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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.

Printed copies are available at the center, upon request.

Updated 7-29-26 skf

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Dear Parents,

We are 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 created to serve as a guide, offering you comprehensive insights into our center 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
(657) 770-3584 - Admin cell phone

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 staff actively engages with each child, offering personal attention, guidance, and a nurturing environment. Through consistent schedules and thoughtful educational activities, 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

8/28 - 9/1: **CLOSED** for open house/meet the teacher & Staff Development

9/2: First day of school for 2026 - 2027 School Year

9/07: Labor Day, Center **CLOSED**

10/23: Early Dismissal (12:00 p.m.) Parent/Teacher Conferences, Staff PD

11/25 - 27: Thanksgiving break, Center **CLOSED**

12/24 - 1/1 : Christmas break, Center **CLOSED**

1/18: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Center **CLOSED**

2/12: **Early Dismissal** (3:00 pm) for community event

2/15: President's Day, Center **CLOSED**

3/26: Good Friday, Center **CLOSED**

3/29: Easter Monday, Center **CLOSED**

4/23: Early Dismissal (12:00 p.m.) Parent/Teacher Conferences; Staff PD

5/31: Memorial Day, Center **CLOSED**

7/5: Independence Day, Center **CLOSED**

8/27 - 8/31: **CLOSED** for 2027 - 2028 open house/meet the teacher & Staff Development

9/1: First day of school for 2027 - 2028 School Year

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.

Due to staffing and space limitations, ***drop in daycare for children attending other schools/programs is not guaranteed.*** When spacing is available, a sign up sheet will be posted and parents may sign up on a first come, first served basis.

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
 Infant/Wobbler Combination (12wks to 24 months) 1:4
 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) 1:18

****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 30th of the current year. Children in the PreK classes utilize the bathroom unaccompanied and therefore must be able to use the bathroom independently.***

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 \$3 per diaper.** Should they run out of wipes, **there will be a charge of \$5 per pack.**

INFANTS (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 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.
- Due to spacing constraints, infant car seats should not be left on a regular basis. Accommodations can be made for special circumstances, but arrangements should be made in advance.

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 \$3/diaper and \$5/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.
- For infants less than 12 months old, you must provide a SEPARATE emergency supply of the following items in order In order to comply with our center's Emergency Preparedness Plan:

- disposable bottles
- disposable nipples
- commercial formula appropriate for your child.
- Once your child has transitioned from bottles to cups, we will ask that you provide two labeled cups per day. One for milk and one for water. These cups will be sent home with your child daily.

*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.

WOBBLERS (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:

- Due to space limitations, **no** diaper bags are permitted. Please use the canvas bag provided by the center. Please be aware that bags 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 \$3/diaper and \$5/pack of wipes if your child runs out***)
- Pacifier (if needed only at rest time, *please provide a labeled container*)
- 2 **labeled** cups, 1 for milk & 1 for water. These cups will be returned to you daily.

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 (***Please note that we will charge \$3/diaper and \$5/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*)
- Ointments, Sunscreen and Bug Spray may be given to your child's teacher; however, each item must be labeled with your child's name and accompanied by a completed over the counter form. These items must be handed directly to your child's teacher so that they may be secured in a locked cabinet.
Please be sure to label all of your child's belongings with first & 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. 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 (VKRP) & Virginia Language & Literacy System (VALLS) assessments are also utilized in order to provide teachers with the data needed to purposefully guide instruction for optimal learning outcomes.

Caring Hearts Academy has been awarded 10 Mixed Delivery slots. The Mixed Delivery Grant provides contract-based public funding to private (non-faith-based) ECCE providers to serve eligible children, preparing them for success in school and life. Children receiving public funding (Mixed Delivery or Subsidy) **must** participate in VKRP (Virginia Kindergarten Readiness Program) & VALLS (Virginia Language & Literacy System) which are state provided screening tools for Virginia's Early Intervention Reading Initiative. The purpose of the EIRI is to reduce the number of children with reading problems through early diagnosis and immediate intervention. If your child does not receive public funding, you may elect to opt out of the VKRP and VALLS assessments by notifying the Director or Assistant Director in writing.

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 no additional cost to the student.

Children will be required to be toilet trained before being promoted to the Pre-K 3 and 4 classrooms. 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.

BEFORE/AFTER SCHOOL CARE & SUMMER CAMP

Caring Hearts Academy has a limited amount of space available for children utilizing the bus service to/from South Hill Elementary, Kenston Forest and Brunswick Academy.

Due to limited space and staffing, when the above-mentioned schools are closed, Caring Hearts Academy may not be able to offer childcare for these students. If space allows, there will be a sign up posted and it will be on a first come, first served basis. We encourage you to have an alternative care option for child care when your child's school is closed.

Caring Hearts Academy offers a limited number of slots for summer camp attendance. The number of slots are based on the center's current enrollment. Available slots will be offered via sign up on a first come, first served basis in mid April.

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

CHALLENGING/AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIORS

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 challenging/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.

We recognize that all children may display challenging behaviors from time to time. Behaviors such as biting and hitting are often developmentally appropriate and are

common phases that many children experience. Our response to these behaviors is primarily guided by each child's developmental stage.

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, a lack of language mastery 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 Challenging 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.

Aggressive Behavior Thresholds:

When a child has difficulty managing their behavior, we have established a threshold for such incidents. ***Once that threshold is met, we request that you pick up your child within one hour.*** This includes incidents where staff successfully intervene to prevent injury, as well as situations where a staff member is targeted by the aggressive behavior, either intentionally or as a result of intervention.

- **Infant, Wobbler, and Toddler Classrooms:** Children will be sent home for the remainder of the day after **3** incidents of aggression.
- **PreK3-4 Classrooms:** Children will be sent home for the remainder of the day after **2** incidents of aggression.
- **Before/After School Group:** Children will be sent home for the remainder of the day after **1** incident of aggression.

Note: *Should the final incident occur within the individual child's last 90 minutes of attendance then the child may be permitted to return to school the following day; however, they will be sent home after 1 instance of similar severe behavior should it occur.*

For children experiencing difficulties regulating their emotions or maintaining safe

behavior, we will provide support by implementing developmentally appropriate classroom strategies. Center-wide assessments will be reviewed and discussed with staff to determine strategies that could benefit your child.

If ongoing behavioral support is necessary, we will begin more in-depth observations and data analysis of classroom behaviors. Conferences will be scheduled with parents/guardians to discuss individualized goals and the option for referrals to related services. A behavior support plan may be developed based on feedback from both parents and teachers.

Should problematic behaviors persist, families will be asked to seek external evaluations for additional support. A Behavior Intervention Plan will then be developed with clear timelines for improvement. If progress toward these goals remains limited, our administrative team will meet with all involved to discuss whether Caring Hearts Academy can continue to meet the child's needs within our current resources and environment.

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 and discuss whether the CHA environment is appropriate for your child’s needs given our scope and staffing constraints.

THERAPY SERVICES

We recognize the importance of early intervention and support services in helping children reach their full potential. When appropriate, therapy services such as speech, occupational, physical, or behavioral therapy may be provided within our child care setting during the day.

Approval for therapy services to occur at the center will be determined on an individual basis and will take into consideration whether the specific service can be safely and effectively

provided within the daycare environment without disrupting the learning experience of other children or the daily operations of the program. Factors considered may include the nature of the therapy, space and staffing requirements, confidentiality considerations, and the child's ability to manage transitions to and from therapy sessions.

Our team is committed to collaborating with families and service providers to support each child's success. We will advocate for the child's needs by maintaining open communication with parents and therapists, sharing relevant observations from the classroom, and working together to promote consistency across settings whenever possible.

At the same time, all therapy services provided within the center must align with our program policies, licensing regulations, and classroom expectations to ensure a safe, positive, and developmentally appropriate environment for all children in our care. Decisions regarding on-site therapy services will be made with the child's best interests and the needs of the overall program in mind.

Therapy Policy

To support continuity of care, minimize disruptions to the classroom routine, and ensure compliance with billing and funding requirements, non-county(MCPS) therapy services must be scheduled. For children who do not participate in rest time, and when the level of need and classroom environment allow, therapy sessions may be considered during the designated rest period on a case-by-case basis.

This policy applies to individual therapy services provided by outside agencies that focus on targeted skill development, such as speech, occupational, or physical therapy services. Services designed to support participation and inclusion within the classroom setting, such as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) support or school-based push-in services, are not subject to this scheduling requirement, as their purpose is to facilitate engagement within the group environment and support access to the educational setting.

The center will work collaboratively with families and providers to determine whether services can be appropriately delivered within the daycare environment while maintaining classroom expectations, minimizing disruption to other children, and ensuring adherence to applicable billing regulations and program standards.

Families will be required to sign a consent to exchange information form so that CHA staff and therapy providers may discuss your child's progress and strategically plan for classroom growth/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. That said, multiple instances requiring redirection with regard to the topic of firearms will result in your child being sent home. Threats of harm or destruction are taken very seriously and may result in expulsion from the program.

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 parent 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 servings of protein, grains, vegetables, fruit and milk. **(No candy, soda, coffee/caffeinated drinks or sugary foods/drinks) Must be labeled with the child's name and the date.**

Please do not bring cups and food items to the classroom. All food items must be packed in an insulated lunch bag. The bag should be labeled with the child's name and left on the kitchen counter.

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.**

BIRTHDAY INVITATIONS

To promote kindness, inclusion, and positive relationships among all children, birthday invitations may only be distributed at the center if every child in the class is invited to the celebration. If invitations are for a limited group of children, we ask that families make arrangements to distribute them outside of the daycare setting. This policy helps prevent feelings of exclusion and supports a welcoming environment for all children.

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 authorized 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 and the Mixed Delivery Grant attendance requirements 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 requests for early drop-off or late pick-up must be made a minimum of 48 hours in advance to help Caring Hearts Academy ensure appropriate staffing.** These requests may not be approved based on staffing constraints.

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.**

Children participating in the Mixed Delivery Grant have acknowledged that they are expected to communicate regarding any absences. **A failure to do so may result in a loss of funding.**

MID-DAY PICK UP POLICY

At Caring Hearts Academy, we strive to maintain a peaceful and consistent environment for all children during their rest periods while also ensuring proper staff coverage. To support this, mid-day pick-ups are not permitted during the designated nap times in each classroom.

Our policy is based on two key considerations:

1. Minimizing Disruptions:

Nap time is a critical part of each child's day, providing necessary rest for healthy development. Entering classrooms during this time can disturb other children who are resting and disrupt the calm environment we work hard to maintain.

2. Staff Lunch Coverage:

During nap periods, staff schedules are arranged to ensure adequate lunch breaks. We do not have additional staff available to assist parents in retrieving children without interrupting these breaks.

Because nap times vary slightly between classrooms, please consult your child's teacher for their specific schedule. Generally, nap periods occur between approximately 11:15 a.m. and 2:15 p.m. All mid-day pick-ups must be arranged before or after these hours.

CENTER CLOSING & LATE PICK-UP POLICY

Caring Hearts Academy closes promptly at 6:00 p.m., unless otherwise noted for adjusted holiday hours.

As a courtesy to our staff and to allow for a smooth transition at the end of the day, **we kindly ask that parents arrive no later than 5:50 p.m.** This ensures that staff have adequate time to gather your child's belongings and provide any necessary updates about your child's day before the center closes.

Please note that late pick-ups will incur a fee of \$5.00 per minute after 6:00 p.m. This policy is strictly enforced to respect both our staff's time and the center's operating hours.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain a positive and respectful environment for our families and staff.

Germ, Germ, 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, **your child must remain home 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 full 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 full 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; **your child must remain home for 1 school day after starting treatment and 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 or Herpangina - **your child must remain home for 5 days** from onset of symptoms and may not return until sores are no longer presenting and existing sores are scabbed over. Children should have returned to a normal diet should they have had sores in their mouths.

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 your child is 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.

MEDICATIONS MAY NOT BE SENT IN CHILDREN'S BAGS.

PARENTS MUST REMOVE MEDICATION FROM THE CENTER ON THE LAST DAY OF THE PRESCRIBED DOSAGE PERIOD.

Enrollment & Money Matters

REGISTRATION

At the time of enrollment, a non-refundable enrollment fee of \$200, 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.

WE PARTICIPATE IN THE MIXED DELIVERY GRANT

For the 2026 - 2027 school year we have been awarded 18 grant funded slots. Qualifying families may be assessed a monthly co-pay based on their financial documentation. It is the family's responsibility to pay this co-pay each month. Failure to pay your child's monthly co-pay may result in late payment fees and potentially the loss of your child's slot.

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.
- The child requires special accommodations and/or modifications beyond what is provided to their age/peer grouping that requires additional resources, such as but not limited to, items such as staffing or the purchase of adaptive supports.
- The child exhibits extreme or atypical behaviors that exceed either the center's scope or that require additional staffing to support the associated needs of the behavior.
- Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or students by a parent or child.
- Repeated challenging/aggressive behaviors.
- 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 \$3 each
2. Wipes will cost \$5 per 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

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.

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 or Assistant Director. An Administration representative 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 Administration'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 participation in the classroom; however, the intention of the open door policy is not for blanket parent observation. 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 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 the best of our ability. In certain situations, should the need of the child exceed the scope and staffing constraints of the center, then the center administration and families will discuss whether or not it is in the best interest of the child to remain in care.

Costs Associated with Additional Support: Should it be determined and agreed upon that a child can thrive in the center environment with 1:1 care, then all associated costs including but not limited to background checks and TB screens of this care will be the sole responsibility of the parent.

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, to include instances of medical neglect.

Cannabis & Alcohol Odor Policy

The safety and well-being of every child is our highest priority. To maintain a safe, healthy, and welcoming environment, parents, guardians, and visitors are expected to refrain from entering the Center with a strong odor or under the influence of cannabis, marijuana, or alcohol.

If a parent, guardian, or authorized pick-up person arrives at the Center and staff have reasonable concerns that the individual may be under the influence of cannabis, alcohol, or any other impairing substance, the individual may be asked to arrange for another authorized adult to transport the child home safely. Center staff will take all reasonable steps to ensure the child's safety while maintaining respect and professionalism.

If staff reasonably believe that a child may be at risk due to an impaired caregiver, the Center reserves the right to contact law enforcement, emergency contacts, or the appropriate child protective services agency, as required by law and in accordance with our mandated reporter responsibilities.

The Center is committed to working with families while ensuring that every child leaves our care in a safe and secure manner.

VIDEO CAMERA/VIDEO REVIEW

For the safety and security of children, families, and staff, security cameras may be utilized throughout the center. Camera footage is intended for use by administration for purposes such as monitoring safety, reviewing incidents, supporting staff training and coaching, and providing feedback regarding classroom practices and procedures.

To protect the privacy and confidentiality of all children, families, and employees, live camera feeds and recorded footage are not available for parent viewing or distribution. Access to camera systems and recordings is limited to authorized administrative personnel and, when required, licensing agencies or law enforcement officials. Video footage may also be viewed by therapist and therapy supervisors to ensure quality interactions that meet goals. Parents and/or guardians will not be permitted to view video footage under any circumstances to protect the privacy and safety of the students and staff in our facility.