

# Texoma Christian School Early Education Parent Handbook



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## Table of Contents

Philosophy and Background	2
Gift Year	3
Statement of Faith	3
Mission Statement	4
Statement of Non-Discrimination	4
Accreditation	4
School History	4
Hours of Operation	5
Application Process	5
Withdrawals from TCS	6
Age for Early Ed	6
Parent Orientation	6
Individual Visits	6
Communication Policy	6
Parent/Teacher Fellowship	7
Parental Participation	8
Immunization Requirements	8
Doctor's Statement	9
Dress Code	9
Personal Possessions	9
Parent Chaperone Guidelines	9
Birthdays	10
Lunch/Snacks	10
Holidays and Parties	10
Drop-off Procedures	11
Pick-up Procedures	11
Parking Lot Traffic	11
Matthew Principle	12
Giving a Good Report	12

## Welcome to Texoma Christian School Early Education Program

### **TCS Early Education Philosophy**

The Early Education Program at Texoma Christian School was developed to provide Early Ed students in our three, four and gift year classes with a Christ-centered experience that is stimulating, enriching, and nurturing in a secure and loving environment. TCS believes children are a blessing from the Lord (Psalms 127:5) and consider this a partnership with parents to help train them up in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6). The Early Education program is designed to assist students in developing their God-given potential spiritually, intellectually and physically as stated in our school's mission statement. The Early Education program encourages students to: become more aware of God in our world, show love for God and each other, learn to respect and respond to others, develop attitudes that support the love of learning, problem solving, and curiosity as well as academic readiness to increase verbal, listening, and perceptual skills and develop large and small motor skills.

At TCS, we have created a program that offers a variety of enriching and interactive age appropriate experiences and activities that unfold throughout the year as the child grows, develops and becomes prepared for his or her formal school years. Daily activities center on units of study that have been created to teach Early Ed students about God's world, who God is and His love for them and for each other. We recognize the unique characteristics of three and four year old's and capitalize on their desire to learn about themselves and the world around them.

Through the year, Early Ed students will grow and develop social skills, listening skills, and pre-reading skills. They will increase vocabulary skills and the awareness and understanding of the abilities God has given them. Large and small motor skills will be developed by using exciting and appealing activities that are incorporated in the daily schedule. During these activities, the teacher is also working on developing good character traits, such as kindness, honesty, patience and self-control (Galatians 5:22). Early Ed helps to provide a foundation for building necessary skills for becoming more independent, confident, responsible learners.

Our three-year old program focuses on helping the children develop an excitement for learning by providing age appropriate, hands-on activities that introduce them to recognizing letters and numbers, developing fine and gross motor skills, working to become more independent, improving social skills and most importantly understanding how much God loves them.

Our four-year old program concentrates on reinforcing and enriching the skills learned the previous year. We focus on improving necessary skills to prepare them for kindergarten such as increasing their attention span, social skills and ability to begin solving problems. It is during this time that the children begin to understand that God made them special which is taught through the scripture memorization of Psalm 139.

Our Gift Year program is designed for children who have completed a four-year-old program but are not yet developmentally ready for kindergarten. The program serves as a way of offering children a gift of time to become better prepared for a formal educational setting. Gift Year will be a time for children to grow and mature developmentally, while allowing them to continue their academic growth. Since most of these students have completed an Early Ed program, they will start the year with a focus on letters as well as letter sounds. The students will be provided opportunities to develop their writing ability through Language Arts activities and numerous fine motor activities, which will include tracing and pre-writing practice. Math activities will review numbers 1-20 and one to one correspondence. The concepts of adding and subtracting will be re-enforced. The students will discover the world that God created and how he wants them to take care of it.

### **Statement of Faith**

Texoma Christian School endorses the Statement of Faith of the *National Association of Evangelicals*. Biblically based and evangelistic in nature, the following statement establishes a foundation for TCS families from a variety of Christian denominations:

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible authoritative Word of God.

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

We believe that for the salvation of the lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

We believe in the resurrection of both saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Mission Statement**

Texoma Christian School offers the children of our community an excellent, biblically based education that promotes in our students the highest standards of academic excellence, character, vision, and service to others. The following statement expresses the mission of Texoma Christian School:

*Texoma Christian School exists to develop fully the student's God-given spiritual, intellectual, and physical potential to influence the world for Jesus Christ.*

## **Statement of Non-Discrimination Regarding Student Admissions**

In the administration of its educational policies, admissions practices, or other school administered programs, TCS does not discriminate on any basis for any reason. Children of any religion, national, cultural, or racial background are welcome to enroll in the school as long as they and their parents accept the basic position of Texoma Christian School in its efforts to provide a Christ-centered education and Christian training for all TCS students. All children are required to participate in daily Chapel/Bible times. Admission to the school constitutes a given acknowledgement by students and their parents to comply willingly with the school's regulation in all matters of personal conduct and respect for authority.

## **Accreditation**

As we strive to bring glory to God, we have worked faithfully to receive the Early Ed Accreditation through the Association of Christian Schools International. This accreditation goes beyond the state's minimum standards and addresses the Early Ed in the social/emotional, academic and spiritual areas. In 2005, we were proud to be one of only eight Early Education programs to have received this accreditation in the state of Texas. Since then, our Early Ed program was reaccredited in November 2014 until June 30, 2019. As a result of this accreditation, we are exempt from licensing by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Service. The faculty and staff at TCS continue to strive to improve their program through on-going self-monitoring through the accreditation process for compliance.

## **School History**

Texoma Christian School began in 1982 when a group of Sherman Bible Church members approached the leadership with their vision for a Christian school. After nine months of planning, hiring Early Ed teachers and selecting curriculum the school began in the fall of 1982 with two classrooms. The dream then and the goal now, is a vibrant Christian education that challenges its students and provides a superior scholastic experience. Mrs. Sue Hall served as the first director with 41 students.

In 1989, as the enrollment of TCS spanned Early Ed through fourth grade, a group of parents saw the need to expand enrollment to include a middle school. Several local churches hosted the middle school from 1989 to 1994. In 1996-97 the sixth year of its existence, the enrollment of the two schools had reached 250 students. Kathy Curry, the middle school director, and Sue Hall, lower school director, worked together with their respective boards to create one Christian school district. The school received full accreditation by the Association of Christian Schools International in 1998. During that year the decision was made to add a high school, one grade level per year.

In August 2003, TCS opened the doors of its newly constructed facility to approximately 325 students. The new facility includes a state of the art gymnasium, full commercial kitchen, 36 classrooms, well-equipped playground, soccer field and all-purpose track. Long range plans include permanent buildings for the lower campus, upper campus, and administration building. Future plans include a fine arts building and additional sports facilities that include tennis and football.

### **Hours of Operation**

The Early Ed, Extended Day and Prime Time classes will follow the school calendar. There will be no Extended Day or Prime Time on school breaks or teacher in-service/work days. If school is dismissed early for weather or early release days, Extended Day and Prime Time will also be dismissed, unless parents are otherwise notified. If school begins late on a bad weather day, Extended Day and Prime Time will also begin late. Please watch or listen to the local TV and radio stations for closing and/or delays. On regular school days, the Extended Day and Prime Time hours will be 7:30-8:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

### **Application Process**

The following are the enrollment procedures for TCS. If these procedures change, the parents will be notified by a note from the administration.

#### *New Students:*

The Early Education Application can be found on our website at [www.texomachristian.org](http://www.texomachristian.org), Admissions > Early Childhood Admissions. The application must be filled out completely and submitted appropriately. The application must be accompanied by a non-refundable application fee. Applications not fully completed or not accompanied by the application fee will not be considered. In addition to the completed application, TCS must receive immunizations records, a doctor's statement of health, birth certificate, social security card, and any previous school records.

#### *Registration of Current Students:*

Beginning in February, re-enrollment applications for the following school year are accepted from families of currently enrolled TCS students on a first-come, first-serve basis. If more applications exist than available spaces, preference will be given by date and time of application submission. Beginning in March, enrollment is open to new families.

#### *Students Entering During the Current School Year:*

Application and material fees remain the same. Tuition will be prorated.

## **Withdrawals from TCS**

TCS families must commit themselves to a full-year enrollment. As an annual charge, tuition is payable for a full school year and is carefully budgeted. Tuition helps to pay salaries and expenses. If a family finds it necessary to withdraw an Early Ed child, the entire monthly payment is due for any month that is attended. When an Early Ed student withdraws, a month's notice is requested, when possible, so that the opening may be anticipated and the vacancy filled. In cases of financial stress, an appeal may be made to the Head of School.

## **Age for Early Education**

Texoma Christian School requires all students entering Early Ed 3 be three years old by September 1. Early Ed 4 students must be four years old by September 1, and Gift Year and Kindergarten students must be five years old by September 1. Screening will be done to determine readiness for kindergarten during the spring semester of Early Ed 4. If the student is not deemed ready for kindergarten, Gift Year will be recommended and required (unless administration approves otherwise). All new kindergarten applicants must be screened as well. **TCS will not enroll any Early Ed student that has not been potty-trained.**

## **Meet and Greet**

Every parent of an Early Ed and Gift Year child is encouraged to attend the all school Meet and Greet before the school year starts. This get-acquainted meeting is planned not only to orient new families, but also to update everyone regarding changes and plans for TCS. This is a time to meet teachers and other parents. It is also an opportunity to hear from the Head of School as they cast the vision for the upcoming school year. The school does not provide childcare for that evening.

## **Individual Visits**

The Early Ed teachers will set up individual classroom visits with each new student to our Early Ed program. The teachers will contact parents in August to set up appointments.

## **Communication Policy**

Your child's teacher will send monthly newsletters electronically through the Renweb program that parents have access to or the communication folder. The teacher and parents will also utilize Renweb to send communications electronically and reminders through email. A red communication folder is sent home daily that encourages the teacher and/or parent to communicate information, questions and concerns.

A Facebook group has been created as an additional avenue for communication between home and school. The purpose is to enhance communication through real time updates and postings of classroom activities and school events while building community among the Early Ed family.

Texoma Christian School believes open communication between parents and the school is vitally important. The school's desire and intent is to keep the lines of communication open and free flowing. Nevertheless, even under the best of circumstances, breakdowns sometime occur and information may be miscommunicated. Should this happen, please seek clarification. Accordingly, TCS has established a designated line of authority for resolving questions and concerns. By following this procedure misinformation can be minimized.

1. Make every effort to give the school the benefit of the doubt.
2. Remember that students do not always have full access to all the facts or complete information related to some situations. Your child's report may be incomplete or possibly emotionally biased.
3. Recall that the school has specific reasons for its rules. The rules apply across the board to all students, and the school makes every effort to enforce them in a fair and consistent manner.
4. Do not discuss the matters with other parents or individuals without attempting to resolve the issue first and directly with the responsible person.
5. Try to support your child's teacher and the school; please call the teacher for any information that might help clarify all the facts.
6. If necessary, make an appointment with the teacher first to seek resolution of the issue.
7. Please follow the appropriate chain of resolution. If you cannot resolve the matter with the teacher (or other TCS individual) please make an appointment with the Director who will make every effort to correct the situation. If the issue still cannot be corrected at that level, the affected parties should visit with the Principal. Remember: Teacher first; Director second; Principal third.

### **Parent/Teacher Fellowship**

At TCS, the Parent/Teacher Fellowship (PTF) is vitally important for the accomplishment of the school's mission. This partnership is essential in assisting TCS parents fulfill their God-given responsibility to educate their children in the ways of the Lord.

Parents are invited to join the PTF at the All School Meet and Greet in August. PTF serves the purpose to strengthen and enhance all the programs offered by TCS. Many of the extra events would not be possible without the assistance of parent helpers. Each year's plans and activities are announced at the beginning of the school year. Parents are invited to become involved as their schedules allow.

## **Parental Participation in School Activities**

A distinctive difference between Christian and secular education is the partnership between the Christian school and the parents in the home. Parents are welcome to become involved in the various aspects of TCS life. Many of the unique activities of a Christian school are made possible by the voluntary efforts of the parents and other individuals.

Parental involvement in the school helps to ensure that the TCS educational program is a rich, total learning experience for each student. Some of the activities of parent-student interaction relate directly to the classroom education of TCS students. For example, parents may volunteer to assist teachers in the preparation of their class materials by monitoring exams, serving from time-to-time in classroom instruction, participating as a chaperone on school field trips, helping in chapel services, assembling instructional equipment, working with the students in school organizations, and carrying out of school- based social activities.

## **Immunization Requirements**

The State of Texas requires each student's personal immunization record (showing the dates and kinds of immunization received for each student) be retained on file at school. All immunizations must be validated by the doctor or health clinic. In accordance with this law, no child will be admitted without certification of the required immunizations unless they have obtained a Vaccine Exemption for Reasons of Conscience from the State. A health form is kept in each student's file. Vision and hearing screening will be available at TCS each fall for Early Ed 4's.

## **Doctor's Statement**

The State of Texas requires that all Early Ed children have in their files a statement from their doctor that they are physically able to participate in an Early Ed program. This is separate from the immunization record and should be written on an official letter head. This document needs to be turned in along with immunizations before the student may start school.

## **Discipline and Guidance Practices**

You received a copy of our discipline and guidance practices with your application form. You signed that you have received and read these practices when you submitted your application.

## **Medical Procedures**

The application form includes an "Emergency Medical Authorization." This form also contains a place for the name of each child's physician, the physician's phone number, and other emergency numbers. If a child should become ill and TCS personnel are unable to contact parents, the child will be isolated and cared for until the parents can be notified or until they arrive at pick-up time.

If the child needs medication at school, the parents must send the medication in its original container with the child's name on it. We must have a signed and dated note with specific instructions for amount and time the medication is to be dispensed. If the container is a prescription, we still need the signed and dated note. This medicine can be given directly to the teacher or taken to the TCS office.

If a child is sick, please call the office that day to let the teacher know that he or she will not be at school. The child must not be allowed to return to school until he or she is symptom free for 24 hours and is able to participate fully in the Early Ed program.

### **Dress Code**

Early Ed and Gift Year children do not wear uniforms. Dress your child in comfortable clothing suitable for indoor, outdoor, and messy activities. The child should be able to manage his or her own clothing without assistance. Please have your child wear tennis shoes with backs. Make sure to send coats and jackets whenever necessary because the children go outside every day possible for at least a few minutes.

### **Personal Possessions**

Teachers will announce *Show and Tell* times but other than that toys are not allowed at school. They become a distraction and are many times difficult to determine ownership within the classroom. Children who stay for Extended Day will be allowed to bring a small pillow and blanket to leave at school. Each child will receive a jumbo plastic bag to keep the items in, and if a small stuffed animal will fit, the child may bring one for rest time only. (We recommend small baby pillow and blanket sets.) They will be sent home frequently to be washed. Mark all gloves, hats, and coats with your child's name.

### **Parent Chaperone Guidelines**

Texoma Christian School deeply appreciates the participation of its parents in all activities that occur throughout the school year. The following guidelines are designed to establish consistency across the grade levels regarding parental involvement and the school's expectation of their responsibility.

Officially and legally, teachers are in charge of extracurricular activities. They will establish or approve itineraries and agendas for all school activities. The school must have a photocopy of a valid driver's license, a signed affidavit and a completed background check form in the office before any parent may volunteer on campus.

Extra-curricular activities are considered as extension activities of the school and classroom. Therefore, the rules, regulations, and guidelines that apply to the school and the classroom also apply for the extracurricular activity. Under the teacher's authority, volunteers must demonstrate and require student compliance and proper respect. The volunteers must be willing to aide the teacher in watching and controlling the children and limit visiting with other parents and teachers. Due to liability issues, younger siblings cannot accompany parents while volunteering.

## **Birthdays**

Birthdays are special for children. Working together with parents, we like to have a special snack in honor of the child's birthday. Please do not be too elaborate. We ask that you not send cakes because they are so messy. A child whose birthday is in the summer months may celebrate a special "pretend" birthday party during the school year. Please do not send birthday party invitations to school unless every child in the class is included in the invitations.

## **Lunch/Snacks**

All Early Ed classes have a snack time. The children will rotate taking the "snack bag" home each week and the parent will send snacks for the entire class for the next week. Teachers will send notes at the beginning of the year to let you know amounts and types of snacks desired. Paper goods may be requested occasionally as well. Extended Day will provide mid-afternoon snacks.

The parents of extended day students may send a sack lunch which includes a drink or students can order hot lunch through the TCS cafeteria. Hot lunch information will be communicated at the beginning of the school year, including cost. TCS is not responsible for the child's lunch time nutritional needs. Please do not deliver fast foods at lunchtime.

## **Holidays and Parties**

Classroom parties during the year include Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter. The Christmas party will emphasize the birth of Christ. The Easter Party is in conjunction with Grandparent's Day. TCS does not recognize Halloween in the classrooms or on campus. Party favors for classroom parties are provided by parent volunteers.

## **TCS Policy for Distribution of Information**

TCS does not distribute information about community or personal events through the office or individual classrooms. The only exception is a birthday invitation if everyone in the class is invited. A poster or flyer regarding the event (no larger than 11" x 14") may be submitted to the administration for approval. Upon approval the poster may be displayed on a bulletin board or other designated places on campus for the week preceding the event.

## **Drop-off Procedures**

*Morning Extended Day* students may be dropped off as early as 7:30 a.m. at the Extended Day building. Your child must be walked in and brought into the Extended Day building and signed in. We ask that you **DO NOT** park in the fire lane. Visitor parking places are available across from the building and are reserved for drop off and pick up only. If you arrive after 8:00 a.m., whether your child is in extended day or not, please pull in the Pre-K line and drop off your Early Ed child with the teaching assistant (TA). She will sign him or her in.

*Early Ed 3's and 4's and Gift Year* who are not enrolled in the extended day may be dropped off as early as 8:00 a.m. at the Extended Day building. Please do not drop off your child unless you can see the teaching assistant. Children will remain with the TA at the front of the building until the teacher picks them up at 8:20 a.m. If you arrive after 8:30 a.m., you will need to park and walk your child to the classroom.

## **Pick-up Procedures**

Morning Early Ed will be picked up in front of the Extended Day building at 11:30 a.m. Extended Day students picked up at 3:15 p.m. will be picked up with their class and signed out by the teacher or TA. Extended Day students picked up at 5:30 p.m. will require the parent to come inside and sign them out.

Early Ed students who are not picked up by 11:45 a.m. will be taken to their classroom for supervision. Parents must come into the building to ask for their child and at that time pay a late fee of \$10. Extended Day students are to be picked up no later than 5:30 p.m. A \$5 charge will be added at 5:35 p.m. and another \$5 charge will be added for every 10 minutes thereafter until the student is picked up.

## **Parking Lot Traffic**

All Early Ed classes will be picked up in front of the Extended Day building. Drive to the end of the driveway and pull up to receive your child.

It is absolutely essential that parents refrain from visiting with or conferring with teachers at dismissal time. Parents who wish to speak with a teacher should set up an appointment to meet at another time. TCS teachers are on duty at that time, and they should not be distracted from watching out for the safety of all TCS students. Parents should refrain from visiting with each other in the parking lot at arrival or dismissal time. Not only does this increase congestion in the parking lot, it creates inadequate supervision of our students. TCS appreciates parents who understand and cooperate with this so the risk of accidents is minimized.

If your child is to ride home with someone other than his or her usual ride, please notify the teacher in advance with a written note. For the safety of all students, we will not release a child to an unknown or unauthorized person. Please make sure that the person's car is marked with a TCS decal. When a teacher or TA is unfamiliar with the person picking up a student, TCS reserves the right to ask for photo identification before releasing the child. A child will not be released to a person without parental permission.

## Two Critical Texoma Christian School Policies to Follow

### Matthew Principle

Students, parents, or teachers who are offended by the words or actions of another, should go first to the offending individual and share this with him or her. Matthew 18:15 *“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.”* If there is no reconciliation after consulting together and praying for mutual understanding, they should agree to go together to counsel with the Early Ed Director for resolution. If there is still no resolution of the matter, then go to the Principal for final disposition of the matter.

### Giving a Good Report

In obedience to the Word of God, we hereby commit ourselves to the goal of giving a good report. When this is not possible, **we commit ourselves to remain silent or to go privately to the person**, confirm our goal, and explain the offense that would hinder us from giving a good report. We hereby intend to approach an offender in a spirit of genuine love having first examined and corrected our own attitudes and actions. Only if we are unable to restore an offender will we share the problem with others according to the principles of Scripture. When we violate this goal, we purpose to ask forgiveness knowing that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

You will be asked to sign on the enrollment packet that you have read and will adhere to the Matthew principle. Our signatures, as parents, recognize our accountability to God for each of our words, our awareness of the lasting damage of an untamed tongue, and our commitment to the struggles and rewards of learning to give a good report.