Hilltop Herald

September 2026

WELCOME TO HILLTOP!

September is at our doorstep. I look forward to the pitter patter of footsteps all of the little voices filling Hilltop hallways again! The teaching staff and I are excited to be collaborating with you and your child!

We are thrilled to welcome back our teachers: Ms. Bri, Ms. Nicole, Mrs. Fitzgerald, Mrs. Sierdy, Mrs. Beebe, Mrs. Werner, Mrs. Brzoska, Mrs. McPhee, and Ms. “C” (Casaundra) We also welcome a volunteer Ms. Andrea (Andi) Craig.

The teachers will return on August 24th and will be busy getting the rooms set up and curriculum planned.

We had all the rooms cleaned top to bottom including carpets, windows, and the floors were waxed during the summer. It is looking rather good in here.

REMINDER FOR YOUR CALENDARS AT HOME: Hilltop will be CLOSED Monday, Sep 7 for Labor Day!

FORMS ON FILE

I am still waiting for quite a few annual physical forms for your children. I sent reminders in late July and will connect with you again during our visiting days. This form MUST be on file for the first full day of classes as required by the Office of Early Childhood (OEC)

If you have not gotten the forms from your doctor, please reach out to make sure they are on the way.

Thanks for your attention to this matter.

PARENT ORIENTATION

Remember to set aside an hour of time on Wednesday evening, August 27, beginning at 6:30 p.m. This will be a time **for parents only.** After a presentation by Mrs. Mazzei regarding Hilltop’s policies and other information, parents will have the opportunity to visit their child’s classroom and visit with the teachers. They will share classroom activities and expectations. We look forward to welcoming you!

****DAYS AND DATES OF THE FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL****

Visiting Day is the first day that your child is scheduled to attend class at St. Paul's Hilltop Christian Early Learning Center. Your child will attend this day accompanied by Mom, Dad, or another designated adult. Visiting Day is intended to help transition your child into the program, give the children an opportunity to meet others in their class, and give the grownups an opportunity to meet each other. Visitation for each class will take place in their intended classroom. The class routine will be different from a usual day due to the shortened time. Your child's usual schedule will begin the next scheduled day.

The schedule is as follows:

VISITING DAYS:

Thursday, August 27, 2026,	9:30 am to 11:00 am	ALL CLASSROOMS OPEN
Friday, August 28, 2026,	9:30 am to 11:00 am	ALL CLASSROOMS OPEN

FIRST FULL DAYS OF SCHOOL:

Monday, August 31, 2026,	9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.	Early Start CT (ESCT)
Monday, August 31, 2026,	9:15 a.m.-11:45 a.m.	**M-F Half Day**
Monday, August 31, 2026,	9:15 a.m.-2:45 p.m.	M-F Full Day
Monday, August 31, 2026,	9:30 a.m.-12:00 noon	**MWF 3's Half Day**
Monday, August 31, 2026,	9:30 a.m.-2:45 p.m.	MWF 3's Full Day
Tuesday, September 1, 2026,	9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.	Two-year-olds

DROP OFF AND PICK UP PROCEDURES

Continuing to follow the Guidance document from the OEC, we will continue with the procedures we have been using since 2020.

1. We will stagger drop off and pick up times.
2. All children and staff will sign in through the "brightwheel" app and answer the health screening questions daily before entering the building. **PLEASE MAKE THIS A PRIORITY!!! DURING OUR ROUTINE INSPECTIONS FROM OEC WE MUST PROVE THAT WE HAVE SIGNATURES OF PERSONS WHO DROP OFF AND PICK UP OUR STUDENTS!**

When dropping off your child: Enter through the upper parking lot located on Torringford West St. Drive to the lower parking lot and form a line in front of the sidewalk at the entrance. Mrs. Mazzei and your child's teachers will greet you and present you with the "QR" code, (the "QR" code can also be found attached to the No parking signs near the sidewalk) to sign-in and answer the health screening questions, after which, you may remove your child from the car. The classroom teachers will greet the children from there and escort them to their classroom or scheduled location. Cars will then leave the parking lot by the lower level, exiting on to Charles St.

When picking up, families are asked to follow the same procedure, entering by the upper parking lot, waiting in line by the sidewalk, where the classroom teachers will dismiss the children from there. They will escort your child to your car, and the **family member will be responsible for signing out using the "brightwheel" app**

brightwheel APP

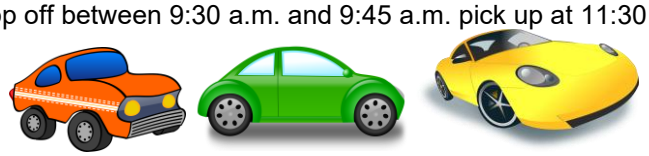
Hilltop utilizes the Brightwheel App to build 2-way communications with families. Please download the app to your phone. Mrs. Mazzei has been building classes. If you have not already joined, Look for your notification!

brightwheel

STAGGERED DROP OFF AND PICK UP TIMES

Having a staggered drop off and pick up times has worked well so we have decided to keep it going. Please arrive during your child's assigned time for drop off and pick up. If you miss your assigned time, you will be asked to return to the line for a later time.

- Early Start CT (formerly School Readiness) Drop off between 9 a.m. and 9:15 a.m. pick up at 3:00 p.m.
- M-F Full day, Drop off between 9:15 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. pick up at 2:45 p.m.
- M-F Half Day, Drop off between 9:15 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. pick up at 11:45 a.m.
- MWF Full day, 3's Drop off between 9:30 a.m. and 9:45 a.m. pick up at 2:45 p.m.
- MWF Half Day, 3's Drop off between 9:30 a.m. and 9:45 a.m. pick up at 12:00 noon.
- T/Th 2-year-olds- Drop off between 9:30 a.m. and 9:45 a.m. pick up at 11:30 a.m.



TUITION & SR FAMILY FEES

Tuition payments are now processed through the "brightwheel app." You should have received your first request for payment on August 1, 2025, due by August 15, 2025. If you did not receive this request via the app please let Barbara Mazzei, know so that she can inform the Hilltop Advisory Committee and resolve the issue. We will still accept payments in cash or check made payable to St. Paul's Thank you!

PEANUT/NUT SAFE SCHOOL

Hilltop is a peanut, nut safe school. NO PEANUTS, NUTS, PEANUT OIL OR NUT OIL PRODUCTS. We do have children enrolled with peanut or nut allergies. If you bring a treat or snack to school, be sure that you have checked the ingredients for the safety of our children. All food from home must be store bought, pre-packaged.

ALLERGY, DIETARY AND OTHER CONCERNS

If your child has an allergy, medical issue, or dietary issue, or you are concerned about an area of your child's development please call the school office before the first day of school. A care plan needs to be developed if your child has any of the above listed concerns.

SCHOOL PARKING

If it is necessary for you to park in the parking lot, please park in the parking area closest to the school entrance area. **DO NOT PARK** along the curbs. This is a **FIRE SAFETY ZONE** and needs to be kept clear in case of emergencies.

Please **DO NOT** leave children unattended in your vehicle while you drop-off or pick-up your child. We are mandated reporters and will report to DCF if we are aware of a child left alone in an unattended vehicle. If you anticipate a problem, please discuss it with your child's teacher so we can assist you with arrangements.

For safety, please hold your child's hand in the parking lot AT ALL TIMES.

PARENT GROUP Hilltop Helping Hands (HHH) is a parent's group which was founded and led by a parent in 2012. This group sponsors school-wide activity nights, community service activities, parent/teacher enrichment as well as helping the staff with various jobs. They also host the Annual Art Show and other events which raise money for our Tuition Assistance Fund.

We are looking for parents who are ready to take on the challenge of keeping this group going. Many of you expressed that you are interested in this group from the packets that were returned this summer. Thank you in advance for your willingness to serve.

We will need one or two parents willing to take the lead in this group. Please speak to Mrs. Mazzei to let her know if you are interested.

DONATIONS GLADLY ACCEPTED

As many of you are aware, Hilltop Christian ELC is a non-profit program. As we strive to offer the best possible experience for our students, we are reaching out to our families and community members for support.

I will share items needed each month in the newsletter.

Your generous donations will contribute to our mission of fostering a love of learning and helping our students develop essential skills. In return, we would be happy to acknowledge your contribution on our website and social media channels, as well as in our monthly newsletter.

Thank you very much for considering this request. We deeply appreciate your support and look forward to the possibility of partnering with you to benefit our community's youngest learners.

HILLTOP STAFF

We are pleased to present our Hilltop staff for the 2026/2027 school year!

Mrs. Stacey Fitzgerald and Mrs. Tracy Sierdy will work together as co-teachers in the MWF. 3-year-old class. Mrs. Casaundra Abeling will be the assistant teacher.

Ms. Nicole Waldron and Mrs. Brianna Ausen will co-teach the M-F class. Mrs. Sierdy and Mrs. Abeling will join this class on MWF afternoons and on Tuesdays and Thursdays as well.

All the way down the hall, Mrs. Melanie Beebe and Mrs. Amy Werner will co-teach our Early Start CT (ESCT) class. Mrs. Abeling will provide lunch break coverage on MWF and Mrs. Sierdy will do the same on Tuesday and Thursdays. We have a volunteer Ms. Andrea Craig also working part time in this classroom.

Mrs. Christina Brzoska and Mrs. Cynthia McPhee will co-teach our youngest students the two-year-olds.

Mrs. Barbara Mazzei is the Director /Head Teacher of the school. Besides her many administrative duties to address, she is trained to be our Music Together® Music Specialist! She will be leading music classes each week beginning in October. Though her schedule is quite busy, she always makes herself available to staff, children and families when needed. If there are ever any concerns, please feel free to reach out to her via phone, or "Brightwheel" Her office hours will be Monday through Friday 7:30-3:30.

Hilltop continues to be blessed with a loving team of resolute teachers!