the tuition is prepaid. Your tuition frequency will be agreed upon in writing prior to your child beginning school.

Tuition is expected for days your child may be absent due to illness, family emergencies, doctor visits, hospitalizations, vacations, or any other reason. Please note that tuition rates do not change in the event of a week that includes a holiday. After

extensive research, we have found our policy to be consistent with other schools and child day care centers. Our costs remain the same throughout the year, therefore, we rely on the specified tuition to be paid each week in order to meet our expenses. Consequently, as much as we might like to, we cannot make allowance for any days missed in your regular attendance schedule.

*We do not trade a scheduled day for another day.* Parents may request an added day or extended hours to a day. We will check our schedule and will let you know if an opening is available.

A \$75.00 fee will be charged for any returned check or non-sufficient funds transaction. Should this cause your tuition to become late, then applicable late tuition fees will apply.

### **WE ARE SUBSIDY PROVIDERS**

Each parent's co-pay and above market fees are due weekly or according to the agreed upon terms in your parent/provider contract. Non-payment in these fees will result in late payment fees and potentially loss of your child's slot. It is the parent's responsibility to log in/out of the subsidy system each day, including holidays and absences. If this is not done, then you are responsible for any non-payment by the state.

### **EARLY ARRIVAL/EXTENDED PICK UP:**

Each child's schedule is specifically tailored to their needs. Agreed upon drop off and pick up times are notated in your parent contract. **Should you need your child to arrive earlier or stay later than scheduled, then you must notify the director prior as soon as possible so that appropriate staff coverage can be obtained.** *There may be times when we are unable to accommodate your request.* Each segment of time for this additional service will be charged at a flat \$15.00. (Early drop off = \$15, Extended pick up = \$15)

### **AFTER HOURS FEES:**

The center closes at 6:00pm sharp, unless otherwise indicated due to adjusted holiday hours. As a courtesy to our staff, **parents should arrive at least 10 minutes prior to closing** so that staff can gather your child's belongings and discuss your child's day prior to closing the center. Whenever possible, in cases of emergencies causing late pick-up, the center must be notified by phone as soon as possible. The fee charged for late pick-up after the center's indicated closing time will be \$5.00/minute per child, according to the center's clock on the parent kiosk. Please note that should a parent be more than 5 minutes past closing, center staff will first contact both parents before calling persons on your child's emergency contact form.

### **AGE RELATED RATE REDUCTIONS**

All rate changes due to a child's birthday will take effect on the Monday *following* the child's birth date, provided that the transition into the next room has been made. If the child is not ready for the transition or the space does not allow for the transition, then the reduction will be made on the week that the child completes the transition. Please

note that generally speaking most transitions occur at the beginning of the next academic school year.

### **PRESCHOOL REGISTRATION**

Children who will attend our Preschool program will need to register by the due date indicated on our re-enrollment forms. This includes children in our Toddler classrooms who will be moving into the Preschool classroom in the fall. Forms will be distributed in February. **Due to our limitation on the number of children that each classroom can accommodate, and the high demand of these limited spaces, enrollment vacancies will be filled on a first come, first served basis.**

Due to our limited spacing and the increased number of children who start in our programs prior to beginning of the “new” school year, we may not be able to care for those children who will be leaving our program in order to attend alternative Preschool programs (or Kindergarten) past the second week of August. Please meet with the Director to discuss availability of enrollment space beyond this time frame, as every effort will be made in order to accommodate your family.

### **WITHDRAWAL & DISMISSAL POLICY**

A two-week notice is required before withdrawing a child from our center. The child’s account must be paid in full before withdrawing, including your child’s tuition for that two-week period. Any account past due at the time of disenrollment will be paid through our electronic draft option.

The director of CHA reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child at his/her discretion, or for the following possible reasons:

- Non-payment or excessive late payments of tuition and fees.
- Not observing the rules of the center as outlined in the Parent Handbook.
- Child has special needs and/or behaviors that we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns.
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or children by parent or child.
- Expired or non-immunizations and/or physical or failure to provide appropriate exemption documentation.

### **WAITING LIST**

In the event that a classroom age group is full at any time, your child's name will be placed on a waiting list. As vacancies occur, pre-registered children would have first priority.

### **EXPECTANT MOTHERS**

Expectant Mothers are invited to register their child, pending space availability. If there are no children waiting for the infant room, then no fees beyond the non-refundable registration fee will be required. Should an eligible child enroll, then the expectant mother will be contacted and she will have the following choices:

1. Decline the slot in the infant room
2. Begin paying a non-refundable \$50.00 reservation fee per week. Half of this fee will be applied to the expectant mother's account should she follow through with enrollment. If she declines the space then the fees paid will be forfeited.

### **FORGOTTEN ITEMS**

Diapers, wipes, and blankets are to be provided by the parents each week. We will do our best to notify you through Procare if your child is running low on these items, but it is ultimately the parents' responsibility. Additionally, Blankets are to be brought at the beginning of the week and left on site until the end of the week. However, in the event that your child does run out of diapers and wipes, or forgets to bring a blanket that day, we do have an emergency stock. Please be aware that there will be an additional charge for these items.

1. Diapers will cost \$2 each
2. Wipes will cost \$3 a pack
3. Blankets will cost \$5 if left at school over the weekend OR if the school has to provide one (this covers the cost of laundering the item)

## **Other Things You Need to Know**

### **CONFERENCES**

Conferences for all students are offered two times per year and are scheduled on the two early dismissal dates noted at the beginning of this handbook. These conferences are not mandatory; however, if you choose to decline the conference, a signature on an opt out form is required. In addition, those electing to participate in a conference must sign an attendance form on the day of the conference.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

CHA does not provide any student transportation. In the event of field trips, parent volunteers will be asked to assist with transportation.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

In the event of inclement weather, every effort will be made to keep the center open. If we must close, we will make every effort to inform you in a timely fashion. The center's Facebook page will be updated and a parent alert will be sent out through our app.

The option most utilized will be a delayed opening, which allows us to make the grounds safe for parents, students and staff. When this occurs, it may impact our part day friends. If the delayed opening is planned for 10:00 a.m., all part day programming will be canceled and students will remain home.

In the event of inclement weather during normal hours of business, the center will consider several factors, such as, but not limited to current and impending weather

conditions and road conditions when making its decision to close. In such an event, parents will be notified as soon as possible and will be required to pick up their child in a timely fashion.

If the center closes due to the weather or utility outage, regular tuition charges will still apply.

### **YEAR END PRE-K4 PROMOTION CEREMONY**

Our Preschool Year End Program and Pre-K4 promotion ceremony is a time to celebrate all of the accomplishments of our children. A child will not be able to attend our graduation ceremony and festivities should his/her enrollment end prior to the date of graduation. ***Each family is asked to contribute \$35 towards the program.***

### **OUR WEBSITE**

Our school website is: [www.caringheartsacademy.com](http://www.caringheartsacademy.com)

### **DONATIONS & FUNDRAISERS**

Caring Hearts Academy welcomes donations of toys, books, clothing, etc. All donations will be noted and appreciated. From time to time Caring Hearts Academy may participate in fundraisers to raise money for needed toys, supplies, and educational materials. We hope for your support during these times. Fundraisers are a positive way to show community support and family support for early childhood education.

Certain fundraisers for the coming school year have been earmarked exclusively to offset the rising cost of tuition. At the end of these fundraisers, proceeds will be distributed amongst the participating families. Every effort will be made to fairly weight the distribution of the funds so that families are receiving proceeds according to their level of participation.

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Although the center makes every attempt to offer the highest quality of care to all children and families, there may be occasions when parents have concerns about particular events, situations, or staff. Appointments with direct caregivers may be made in advance through the Procure app or by request in the office. If they have tried this without satisfactory results, or if the concern is serious enough to warrant immediate administrative review, parents are encouraged to contact the Director. The Director will schedule meetings as necessary with appropriate parties to gather relevant information before deciding on a course of action. Parents will be informed, as appropriate within confidentiality requirements, as to the result of the Director's inquiry.

### **INFORMATION CHANGES**

Parents are required to notify the center immediately of any pertinent information changes regarding the enrolled child. This includes the addition or deletion of individuals authorized to pick-up your child.

### **OPEN DOOR POLICY FOR ENROLLED FAMILIES**

We are committed to our partnership with your family and we value your daily input. Frequent, consistent and detailed communication between parents and teachers is important for a superior parent/caregiver relationship.

We welcome and encourage your visits at any time. We do ask that during the first month of attendance, you limit your visits, in order to help assist your child in acclimating to their new routine. Parents and guardians are welcomed, and encouraged, to visit with their child throughout the course of the day and to join in classroom activities, but as a courtesy to our teachers, please be sure to communicate with them ahead of time. Also, please be aware that your child's teacher may not be able to carry on conversation specific to your child while they are in the classroom. You are welcome to schedule a time to meet and discuss your child's progress, etc. with your teacher. We additionally welcome phone calls throughout the day to check in on your child...we are more than happy to give you an update!

As part of our "safety first" policy, **prior to reporting to the classroom, all visitors must report to the office to sign in.** A representative of the school will then escort you to your child's classroom.

### **VOLUNTEERS**

Parents are encouraged to volunteer at CHA! All volunteers are required to undergo a Criminal Background Check and will have their names checked against the Child Protective Services Registry, both of which entail a fee. Volunteers that wish to provide transportation for field trips must also be willing to produce evidence of a valid driver's license, an appropriate driving record, and satisfactory proof of insurance on their vehicle.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

Children will be admitted to the center regardless of race, gender, religion, or national origin and in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

At Caring Hearts Academy (CHA), our primary commitment is to meet the diverse needs of all our students, ensuring a nurturing and enriching educational experience. We recognize that every child is unique, and it is our endeavor to provide an inclusive environment where all children can thrive. To achieve this goal, we have formulated a comprehensive policy that outlines our approach to accommodating students with

disabilities or special needs.

**Individualized Support Plans:** We firmly believe in the power of individualized care. Students with disabilities will have their needs assessed and addressed through personalized plans. Parents are kindly requested to provide the school office with relevant medical documentation and updates at the beginning of each school year. This information is essential for us to develop effective support strategies for the student's benefit.

**Annual Review Meeting:** To ensure that the student's needs are being met optimally, an annual meeting will be held between the student's family and our school staff. This meeting will serve as an opportunity to review the student's progress, discuss any changes in their needs, and make necessary adjustments to the support plan.

**Limitations and Refusal of Admittance:** While we strive to provide the best care possible, there might be situations where we are unable to offer specialized care due to a lack of specialized staffing or appropriate equipment. In such instances, we reserve the right to refuse admittance to ensure the safety and well-being of all students.

**Additional Support for Diverse Needs:** At CHA, we recognize that some children may occasionally require extra support due to various reasons, such as social/emotional needs or specific developmental requirements. However, it is important to acknowledge that as a private facility funded primarily by parent-paid tuition, there are limitations to our ability to offer one-on-one supervision, especially in areas such as toileting in classrooms that promote independence, managing special meal needs, and addressing aggressive behaviors.

**Individualized Support Plans for Additional Needs:** If, after careful assessment and consideration, we identify that a child requires additional staff support to thrive within our environment, we will collaborate with parents to design an individualized support plan. This plan will be customized to address the specific needs of the child and will outline the support services required.

**Costs Associated with Additional Support:** The additional support services will be provided at an associated cost. This cost will be calculated by estimating the required number of additional staffing hours throughout the week and applying a rate of \$15.00 per hour. This contribution from families will assist in covering the expenses associated with the provision of supplementary staff support.

Caring Hearts Academy remains dedicated to fostering an inclusive, supportive, and

enriching educational journey for all our students. We believe that by working together with parents and guardians, we can create an environment that nurtures every child's potential.

## **Safety First**

### **EMERGENCY CONTACT**

Parents are *required* to provide two (2) local emergency contacts in the event that they cannot be contacted. These individuals will be contacted to pick up your child should you not be available in the event that your child becomes ill, injured or we have an unexpected closing or emergency requiring pick up.

**NOTE:** Any parent who works in a setting (ie: first responder) that will preclude them from picking their child up in an emergency situation/setting must meet with the director and provide a clearly written plan of action for catastrophic situations.

Parents will be contacted via our school app in the event of an emergency/weather event that causes a delay in opening, an early dismissal or a closing.

Should a student have an emergency, injury or illness, then the parents will be contacted by a CHA staff member. Should the parents be unavailable, then the emergency contacts will be contacted.

### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

A copy of the CHA Emergency Preparedness Plan is on file in the office. Parents may request a copy of this plan from the Director.

### **PANDEMIC EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

In the event of a pandemic, Caring Hearts Academy will implement the Pandemic Section of the Emergency Preparedness Plan under the guidance and direction of the Virginia Department of Health, the Virginia Department of Social Services, federal and local governments as follows:

To ensure the safety of the children, families and staff, Caring Hearts Academy will monitor the situation and take into account the guidance and suggestions made by the authorities. Decisions made by Caring Hearts Academy will be based on the guidance received and will consider the impact to the children, families and staff. Decisions may include the following:

- Closure of Caring Hearts Academy
  - Length of closure will be determined by guidance provided by the Virginia Department of Health , the Virginia Department of Social Services and federal/local government.



- Adjusted hours of service
- Daily health checks of children and staff
  - Children and staff must have a temperature below 99.5 to attend CHA
  - To return to school after an illness, children and staff must be fever free with no fever-reducing medication for 24 hours. ***Guidance provided by the VDH and other agencies may alter this and quarantine requirements may be required.***
- Limited entry into the building
- Limited access to the property
- Limitations on what the children may bring into the center, such as
  - Blankets
  - Stuffed animals
  - Pillows

Caring Hearts Academy will communicate these plans through a variety of methods such as mass emails, Procure Parent App messaging, school website and the school/parent Facebook pages.

Payments and Contracts are still required to be maintained during a pandemic and any government imposed restrictions that may occur, to include closings and stay at home orders. Each family has the right to withdraw from their contract with two weeks advance written notice. Payment is required for that two week period, regardless of attendance. If a family chooses to withdraw, then the account must be brought current, to include the two week withdrawal fees. During times of crisis within the community when parents withdraw their children, Caring Hearts Academy must endeavor to fill open slots in order to remain open; Therefore, the student's space for future return will not be held or guaranteed, as all available spaces are filled on a first come, first served basis.

### **FIRE DRILLS AND SHELTER IN PLACE DRILLS**

Our center, in accordance with the regulations set forth by the Department of Social Services, practices the proper evacuation of our facility through the use of fire drills on a monthly basis. All children, including infants, will be participating in fire drills year-round, as it is important for all staff and children to be aware of what to do in an emergency situation, regardless of the season.

Our center will additionally be practicing two shelter in place drills annually, during which time our safety procedures and supplies will be reviewed. During this brief drill, the center will be locked down. No individuals will be allowed to enter or exit the building until the drill has concluded.

### **EMERGENCY RELOCATION**

In the event that we need to evacuate our building and move to a different location, we will evacuate to the office of Dr. Kendall Morris, DDS located at 604 N. Thomas St., South Hill, VA. We will dismiss children from the basement.

Parents/emergency contacts will be called after our arrival at the alternate location.

Please proceed to the rear basement entrance for pick-up and information.

### **APPLICATION OF PESTICIDES**

The center's ongoing exterior building maintenance involves the application of pesticides. All questions and comments concerning the products used should be directed to the front office.

### **CHILD ACCIDENT FORM**

Our staff will take every effort to ensure the safety of your child. Unfortunately, accidents do occur. In any event where a child is injured, proper treatment, such as simple first-aid, will be administered and your child will be made to feel comfortable. Caring Hearts Academy staff, for every detected injury that occurs, will fill out an accident form. A copy with your signature will be retained for your child's file. We will contact a child's parent if the decision has been made that the child's injury warrants a phone call. A child coming into Caring Hearts Academy with injuries may also require an accident form to be completed, so that both the parent and center staff are aware that the injury occurred at home.

### **CHILD INCIDENT FORM**

Caring Hearts Academy staff will fill out an incident form if your child exhibited behavior that is not acceptable and does not adhere to the classroom discipline policy. A copy of this form will be kept in your child's file.

### **MANDATORY CHILD ABUSE REPORTING**

All employees of a licensed childcare center are mandatory reporters of child abuse, neglect and maltreatment. Every employee is required to immediately report any suspected child abuse, neglect or maltreatment.