



Family Handbook



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WELCOME

The administration, staff and Board of Directors at Hilltop Christian Early Learning Center welcome you and your child. Our school is owned and operated by St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church and functions under the direction of an Advisory Committee that reports to the church council and congregation. We provide a quality Early Learning experience for children residing in the area-wide community. The staff is ready to assist you and your child throughout the year.

STAFF

St. Paul's Hilltop Christian Early Learning Center has a director/ head teacher who oversees administration and curriculum. Each classroom has at least one qualified teacher along with other teachers and assistants. We continually strive to maintain a student/teacher ratio of 9:1 in all preschool classes and a 4:1 ratio in the 2-year-old class. Each classroom's staff is maintained September through June, barring any extenuating circumstances that may alter it, such as a teacher's resignation from the program. If a teacher is absent, a substitute teacher is called in. On rare occasions, when a substitute cannot be found, the ratio is never less than one (1) teacher to every nine (10) children. The staff attends a minimum of monthly staff meetings and attends workshops that are related to child development or curriculum. All staff members are certified in child CPR, first aid and Drug Administration, including Epi-Pen.

PURPOSE AND PROGRAM

The purpose of St. Paul's Hilltop Christian Early Learning Center is to provide excellence in education and to be distinctively Christian. We offer ALL children aged 2 through 6-years-old the opportunity to gain experience spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and mentally through participation in a wide variety of age appropriate and individualized activities.

ADMISSION

Our program serves children aged 2-6 years. A \$90.00 non-refundable registration fee is due upon registration; this can be paid by cash, check (made payable to St. Paul's Church) or invoiced on the brightwheel app. Tuition payments are made monthly beginning in August and ending in May of the school year. Each child entering our program must have an updated physical form, signed and dated by his/her pediatrician, including current immunization documentation. These physicals must be updated yearly.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM PLAN 19a-79-8a

Children at St. Paul's Hilltop Christian ELC will follow a flexible daily schedule that meets the individual needs of the diverse population of children and families served by our program by following developmentally appropriate practices which include children with cultural, language and developmental differences. The daily schedule will include indoor and outdoor physical activities which are planned around the children's interests and need. These activities will allow for both fine and gross motor development. The daily schedule will include opportunity for problem-solving experiences that help to formulate language development and sensory discrimination. Children will have the opportunity to express their own ideas and feelings through creative experiences in all parts of the program, including:

- ✓ Cultural learning experiences
- ✓ Child initiated and staff-initiated experiences
- ✓ Exploration and discovery
- ✓ Varied choices in materials and equipment
- ✓ Individual and small group activities
- ✓ Rest, sleep or quiet activity
- ✓ Nutritious meals and snacks
- ✓ Toileting and cleaning up
- ✓ Outdoor physical activities

Children under two years old will not have access to cell phones, laptops and computers that are capable of playing video games. Program staff will restrict access to cell phones, laptops and computers for children ages two and up, unless it is for educational or physical activities.

CURRICULUM

Our curriculum is play based with planned activities and learning times using the State of CT Early Learning Developmental Standards (ELDS) as our guide. Our activities are planned with goals in mind to give children a foundation for learning according to their individual needs as well as their family values, beliefs, and spoken language. Our Christian beliefs, our teacher-child interactions, the interests, and experiences of all build upon the foundation for early learning. Throughout our curriculum, children will gain knowledge of social skills, creative experiences such as art and music, early math and science, early literacy and writing skills. Our curriculum supports early literacy with designated reading times; during large and small group time as well as one to one. Large group reading can take place during transitions at the beginning and the end of the day. Teachers use a variety of strategies to encourage language and expand vocabulary by using rhymes, songs, poems, and games that encourage children to imitate words and sounds. Adults purposefully find time for conversations with children to expand their vocabulary. The centers throughout the classroom provide opportunities for vocabulary expansion with books placed to encourage reading. To promote concepts of print teachers, discuss the book to promote the understanding of print and its relation to pictures. Teachers write child dictation on artwork and place it around the classroom. Teachers encourage children to sign their creations.

Hilltop also utilizes Creative Curriculum® resources to support our lesson planning. Creative Curriculum® aligns with the state ELDS and will support the teachers as they strive to dig deeper into the topics of study. Teachers utilize the State of Connecticut's assessment tools which partner with the ELDS to guide their assessments of children, individualize plans for children based on their development and to follow their growth over time.

Hilltop is proud to include Music Together® curriculum in the weekly plans. Mrs. Mazzei is a trained and registered Music Together® teacher. This program is a researched based music program intended for young children. Each class will be scheduled for music class one day each week. To learn more about the benefits of Music Together®, visit <https://www.musictogether.com/prospective-parents>.

There will be an online option for learning established should a child need to be absent for an extended period of time due to illness. This option will also be utilized should a classroom or the whole program need to be shut down for any length of time. The platforms we will use will include Zoom, and Brightwheel app.

Families receive with their enrollment paperwork a “family intake” form for them to share information about each family's values, beliefs, experiences, cultures, and languages. This gives the teacher information to enhance their planning for each child in unique ways. The Early Start CT classroom has taken this a step further by asking families to prepare pictures or posters about their family's traditions. Each student is given the opportunity to bring that in, and parents are encouraged to come into the classroom to share with their child the family traditions.

FAMILY LANGUAGE PREFERENCES & LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Based on information gathered on the registration form, the intake form, and conversations with families the Director and teachers determine if any children are dual language learners. Teachers use this information in lesson plans, books, music, and words in the everyday environment in the classroom. Additionally, teachers communicate with families to learn key words or phrases that would be helpful in communicating with them. Some words or phrases would be “bathroom,” “hungry,” “yes,” “no,” and “help.”

Language acquisition is considered depending on each child's level of understanding an ability, according to the home language and English. Teachers of children in early development speak in shorter sentences and/or use two languages. For example: they may use the word rojo and red at the same time when referring to the color. The Music Together curriculum provides wonderful opportunities for children to build language when singing songs on "vocables" such as "do, do, do..." as well as offering opportunities to gain experience language through music. This curriculum always offers music from other cultures and languages during the semester

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Hilltop provides excellence in early childhood education, by providing predictable routines within the course of the day yet keeping the schedule flexible to allow children freedom to explore and solve problems. Hilltop offers both large group and small group activities, arranging classrooms and schedules with both active and quiet options, and provides a variety of choices for children. Our curriculum is play based with planned activities and learning opportunities using the State of CT Early Learning Developmental Standards (ELDS) and Creative Curriculum® as our guide. Our activities are planned with goals in mind to give children a foundation for learning according to their individual needs as well as their family values, beliefs, and spoken language. Our Christian beliefs, our teacher-child interactions, the interests, and experiences, build upon the groundwork for early learning. Throughout our curriculum, children will gain knowledge of social skills, creative experiences such as art and music, early math and science, early literacy and writing skills. Daily schedules include both indoor and outdoor play. When weather prohibits children from playing outside, we utilize the "Porrit Playroom," a large muscle indoor space. Classroom time provides a balance of teacher-led activities as well as child-initiated opportunities. Children build language and vocabulary through conversation, literacy activities, music, and open-ended questions. Teaching staff encourage children to gain self-help skills by providing support to children while dressing, toileting and serving themselves at snack time.

FAMILY LITERACY

Hilltop has a lending library in an effort to promote family literacy and parent-child interaction. There are book giveaways throughout the school year. We offer our families the opportunity to purchase books from "Scholastic" online. We are fortunate to have a community college in the next town over which we have a great professional relationship with. We are happy to communicate with the college for information per family request. EdAdvance, a local agency that provides adult education is also within reach should the need arise for parents. We are ready and willing to provide this information to parents and families. We promote programs offered by the local libraries for children and adults.

INCORPORATION OF PRE-LITERACY ACTIVITIES/TEACHER TRAINING

As a NAEYC accredited and School Readiness early childhood program, Hilltop is committed to providing the most educational environment and activities as possible, incorporating elements of the "whole child" perspective, which of course includes the area of pre-literacy development.

Here at Hilltop children are exposed to literacy on a daily basis. All cubbies, mailboxes, and cots are labeled clearly with each child's name. Similarly, toy bins, shelving, and furniture are labeled for children to become familiar with letters and words. As children move about the classroom, they are exposed to a rapidly escalating number of literacy activities.

Teachers implement strategies to instruct in areas of literacy. These things can be as simple as work repetition, flashcards, singing and finger plays. Likewise, books and reading play an integral role, as every classroom is stocked with children's books, which range in content from photo/picture books and increase in complexity as the children grow.

Additionally, various displays within the classroom offer exposure to pre-literacy. Classroom “centers” are labeled with both pictures and words; all classroom schedules and routines are posted at the children’s eye level with pictures and words to ensure children’s natural processing of information.

EARLY LITERACY IN THE CLASSROOM

The classroom teachers have had specific training in Early Literacy. Some teaching skills that have been added to the learning environment are: concepts of print, phonological awareness, journal writing, teaching individually as well as small groups, using related books in all centers, using “big books,” fiction and non-fiction, and using sign language.

ASSESSMENTS

Why do we assess young children? It’s important to understand children’s current skills and abilities so that we can plan how to support their next steps in learning and development. There is valuable information about common learning progressions (see the CT ELDS) to use as a guide, but children’s development does vary based on many factors. Because individual children’s development does not follow a straight and even pathway, it’s important to gather factual information about where they are now so we can support them in taking next steps that are a “just-right” challenge for them. To do this we observe children, talk with families about what they see at home and in the community, and document this information. We then can use this information to guide us as we plan learning experiences. As we track children’s progress over time in partnership with families, we can adjust our strategies and make sure they continue to learn and grow!

As school starts in September, parents will be asked to download the “Sparkler” app which holds the Ages and Stages Questionnaires and complete the assessment online. This will serve as an initial screening tool and will guide teachers in planning curriculum. In November, the teachers will invite the parents to meet for a Parent-Teacher Conversation where the results of the questionnaires will be discussed, and teachers and families will discuss goals for the child. Families will receive a summary of the Ages and Stages results as well as a summary of the conversation.

The State of Connecticut Early Learning and Developmental Standards and Assessment tools will be accessed throughout the year as teaching staff observe children throughout the natural part of each day. Teachers will record their observations in individual children’s records throughout the year and will follow their growth over time. In April, Parent Teacher Conversations will be scheduled. At that time, teachers will review the Child Profile with parents. Families receive a copy of the profile as well as a summary of the child’s strengths, areas of growth, the child’s interests, and passions as well as goals for the child at home and at school.

If families have any questions or concerns about Hilltop’s screening and assessment tools and how they best support their child, they are invited to inquire with their child’s teacher or with the Director.

Teacher’s observations are kept confidential. Children’s records are kept in a locked file cabinet in the classroom and are not shared with anyone outside of Hilltop staff without parent’s permission, with the exception of officials who are required to check Hilltop’s records including state and local health departments and NAEYC assessors. Teachers receive training for the Ages and Stages as part of their orientation upon hire. Training on the State of Connecticut tools for planning, observations and assessment are provided upon hire and periodically thereafter.

EARLY START CT GRANT

After an extensive process in the spring of 2014, the Torrington School Readiness Council chose Hilltop as one of the community programs where Torrington families that are typically unable to afford to attend a high-quality preschool can attend. Early Start CT is a class which is funded by public funds. For this reason, the Early Start CT classroom does not include curriculum which is distinctly Christian. However, Early Start CT families receive the same quality of programming as the other classrooms. The Early Start CT classroom is open to Torrington residents. Tuition is based on family size and income.

NAEYC ACCREDITATION

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) was established in 1926 and is the most widely recognized organization supporting early childhood education. They provide a wide variety of support and research-based standards which guide early childhood professionals and families. One such support system they provide early education programs is the opportunity to attain high quality through accreditation.

“Since 1985, NAEYC has offered a national, voluntary accreditation system that helps early childhood programs meet high professional standards and helps families identify high-quality programs. Today, NAEYC Accreditation represents the mark of quality in early childhood education. Over 7,000 childcare programs, preschools, early learning centers, and other center- or school-based early childhood education programs are currently NAEYC-Accredited.” (www.rightchoiceforkids.org) Programs accredited by NAEYC must meet 10 standards for high-quality early childhood education including—Relationships, Curriculum, Teaching, Assessment of Child Progress, Health, Teachers, Families, Community Relationships, Physical Environment and Leadership and Management.

In 2013 we completed the self-study process for the first time. We were thrilled when we received our NAEYC Accreditation certificate in February of 2014! Learn more about accreditation at <http://www.rightchoiceforkids.org/> or <http://www.naeyc.org/accreditation>.

SCHOOL DAY OPERATING POLICY

Hilltop is open Monday through Friday varying times for each classroom. Typical start times are 9:00a, 9:15a and 9:30a. Typical end time ranges between 11:30a to 3p. We follow the Torrington Public School schedule for holidays and vacations. We do have our own school calendar as well. Tuition is due monthly regardless of absence, including sick days.

Morning arrival times will be staggered by class. Parents and caregivers will enter the upper parking lot, drive to the sidewalk in front of the Hilltop wing and wait in their car with their child. The parent/caregiver will get the child out of the car, and the parent will check in using the brightwheel app. At this time parents/guardians have the opportunity to speak with the child’s teacher about any extenuating circumstances that may affect the child’s day. The child will then be transferred to their classroom teacher who will escort them into the classroom. Staff also use the brightwheel app to sign in.

We believe that hand washing is key to protecting our staff and students from illness. Upon arrival at school, the children will apply hand sanitizer or wash hands before starting the day. Staff are also required to wash their hands at the start of each day.

At dismissal, parents/caregivers will follow the same procedure by creating a line in front of the building. Teachers will escort the children to their cars. Children will be dismissed individually to each parent or person designated on the emergency card. **These procedures are subject to change. This allows the teacher to interact with the parents, if necessary, about events at school. Families whose children are transported by others, including grandparents, can access the Brightwheel app, email, or telephone for regular two-way communication with teachers. Teachers will also utilize these tools to communicate with families on a regular basis.

PARKING

Please exercise extreme caution when operating a motor vehicle in the areas around the school. For safety reasons please do not park in the driveway connecting the two parking areas. Emergency vehicles would use this area if there were an emergency. Additionally, there is NO PARKING or IDLING in the fire lane outside the school entrance. This area is reserved for school drop-off and pick up as well as emergency vehicles. Should you need to park for any reason, please avoid parking in the upper parking area, if possible, because church personnel and members frequently use it. Families with infants and toddlers would appreciate being able to park in spots closest to the building. For your children's safety, please do not leave them in the car unattended. Please maintain safety while walking between your vehicle and the school building during drop off and pick up time by holding your child(ren)’s hand(s) while walking in the parking lot. All children being transported should be properly restrained

to and from school. More information can be found on the Safe Kids CT website by following this link.
http://www.ctsafekids.org/files/4214/3206/0707/CT_Laws.pdf

IDENTIFICATION OF GUARDIANS

We ask that the same person drops off and picks up your child daily as much as possible. This will help us maintain cohorts.

If someone other than a parent is going to pick up your child from school, we must have written permission from you. Persons who have permission to pick up your child are listed on the emergency pick up form. School personnel have the right to ask a person unknown to the staff to produce proper identification (Driver's License or Photo Identification) before we release a child into that person's custody. Should any person picking up a child seem impaired, school personnel will not dismiss the child to the person. Other contacts will be called to pick up the child. Because Hilltop staff members are mandated reporters, proper authorities may be contacted should a child's safety be in jeopardy.

CALLS AND ABSENCES

You can reach the teachers by calling 860-482-3727 to leave a message or use the brightwheel app to message us if your child will be out. The director and teachers are always interested in speaking with you anytime about an emergency or change in pick-up information. All other calls should be made to teachers before or after school.

Another wonderful way to reach out to staff is through the brightwheel on your phone. This app provides a wonderful opportunity for 2-way communications between the teachers and families. Be sure to download the app and join your child's class. If other members of the family provide care (such as a grandparent), they can join the class too!

State regulations require us to keep track of children's absences. Please call us and inform us of the reason your child will be absent from school. If your child is absent and there has not been a call, we will call or message the family to determine the reason for the absence. This also allows us the ability to track any illnesses should there is something "going around."

CHANGE OF ADDRESS AND TELEPHONE NUMBER

Please inform your child's teacher immediately if your mailing address, physical address, email address or telephone number changes. An emergency telephone number is kept on file for each child. If this number changes, we should be informed immediately.

ATTENDANCE

We are required by the state to keep track of the children's attendance on attendance sheets. To ensure all children are accounted for, regulations require the person responsible for picking up and dropping off to sign the child in and out. The brightwheel app keeps track of attendance.

CLOTHING AND SPECIAL ITEMS

Please send your child to school in clothes that they can play in and that are easy for them to manage when they need to use the bathroom. We paint with washable paint and provide smocks. Weather permitting, we use the play yard. A change of clothes should be left at school at all times so that teachers can access should your child need to change their clothes in case of a spill or bathroom accident.

Shoes should support the feet and allow your child to run and jump safely. **Sandals, flip-flops, and Crocs are not permitted on the playground.** Children will have a place in the classroom to put their belongings.

OUTDOOR PLAY

We take outdoor play seriously at Hilltop. This provides an opportunity for fresh air and builds both fine and gross motor strength. It also lends to personal and social interactions with peers and adults. Please send in clothing appropriate for the weather for outdoor play. This includes a lightweight jacket in cool weather as well as snow boots, snow pants, hat & mittens in the winter. If you have an extra set of snow pants and/or boots to leave at the school that will help with the items brought in each day. ***Please label hats, mittens, and scarves before your child comes to school. If girls come to school in a dress, be sure they wear warm leggings and warm shoes!*** In the summer, we recommend dressing your child in sun protective clothing including sun hats and sunglasses. ***Please apply sunscreen before school. Teachers in the full day classes will re-apply the sunscreen for afternoon play.*** We are required by state licensing to provide outdoor play each day. We use the “Child Care Weather Watch” as our indicator for appropriate temperature to be outdoors.

PARENT/TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

The teachers look forward to having an active and open line of communication with each child and family. A teacher greets and dismisses the children every day. This is a time when information can be quickly exchanged. If a longer conversation is necessary, please let the teacher know, so an appointment can be made for a conversation.

If the teacher or parent has a concern about development, speech, or behavior, the parent may begin a process for the school to observe and if indicated, ask for services to assist the child.

A parent may request a conference with the teacher and/or director at any time.

It is helpful to share information with the teacher that may be significant so that we can support the child through a challenging time (i.e.: death of a significant person in the child's life, loss of a pet, birth of a child, move).

We hope to find ways that parents can be involved in the program in a healthy way. Having your assistance enhances our program. Here are a few examples of ways that you may become involved: field trip volunteers, provide ideas for curriculum, read to the children, play with the children, show us about your job, share craft ideas, sing, or play and instrument for the children, provide snacks for celebrations, or bring in things for craft or collages.

In the fall, we will conduct a “getting to know you” conference. We will discuss the Ages and Stages questionnaire, and the Family input found on the questionnaire from school. In the Spring, an opportunity for a formal conference will be provided for you about your child. Progress reports on your child will be distributed at the end of the year.

There is a Director's Bulletin Board to the left as you enter the building. Teachers will keep you informed about curriculum and classroom activities via the “brightwheel” app. Teachers will provide families with monthly class newsletters. You will also receive ***the “Hilltop Herald”***, a newsletter written by the director, with information about future events and important dates. The Hilltop website and Facebook pages provide information for parents. Please be sure to subscribe to our website. We also utilize the “brightwheel” app for two-way communication, announcements, and reminders. Please visit the app store on your phone to download brightwheel today.

HILLTOP HELPING HANDS

Hilltop Helping Hands is a parent-led group of volunteers who are there to help in a variety of ways. The group includes Co-Chairs who will determine agendas and run the meetings. The Hilltop Helping Hands meets monthly and coordinate activities such as parent education events, family nights, and fundraisers. The group also helps to organize parent helpers who volunteer to help the staff with odd jobs, fundraisers, and Scholastic Book Clubs. Hilltop Helping Hands’ big event of the year is the Annual Art Show/Auction which raises funds for the tuition assistance fund.

TUITION

Tuition payments are due on the 15th of every month, starting in August. Invoices are sent via the brightwheel app on the 1 of the previous month. These payments can be made in a number of ways; by mail; to St. Paul's, 837 Charles St, Torrington, CT 06790, or online using the “brightwheel” app, also by placing your payment in the locked box outside of St. Paul’s office. Please make the checks payable to **St. Paul's** and put your child’s name in the memo area. If you pay with cash, please put it in a sealed envelope with your child's name and class

time on it. Credit card payments in person can be accepted in the church office Monday-Friday 9:00a-12:00p. St. Paul's Hilltop Advisory Committee sets the tuition cost annually. Information about tuition and the schedule of payment was in the packet you received in June or at registration. Should Hilltop close due to Covid-19, Hilltop will continue with Distance Learning and request a 50% payment of tuition. If this causes a financial difficulty, please speak with the Director to come up with an agreeable solution.

In order to provide for an excellent program at Hilltop, refunds are NOT made for absences or departures. See Policy on Delinquent Tuition Payments for Additional Information.

EARLY START CT FEE POLICY

Early Start CT (ESCT) families will meet with Mrs. Mazzei to determine their family fee. Families are required to bring in their most recent tax return to determine if their child qualifies for the class and what their fee will be. Other verification of income might include pay stubs, social security checks, unemployment vouchers, welfare card, letter from your employer, or income maintenance. Fees are on a sliding scale based on the CT Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Fee Schedule. The weekly fee will be multiplied by the number of weeks in the school year and then divided by 10 to determine a monthly fee. Family fees will be collected monthly at the beginning of the month, September-June. Fees can be paid through the “brightwheel” app, by cash or check left in the locked box outside the church office or delivering it to the church office.

The church bookkeeper maintains records of family fees and provides a monthly report to the Director. If a family falls behind, the Director will meet with the family to plan a workable solution. Solutions may include, but are not limited to fee reduction, waiver, an alternative payment schedule or redetermination of the family fee. We encourage families to apply for Care4Kids, Hilltop now accepts C4Kids payments.

Families must also provide proof of address, family size and the child’s birth certificate. All records are held in the Director’s office in a locked file to maintain confidentiality. The School Readiness Monitor will have access to these files for audit purposes only.

TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN

Leaving the safety and confines of a pre-school program can be a scary milestone for children. Most of these children have been with us for at least two years. It is only natural to feel a bit intimidated when kindergarten rolls around. Hilltop teachers and staff work extremely hard to make sure this transition goes as smoothly as possible for our preschool students and their families.

As a School Readiness program, our teachers work diligently to prepare our preschoolers for this next and important phase in their lives. The State of CT issues a base list of tasks that children should be able to accomplish by the time they enter the public school system. This list is updated from time to time and immediately relayed to our teachers to ensure that they are guiding the children in a manner that will prepare them for what’s to come.

Our Hilltop Director/Head Teacher serves on the Torrington School Readiness Council committee along with kindergarten teachers, special education teachers, Head Start representatives, Family Resource Center Staff, Torrington Childcare staff, and preschool special education staff. The Torrington School Readiness Council oversees the Kindergarten Transition. This provides a direct link with our local elementary schools to help families prepare for and manage transitions from our program to kindergarten. Torrington School Readiness Council meets monthly during the school year. Parent information sessions are planned; registration procedures and timeline are decided. The council with the help of the Torrington Public School kindergarten teachers plans a Kindergarten Registration Fair that is held in March on a weekend so that working families have an opportunity to fill out the registration paperwork and get together other paperwork that is needed for the child to attend kindergarten the following September. Hilltop passes this information on to our teachers and staff and helps be the bridge for families as they prepare for this big step in their child’s life.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

You should have received a school calendar in the packet or at registration. If you have misplaced it, you will find it posted on the Hilltop website or let Mrs. Mazzei know if you need a paper copy.

Parent orientation is held in late August or early September in the evening. Each class will have their own visiting day before the official first day of classes. We follow the Torrington School System schedule closely, with the last day of school scheduled in June. ***We have the following days off: Labor Day, Columbus Day,***

Thanksgiving recess, Christmas recess, New Year's, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, Spring recess and Memorial Day. See Policy on Opening Delays and Closings Due to Weather.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Families are asked to participate in our annual program evaluation each spring. Additionally, the Hilltop staff is expected to complete a survey regarding the program. The results of both evaluations are tabulated by the director and shared with the Hilltop Advisory Committee and the families. Outcomes from the evaluations will be used for program growth and improvement.

MEALS, SNACKS AND BIRTHDAYS

Hilltop provides daily morning snacks in all classes. We begin each snack or mealtime with grace or a poem. Two food groups are served to your child for snacks each day. Typically, snacks include a fruit or vegetable and a savory or sweet cracker. All snacks will be prepared in separate packaging before the day starts by a gloved and masked staff member. Additional menu items include dairy products such as 1% milk, cheese, and yogurt. Water is served every day. Students have the opportunity to build relationships and increase their vocabulary during this time with classmates.

Early Start CT (ESCT) and Full Day class families must supply their child's lunch daily. Lunches should compare with the federal guidelines for healthy lunches and include low-fat milk, a meat or meat alternative, whole grain, fruit, and vegetable.

Snack menus are planned monthly and posted on the Hilltop website and "Brightwheel." Each classroom has a menu posted near the sink. Occasionally, teachers will plan a cooking activity that will be a part of snack.

Birthdays may be celebrated at Hilltop. Please speak with your child's teachers to make plans. There are many ways to make your child's birthday special. When considering what to do for your child's birthday, please consider finding healthful ways to celebrate. Only store bought, prepackaged snacks will be accepted.

Hilltop is a peanut and nut-safe school.

No peanut, nut or nut oil products are allowed in the school.

POLICY ON WELLNESS

Hilltop believes that as adults, we are key in helping children make healthy choices. We strive to keep these principles embedded in our program by providing healthy food choices for snacks and celebrations, limiting screen time at school, and providing daily opportunities for physical activities. We provide whole grains, fruits and vegetables and non-fat milk or water for daily snacks. We expect parents to provide either non-food or healthy food choices for celebrations including birthdays and other holidays. We believe this will provide a healthy foundation for children to build on as they learn to make smart choices for themselves as they grow. We utilize strategies and ideas from the 5-2-1-0 curriculum to promote our Policy on Wellness. To find out more visit www.letsgo.org.

ILLNESS OR INJURY

In case of an injury or illness while in school, your child's teacher will telephone the parent or alternate person listed on the emergency card. If neither person can be reached, the child's doctor will be called. Should a parent need to be called to pick up a child because of illness or injury, the child will wait in the school office with the Director or another member of the teaching staff.

Most of the Hilltop staff members are trained in First Aid and CPR, including AED training and are able to care for your child should there be a medical concern. An incident report will be filled out if your child is injured. In the unlikely event that an ambulance is required for immediate medical attention, the school will call 911. One of our staff will accompany your child to Charlotte Hungerford Hospital's Emergency Room or the hospital of your choice as indicated in the child's record.

HEALTH

The State of Connecticut regulations require children enrolled at Hilltop to have a health record documenting a health exam within one year prior to enrollment and it must be updated annually. The form must be properly completed and signed by a licensed physician, physician assistant, or APRN. Your child's immunizations need to be up to date as well. We need this information prior to the first day of school. If there is a problem with this, please talk to the director. Should your child's form expire during the school year, you will receive a notification from the school office reminding you to make an appointment to update your child's health information. Should your child's health record be more than 30 days overdue, your child will not be allowed to attend school until their health record is updated. **Please note that if your child is under immunized and there is an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease at our center, your child WILL NOT be able to attend the program until the is vaccinated or the disease has been determined by our health consultant not to be contagious any longer.**

Health records are kept with each child's records in a locked cabinet in the office and are kept confidential. Records are accessible to the director, classroom teachers, the school health consultant and officials from the state licensing agency and the local health department.

Hilltop works with organizations such as the Lion's Club to organize health screenings such as vision, dental and hearing.

Please don't send your child to school with a fever or contagious disease. If your child develops a contagious disease, notify the teachers so we may inform the other parents of the symptoms and treatment so they can look for symptoms in their child.

Trained teachers or the director may administer nonprescription topical medication (free of steroids, antibiotics, or fungal components), asthma medication (inhalers ONLY), and emergency medication (Epi-Pen, Prelone, Benadryl) when the criteria have been met to do this. Acetaminophen or its equivalent and Ibuprofen or its equivalent can also be administered in emergency situations based on Doctor's specific written orders.

COVID-19 RELATED HEALTH POLICIES

All staff and children will be screened with a questionnaire about symptoms of illness using the "brightwheel" app upon arrival. If ANY of the items on the screening process raises a flag, they will not be allowed to enter the building.

If it is a medical symptom, the child or teacher will not be allowed back into the program until we receive a signed note from a medical professional.

HANDWASHING POLICY

Staff shall wash their hands:

- ✓ Upon entry to the classroom
- ✓ After changing a child's diaper
- ✓ After toileting or assisting a child using the toilet
- ✓ Before eating or handling food
- ✓ After handling bodily fluids (saliva, nasal secretions, blood, vomit, etc.)
- ✓ After handling soiled items, such as garbage
- ✓ After handling animals/animal cages
- ✓ Whenever hands are visibly soiled

Children shall wash their hands:

- ✓ Upon entry to the classroom
- ✓ After a diaper change
- ✓ After toileting
- ✓ Before eating meals or snacks
- ✓ After blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing
- ✓ After playground use or outdoor play
- ✓ Before and after water or sensory play
- ✓ After handling animals/animal cages
- ✓ Whenever hands are visibly soiled



Diaper Changing Procedures

*****NEVER LEAVE A CHILD UNATTENDED*****

Step 1 Get organized—gather all supplies and bring them to the changing area:

- Non-absorbent paper liner
- Clean diaper & clean clothes (if needed)
- Disposable gloves (2 sets)
- Diaper wipes
- Wet paper towels
- Plastic bag
- Thick application of diaper cream, if needed

Step 2 Carry the child to the Changing area--Keep one hand on the child at all times

Step 3 Clean the child's diaper area—keeping dirty wipes inside the soiled diaper

Step 4 Remove soiled diaper and clothing without contaminating any surface not already soiled—putting soiled diapers into plastic-lined hands-free covered can

Step 5 Put on a clean diaper and dress the child

Step 6 Wash child's hands and return child to supervised area

Step 7 Clean and disinfect the diaper changing surface

Step 8 Teacher performs hand washing hygiene and record activity in the daily log

SICK CHILD PROCEDURE 19a-79-5a(a) (3)

Program staff shall be knowledgeable about the signs and symptoms of child illness

Program staff will be responsible for the initial observation of each child upon arrival and continue observations during the day for signs and symptoms

RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER ILLNESS
GUIDELINES FOR CONTAGION

Control of communicable diseases is the joint responsibility of parents and teachers. This outline of the most common of communicable disease will serve as a guide for you.

Disease**Exclusion Period Ends**

Chicken Pox	when lesions are crusted over
Common colds	can be serious and for this reason, no child with acute respiratory symptoms should be sent to school.
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	after properly taking prescribed medicine for 24 hours
Covid-19.....	self-isolate at home until medical clearance is granted
Fever.....	remains at home for 24 hours after temperature returns to normal
Flu	24 hours after fever ends (without fever reducing medications)
Head Lice	child remains at home until receives at least one (1) treatment
Impetigo	24 Hours after treatment
Measles.....	5 days after appearance of rash
Mumps.....	9 days after onset of swelling
Ringworm.....	May return after anti-fungal ointment has been applied
Scarlet Fever.....	7 days, or at the discretion of the physician
Scarlatina.....	7 days, or at the discretion of the physician
Scabies.....	24 hours after the completion of the treatment
Strep throat	48 hours after treatment has been started
Vomiting, diarrhea	24 hours free of symptoms

All children must be able to fully participate in the program. If they are not able to fully participate, they will be excluded and may return when able to fully participate.

showing signs or symptoms of contagious illness shall be placed in a designated isolation area under continual supervision

Parent shall be called immediately to remove the child from care

Program staff shall complete an illness form that includes a description of the illness, date, time and location and any action taken by the facility including whether the child was transported to a hospital emergency room, doctors office or other medical facility as a result of the illness

A copy of the illness report shall be provided to the parent not later than the next business day

REGISTRATION PROCEDURE FOR NEXT YEAR

Registration for Hilltop is accepted at St. Paul's Lutheran Church office, 837 Charles Street, Torrington. Phone 860-482-3555. Dates for registration are as follows:

- **First of December** – Active St. Paul's members and currently enrolled families. If you have questions about your status as a member, please call the church office.
- **Mid-January** – Open House for the general public. Open House attendees will be able to register on or after this date. (Dependent on current conditions) – Registration opens for the general public.
- **Registration is conducted during church office hours – 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.**
- Registrations are accepted **in person, in order of arrival in the church office.**
- Registrations are **not affected by the school's delays or closings due to weather**

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

This procedure is for child day care programs which are licensed under the authority of Connecticut General Statutes 19a-79-1a through 19a-79-13.

Most problems within a day care center are non-life threatening and can be resolved by:

1. Discussing the problem with the classroom teacher.
2. Discussing the problem with the program director or director's designee

Barbara J. Mazzei
Name of Designated Director

Nicole Waldron
Name of Alternate Person in Charge
3. Contact the Hilltop Advisory Committee to discuss the problem
4. If the problem is not resolved, you may contact the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood Licensing Division.

In case of an emergency, notify the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood as soon as the emergency is under control.

- **By phone to Complaint Dest (800)282-6063 or (860) 500-4450**
- **By filing online at www.ctoec.org/contact-us/file-a-complaint**

In case of abuse/neglect or life-threatening situations call 911 or the Department of Children and Families at 1-800-842-2288 and the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood – Division of Licensing.

ALL INSPECTION REPORTS AND CORRECTIVE ACTION PLANS ARE AVAILABLE FOR YOUR INSPECTION AT THIS CHILD CARE PROGRAM

ONLINE AT www.211childcare.org, OR

BY FOI request from the OEC Licensing Division:

https://oecct.goveqas/WEBAPP/_rs/

THE SAME PROCESS WORKS FOR COMPLIMENTS AS WELL!

ST. PAUL'S HILLTOP
CHRISTIAN EARLY LEARNING CENTER
POLICIES

POLICY ON ABUSE AND NEGLECT

As childcare providers, our program staff have a responsibility to prevent child abuse and neglect of any children enrolled at our center. We are required by law to report if we suspect that a child is being abused or neglected or is at risk for abuse or neglect. As mandated reporters, the law protects staff from discrimination or retaliation for reporting abuse or neglect.

Child abuse is defined as non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, or neglect of a child under age 18 by a person responsible for the child's health and welfare, or care by a person given access to the child by a responsible person. The forms of abuse and neglect include the following:

Physical Abuse: injuring the child by shaking, beating, burning, or similar acts.

Sexual Abuse: engaging in sexual behavior with the child or allowing sexual exploitation of the child.

Emotional Abuse: excessive belittling, teasing, or berating which impairs a child's psychological growth.

Neglect: failing to provide for a child's basic needs (food, clothing, shelter, hygiene, education, medical care, and supervision).

At Risk: placing a child in danger of abuse and neglect (threatening a child with bodily harm).

If a staff member suspects abuse or neglect, they will document any visual signs or verbal statements made by children and a telephone call will be made to the Department of Children and Families **CARELINE** at 1-800-842-2288 within 12 hours of the report and must file a written DCF-136 form within 48 hours of making the report. All phone conversations with DCF will be documented. If the department accepts the case, we will make every effort to safeguard the child and cooperate with the investigation. All documentation will be maintained in the child's record at Hilltop.

Hilltop maintains zero tolerance for abuse by Hilltop staff. If the suspected abuse involves a staff member, the staff member will immediately be put on leave of absence until the investigation is concluded. The director will inform Hilltop families that a report has been made. Abuse is grounds for dismissal.

Staff members receive a review of mandated reporting policies upon hire and annually thereafter. Staff will be urged to attend additional workshops that deal with this topic.

This policy is presented at the annual Parent Orientation event before the start of the school year and is included in the Parent Handbook. All families are expected to initial and return the Parent Acknowledgement page in the back of the handbook, indicating they have read and understand this policy. The policy is also posted on the bulletin board in the entry way of the school.

NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY

St. Paul's Hilltop Christian Early Learning Center admits students of any race, color, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ability, or national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, and other school-administrated programs. St. Paul's church members and already enrolled families have first opportunity to register.

POLICY ON BITING

When a child bites another child, the teaching staff will intervene immediately. The child who was bitten will be comforted and given first aid as needed, paying attention to the bitten child first. The child who bit will be spoken to by teaching staff using a tone of voice and facial expression, saying something like "you may not bite, biting hurts!" The child who bit will be directed to look at the bitten child and notice the bitten child's reaction to the bite. For example, teaching staff will point out that the bitten child's face looks mad, sad or is crying, so the child will see how biting affected the other child. The biter will be seated nearby as the bitten child is dealt with. First aid will include universal precautions, washing with soap and water, ice, and a bandage, as necessary.

After first aid is given, and both children have regained composure, teaching staff will facilitate communication between both children, encouraging the bitten to use a big voice while telling the biter that it hurt. Sometimes, a child bites because they don't know the words to use when they want a turn to play. The teaching staff will support the biter by giving the biter language to use when this happens. The behavior will be noted in the biter's file on a Behavior Log.

The parents of both children shall be notified of what happened without naming or labelling the children involved. Parents shall be reassured as the Lead Teacher communicates to them how the incident was overseen. If the skin was broken or there are signs of infection, staff will recommend the child be seen by a physician. An incident report will be completed, and copies will be made, one will be filed in each of the children's files, one will be sent to the Main Office, and each of the children's parents will receive one. All staff will be alerted to the incident.

The Lead Teacher will meet with the biter's parents to develop strategies for the child's behavior, to prevent future biting. The Lead Teacher will be a resource for providing information on biting to the parents. If the child bites again, the parent will be called and must take the child home immediately. The Lead Teacher will meet again with the parents to further discuss reasons for the behavior and to create a plan to change the biting behavior before the child may return to class.

DISCIPLINE POLICY and GUIDELINES

When children have challenging behaviors that interfere with their ability to learn or interfere with their peers' learning the following guidelines will be used by staff to provide positive behavioral support to them. The goal of these guidelines is to limit or eliminate the use of suspension, expulsion, and other exclusionary measures.

First, we will assess the function of the child's behavior. Most behavior, good or bad, is motivated by a need to get something (attention, desired activity/object, or internal stimulation) or to avoid something (challenging work, embarrassment, or discomfort). It is necessary to clearly identify the targeted behavior that has not responded to standard teaching strategies that have been used by teachers or parents before. Be as specific as possible ("J... yells and screams at the teacher," rather than "J....is disruptive in class." Be sure to document what happens before the challenging behavior, include the setting, with whom and during what activity. Try to determine what happens immediately after the behavior (did the class laugh? was the child taken out of the classroom? Did they get out of doing an activity they did not want to do?)

Hilltop uses social emotional and discipline techniques that are taught through Dr. Becky Bailey's Conscious Discipline© curriculum. Teaching staff will use positive guidance techniques when handling child behaviors. This includes redirection, following through with developmentally appropriate expectations, guidance talks, conflict mediation, and calming techniques. Teaching staff will support children while facilitating conversations between children as they create solutions to problems that normally occur in the classroom. Techniques used will provide children with the ability to develop self-control and self-discipline, building positive self-esteem.

While children are in attendance at the program the operator, staff, and program staff shall not engage in nor allow abusive, neglectful, corporal, humiliating, or frightening treatment or punishment under any circumstances. Additionally, staff will not use physical punishment, psychological abuse or coercion when disciplining children. This includes but is not limited to speaking to children in a threatening or derogatory manner, spanking, slapping, pinching, shaking, or striking children and shall not tie nor bind children and shall not physically restrain children except for the protection and safety of the child or others, using least restrictive methods, as appropriate. **Program staff will continuously supervise children during disciplinary actions.**

Each classroom will have a space set aside for children to utilize when they need to regain composure or maintain control when they are upset, angry or frustrated. A child may choose to use this space, or a teacher may direct a child to this space when the child's actions dictate.

All negative behavior will be documented by teaching staff on a behavior log sheet and kept in individual children's files. When there is a pattern of negative behavior, the Lead Teacher will meet with the child's parents/caregivers, and other relevant adults to develop positive strategies which can be implemented at school and at home to support the child in gaining control over his/her behavior, which may include, but not be limited to: relationship building strategies, remediation strategies, and referrals. A follow-up meeting will be held to review the efforts and progress made. It will be determined whether more progress is needed, or if any changes to the plan need to be made. A final meeting will be held to celebrate success or decide what additional actions may be necessary. This process will be documented on the Discipline Agreement and Guidance Plan Worksheet found in the back of the Parent Handbook.

After staff follow Hilltop's Response To Intervention procedures and exhausts all interventions available and a child's behavior jeopardizes the safety of the child, or others in the class, Hilltop reserves the right to temporarily suspend a child, or the child may be asked to leave the program, aligning with state of Connecticut guidelines for

PreK suspension and expulsion. If it is determined that the child needs a different placement, Hilltop will support the family in seeking a placement which better meets the needs of the child.

Our program will always comply with federal and state civil rights laws.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Medical:

In case of a medical emergency, a qualified program staff member will address first aid as needed. Another program staff member will notify the family of the child. Attempts will be made to consult with the child's physician/dentist. If neither is available, the program's medical consultants will be contacted. For extreme emergencies, 911 will be called. An ambulance will take the child and a program staff member to the nearest hospital. The child's emergency permission form will be brought with them. A program staff member will notify the family or alternate pick-up person to meet the child at the emergency room. Additional program staff will be called in if necessary to maintain required ratios.

MULTI-HAZARDS: Local Emergency Management Phone Number 860-489-2255

Director's Name: Edward Bascetta

MULTI-HAZARD EMERGENCY DRILL:

A multi-hazard emergency will be practiced at least annually which includes the demonstration of all staff, program staff, and children sheltering, locking down and evacuating the facility.

FIRE/EVACUATION:

In the event of a fire, evacuation from the building will be through the closest fire exit. Program staff will be responsible for supervising the children under their care and leading them to the fire exit. Immediately, the group will walk to (the dumpster area in lower parking lot) safely away from the building, and line up to take a name to face attendance. The director or person in charge will be responsible for taking (the sign-in and out sheets or make available the computer access to such documentation), portable first aid kit, cell phone and emergency files with them. Should it not be possible to return to the facility, staff and program staff will walk the children to the Tarringford School located directly across the street from Hilltop. Parents will be notified and directed to the evacuation location to pick up their children. Ratios will be maintained at all times and two program staff 18 years or older will remain with the children until all children are picked up. No one will reenter the building until safety is assured by the fire department. Fire drills are practiced monthly, using a window or the exit door. Once or twice a year, teachers practice by going out of the exit windows in the classroom.

SHELTER IN PLACE/Weather:

In the event of severe weather, such as tornadoes, hurricanes, winter storm, or any other unsafe situation where evacuation is not possible, staff, program staff, and children will remain indoors in a safe location (safe room location) away from closed windows and doors. Program staff will have appropriate supplies available for the comfort and engagement of the children. First aid program staff will be on hand to administer first aid, as needed, until emergency personnel can arrive. Parents will be notified after the immediate danger has passed. Each class conducts a severe weather drill 3 times a year.

Lockdown:

Should an emergency or threat that involve potential violence in or around the facility requires the need to stay put, the director/person in charge will notify the staff by cell phone text that they should begin lock-down procedure. 911 will be called.

Each program staff is responsible for the children in their care at that moment. The program staff will gather the children to the safest area of the room, away from any windows or doors. Doors and windows will be locked, lights turned off, and curtains/blinds closed to all interior windows.

Program staff will calm the children and help them stay quiet. Attendance will be taken periodically. The director/person in charge will remain in constant communication with the emergency personnel. Hilltop has direct access to Torrington PD through our Mutualink emergency system (Panic Button) Parents are not permitted access to the facility until it is determined that it is safe to do so. During the emergency, the director/person in charge will do all they can to notify parents by way of the brightwheel app, however, certain emergency situations may preclude this possibility. Wait for all clear from the emergency personnel. The director/person in charge will communicate all clear to staff, program staff, and children. Parents will be notified by way of the brightwheel app after all clear has been given by the emergency personnel.

Alternative Staff Coverage: Employees of St. Paul's Lutheran Church (i.e., church secretary, pastor, and custodian) may be called upon to supervise children if an emergency situation warrants.

Notification of Parents: Parents will be notified via the "Brightwheel" App, or a call will be made to them (or alternate person listed on the registration form) to apprise them of any changes due to emergencies. WZBG (97.3FM) will also carry information. Notification will also be posted on WFSB, Hilltop's Facebook page, and Hilltop's website. The school (860-482-3727) or the church office (860-482-3555) may be called if there are questions.

Continuation of Operations:

If an emergency causes the facility to be unsafe for childcare program staff will notify parents and refer them to 211 for other childcare options. The Operator will submit an initial application for Change in Location and will notify the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) when an alternate location has been identified so that an inspection can be completed as soon as possible so that it can be approved for childcare.

Accommodations for Toddlers, and Children with disabilities or chronic medical conditions:

In consultation with the child's parent, program staff will develop a plan to ensure the special needs of the children are met during an emergency, including the provision of necessities such medications, diapers, wipes, or other comfort items.

POLICY ON LATE PICK UP OF CHILDREN

In the event the child is not picked up at closing time, this procedure will be followed:

1. The teacher will call the parents if the child has not been picked up within 10 minutes of the child's scheduled pick-up time.
2. The emergency person listed on the emergency card form will be called next. If they are unable to come for the child, the next contact on the list will be called.
3. The director, or appointed staff member, and one other staff person, age 18 or older, will remain inside the building with the child at a rate of \$1.00 each minute, beginning ten minutes after scheduled closing, according to the classroom clock. The late pick-up fee will be billed by the Board of Directors and should be paid by the parents within ten days.
4. If a child has not been picked up by a family member or an emergency contact person after 30 minutes, staff will call the local authorities, including the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the Torrington Police department. The number for our local non-emergency police department is 860-489-2000.

POLICY ON PARENT CONTACT/INVOLVEMENT

Parent orientation is held in September to acquaint the parents with the school, staff, and program.

Each month a newsletter is distributed to each family. A summary of the past activities and plans for upcoming events are detailed.

A hall bulletin board (at school entry) will have posted all state-regulated information as well as informative and educational materials to assist in the parenting process.

A listing of school policies and procedures will be sent home to each family at the beginning of the school year.

Notices regarding any upcoming event or holiday will be sent home with each child. Besides written notices, announcements will be found on our Facebook page at Hilltop Christian Early Learning Center, through email as well as the “Brightwheel” App. Please be sure to like our Facebook page and download the “Brightwheel” app on your smart phone or tablet.

Parent conferences are scheduled for each child in the late fall and spring. Parents are invited to visit the school at any time during the year or to schedule conferences at any other time if they so desire.

Parents may volunteer with Hilltop Helping Hands, or on field trips. If parents wish to volunteer in their child’s classroom on a regular basis, they must participate in a short training course and have a background check completed. St. Paul’s Lutheran Church will conduct the background check.

POLICY ON SECURITY

For security reasons, the doors will be kept locked during the school day. They will be unlocked for the arrival and departure process. If you arrive late after the doors are locked, you may ring the doorbell to the left of the door. You may also call Hilltop to let someone know you are waiting. Security cameras are installed at the main door, parking lot, indoor hallway, all classrooms, outdoor classroom, and the back door by the playground for monitoring purposes. All of the windows have a one-way protective covering, allowing us to always see out but outsiders cannot see in.

If someone other than the person on the pick-up form is picking up your child, please let the teachers know in writing. Please inform the person dropping off and/or picking up your child of the above information. If the teachers do not know the person picking your child up, they will ask for picture identification such as their driver’s license.

POLICY ON TOILETING

Hilltop facilities are not equipped to manage diaper changes or habitual toileting accidents. Every student must be potty trained in order to attend Hilltop. Occasional accidents will happen. If a child is soiled while at school, staff will contact the parent or caregiver. If contact cannot be made, a staff member will change the child. If there is a habitual problem with toileting issues, a parent-teacher conference will be held to address the issue.

Children enrolled in the two-year-old program do not have to be potty trained. Parents are required to ensure that their child starts their day in a dry diaper or pull-up. They will also provide extra diapers or pull-ups for changing if needed. Teachers will check periodically for soiled diapers and will change a child within 5 minutes of discovery, following proper procedures which are posted at the changing station. The changing table is available ONLY for children in the two-year-old class.

POLICY ON PEANUTS/NUTS IN THE SCHOOL

St. Paul’s Hilltop Christian Early Learning Center is a peanut and nut-free school. No peanut, nut, nut oil or nut milk products are allowed in the school.

POLICY ON SUPERVISION PLAN

Classroom Supervision

Classrooms are arranged to allow teachers the ability to supervise the room appropriately. Teachers position themselves in the classroom to assure they can see what is happening in a few areas of the classroom at a time and move about the classroom throughout the session, to monitor children in all centers and children who might not be in the direct line of vision. At no time will a child be unsupervised. In the preschool classrooms, Hilltop will maintain a 1:10 teacher-child ratio. A teacher never supervises more than 10 children.

In the **two-year-old** classroom, teachers assure that children can be seen and heard at all times. The classroom is arranged, and teachers are positioned so they can see the children at all times. The teacher-child ratio in this classroom is 1:4 with no more than 8 children in the class at any time.

Outdoor Supervision

It will be the responsibility of all program staff to ensure the safety of children on the playground and the outdoor classroom. Supervision of children will include the following: A head count will be taken before leaving the building. At least two (2) teachers accompany each class on the playground. Program staff will encourage and demonstrate proper equipment usage and play. Program Staff members follow procedures; they are positioned so each area of the playground is observed, they will circulate through the play areas, supervising and interacting with the children in a positive manner. NO program staff person is allowed to sit or socialize with other staff. A head count will be taken before re-entering the building. Program staff may not leave children unattended or out of state-permitted ratios and group sizes. Children may not go inside for any reason (including the bathroom); nor may they go back outside unless accompanied by a program staff. There are sometimes times when activities occur outside of the fenced area. (Please be advised that these areas are not licensed by OEC.) There is a permission form in the registration packet that we request you sign so we can take walking trips on the church grounds. When this happens, teaching staff conduct periodic head counts and keep a watchful eye to assure children stay within a safe distance and can see and hear the children at all times.

When there are woodchips as surfacing on the playground accessible to children under age three years, we shall:

1. Be sure that all program staff are aware that the woodchips pose a choking hazard to children under the age of three
2. Always have a phone outside at all times in case of emergency.
3. At least one (1) CPR certified program staff member will be on the playground whenever there are children under the age of three using the playground.

Bathroom Supervision

Teachers supervise the bathroom. At no time are children allowed to walk to the bathroom alone. Children enter the toilet stalls by themselves. Stall doors are left unlocked. We encourage the children to be independent with their bathroom needs. Three-year-old classes are escorted by staff at all times. When larger groups of four-year-old's class are taken to the restroom, the staff member may allow two children to return to the classroom at a time, but the adult stands in the hallway outside of the bathroom door where she can monitor the children in the bathroom as well as the two children returning to the classroom to assure, they have returned to the classroom safely. The teacher reminds them to tell the other teacher(s) they are back once they return to the classroom.

Hilltop staff members are instructed to help with the children's garments and toileting needs as little as possible. Please be sure to work with your child so they are able to wipe themselves and manipulate their clothing including snaps, buttons, tights, and belt buckles.

Each class is taken to the bathroom at least once a session. Small groups of children are taken to the bathroom at other times as needed. Both bathrooms in the Hilltop hallway are FOR CHILDREN ONLY during Hilltop hours. All adults must use the restrooms at the top of the stairs outside of Fellowship Hall.

Naptime Supervision

Children who are at Hilltop for 5 hours or longer must participate in a rest time. Children will be provided with a space to lie, spaced away from other children. Teacher-Child ratios will be maintained through rest time of 1 teacher to every 7 children, never more than 10 children to each teacher.

POLICY ON SAFETY ON THE PLAYGROUND

- A first aid kit and telephone are brought out to the playground every time.
- Classes exit the classroom to the playground through the back door, and reenter through the same door.
- Play yard rules include:

- Bottoms only on the swings
 - UP the ladder, ramp or climbing wall, DOWN the slide
 - Feet first down the slide
 - Climb the ladder or equipment wall, not the fence
- Outdoor play will happen every day when the temperature is 32 degrees or warmer, including wind chill factor during the winter months or a heat index of 90 degrees or higher in the summer months.
 - Should the weather prohibit children from playing outdoors, they will play in the playroom which provides plenty of opportunity for big muscle play.

POLICY ON OPENING DELAYS AND CLOSINGS DUE TO WEATHER

When Torrington Public School System has a delay, St. Paul's Hilltop Christian Early Learning Center's morning classes will begin 1.5 hour late and dismiss at 12:15 or 12:30, depending on your child's class assignment. School Readiness and the M-F Full day classes will start at 10:30 and 10:45 respectively and dismiss at the regular time.

When Torrington Public Schools are closed, or move to distance learning due to weather, we will be closed. The allowance for closing school due to inclement weather is 5 days for a 5-day class, 4 days for a 4-day class, 3 days for a 3-day class and 2 days for a two-day class. Missed days in excess of this will be made up at the end of the school year. Any days lost due to Covid-19 will only be made up if the whole class is in quarantine.

Local TV channel WFSB will display school's closing or delay.

Announcements will also be made on the Hilltop Facebook page, and on the Brightwheel app.

****Due to current times, if the Torrington School system closes due to Covid-19, Hilltop will make an independent decision regarding closure.**

POLICY ON DELINQUENT TUITION PAYMENTS

Tuition payments and School Readiness family fees are due and payable the first of the month starting in September and ending the first week of June. Payments will be considered delinquent after the 10th of the month in which the payment is due. A discrepancy notice will be sent out after the 10th of the month, and if no action is taken to bring the account current, a second notice will be sent out by the 25th of the month. Payment needs to be received by the 30th of the month to avoid a \$15.00 late fee.

A child's enrollment will be considered to be in jeopardy if the payment is not in by the 30th of the month in which it is due.

In the event of a hardship, the St. Paul's Hilltop Director should be notified, and she and a representative of the St. Paul's Hilltop Advisory Committee would be happy to discuss the matter in order to work out an agreeable solution.

There is a \$20.00 return check fee for any check that cannot be processed by Torrington Savings Bank. The party who is paying the tuition will be responsible for reimbursing St. Paul's \$20.00 for each occurrence.

In order to provide for an excellent program at Hilltop, refunds are NOT made for absences or departures. Failure to return to school and/or failure to pay will result in further action by the board. The Hilltop Advisory Committee reserves the right to collect tuition and fees incurred for failure to pay.

WITHDRAWAL AND/OR DISENROLLMENT OF CHILDREN

Parents or guardians must provide the center with two (2) weeks' written notice prior to withdrawing their child from the program. ALL tuition owed must be paid in full. Likewise, the program will provide the same courtesy if care for a child must be disenrolled for any reason. The program will work with families and children to avoid a child's disenrollment.

HILLTOP'S CHILD FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT POLICY

In an effort to maintain a safe and child-friendly environment, the Hilltop Advisory Committee has adopted the following policies:

Drug Free Workplace Policy

Unlawful manufacture, distribution and possession or use of controlled substances is prohibited in this facility.

Smoking Policy

Smoking, or carrying a lighted cigarette, pipe, cigar, or similar device is prohibited at all times in all work areas, areas opened to the public, storage closets, bathrooms, offices, and foyers. Smoking is also prohibited in all outdoor areas during school hours on property owned by St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Firearms and/or Weapons in the Workplace

The carrying of firearms or any weapon on to St. Paul's property is prohibited. The only exception is a Law Enforcement officer on the premises in an official capacity.

POLICY ON MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION

The following policy is adopted from section 19A-79-9a of the Administration of Medication section in the Statutes and regulations booklet and lists the proper steps when administering medication in a day care setting and must be strictly followed by Child Care personnel.

Training Requirements

A teacher or director who is responsible for administering medications shall be trained by a physician, physician's assistant, advanced practice nurse or registered nurse that abides by the regulations given by the state to provide training. The training is valid for three (3) years. Training to administer an Epi-Pen must be renewed every year. The medication course is a pre-requisite for the Epi-Pen course. The trainer will provide written approval for each participant who has successfully completed the training course. If a child with special medical needs is enrolled, at least one staff member trained in the procedure will be on site at all times. There may be other types of medications that must be administered by staff (ex: insulin). In such a case, the staff responsible will be trained by a physician, physician assistant, advanced practice nurse or registered nurse that abides by the regulations set forth by the Office of Early Childhood to provide the training.

Topical Medications and Medications That May be Administrated to a Child at Hilltop

Hilltop encourages all parents to apply sunscreen and/or insect repellent when appropriate before the start of school. Sunscreen with UVB or UVA protection of SPF 15 or higher is recommended when the sun is strong during the spring and summer days when we are in session. Hilltop staff will apply sunscreen for the afternoon portion of a full day class. Families MUST sign the "Authorization for the Administration of Non-Prescription Topical Medication Form" before staff can apply sunscreen. Our playground is located in an area that may contain a high population of ticks, so we urge families to take precautions and apply insect repellent containing DEET.

Hilltop trained staff will administer Asthmatic medication (inhalers ONLY), and Emergency medications (Epi-Pen, Benadryl, or Prelone). Acetaminophen or its equivalent or Ibuprofen or its equivalent will be given in emergency situations based on the Doctor's specific written orders. Additionally, Non-prescription topical medication free of steroids or antibiotics or fungal components can be applied by trained staff.

Emergency medications (ex. Epi-Pen, asthma medication) and non-prescription medications are stored unlocked in the child's classroom out of the reach of children. If a staff member must administer medication, they will keep a record of it and keep the Record of Administration with the Authorization form with the medication in its storage location.

Family Responsibilities

Families must obtain the Medical Authorization form and ensure it is completed by the child's physician and signed by both the doctor and the parent or guardian. The family must also provide the appropriate medication as indicated on the authorization form. The medication must remain at Hilltop. Children WILL NOT be able to attend school without the paperwork AND medication at school. All medications must be in the original container. Prescribed medications must have a prescription label on them.

MONITORING OF DIABETES POLICY 19A-79-13

Prior to attending our program, the parent(s) of a child with diabetes mellitus will meet with the Director and Health Consultant to review the Monitoring of Diabetes Policy and discuss how the individual needs of the child will be met while at the program.

An individualized plan of care for the child will be developed with the child's parent(s) and health care provider and updated as necessary. The plan will include appropriate care of the child to prevent and respond to a medical or other emergency and will be signed by the parent(s) and program staff responsible for the care of the child.

While the child attends the program, a director, head teacher, or program staff designated trained in a First Aid course and trained to administer finger stick blood glucose tests will be on site.

At the time of enrollment, the child's parent (s) will provide the necessary equipment and supplies to meet the child's individual needs. The glucose testing supplies and list of necessary equipment and supplies will be labeled with the child's name and will remain inaccessible to children when not in use.

A signed agreement from the child's parent (s) will be provided agreeing to check and maintain the child's equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, restock supplies, and remove material to be discarded from the facility on a daily basis. All materials to be discarded will be kept locked in the classroom until given to the child's parent (s) for disposal.

We will keep the following records as part of the child's medical record and will be updated annually or when there is a change in information.

1. A current written order signed and dated by the child's physician, physician assistant or advanced practice registered nurse indicating:
 - Child's name
 - The diagnosis of diabetes mellitus
 - The type of blood glucose monitoring test required
 - The test schedule
 - The target ranges for test results
 - Specific actions to be taken and carbohydrates to be given when the test result fall outside specified ranges
 - Diet requirements and restrictions
 - Any requirements for monitoring the child's recreational activities
 - Conditions requiring immediate notification of the child's parent(s), emergency contact with the child's physician, physician assistant or advanced practice register nurse
2. An authorization form signed by the child's parent (s) which includes the following information

Child's name
The parent(s) name
The parent(s) address
The parent(s) telephone numbers at home and work
Two adult, emergency contact people including names, addresses, and telephone numbers
The names of the program staff that are designated to administer finger stick blood glucose test and provide care for the child during testing
Additional comments related to the care of the child, as needed
The signature of the parent (s)
The date the authorization is signed
The name, address and telephone number of the child's physician, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse

The program will ensure the child's parent (s) receive daily results of all blood glucose tests and any action taken based on the test results by means of text on brightwheel app. The test results and any action taken will be documented in the child's medical record. Incidents and emergencies will be reported to the child's parent(s) and the child's physician.

Blood glucose testing will be conducted in the Director's office respecting the child's privacy and safety

Your cooperation with the above policies will be appreciated as we strive to provide your child with a quality nursery school experience here at St. Paul's Hilltop Christian Early Learning Center.

Advisory Committee

DISCIPLINE GUIDANCE PLAN WORKSHEET



The Discipline Policy has been discussed with me as part of a group during Parent Orientation night, on Visitation Day, or individually while on tour or upon enrollment. I understand St. Paul's Hilltop Christian Early Learning Center's Discipline Policy as described in the Family Handbook. I understand I may be called in to meet with my child's teacher if my child's negative behavior exhibits a regular pattern. The meetings will be utilized to develop strategies and a working plan to be implemented at school and at home to support my child in gaining control over my child's negative behavior. The Guidance Plan Worksheet will be implemented only if needed.

(child's name)

(parent/guardian signature)

Guidance Plan Worksheet:

Child's Age: _____

Initial Write-up Date _____

Noted Behaviors:

Behaviors observed:

Thoughts about behaviors:

Additional Information:

Check procedures used and summarize information gained

____ Discussion with child

Date: _____

Summary:

____ Discussion with other staff

Date: _____

Summary:

____ Discussion with parent Date: _____
Summary:

____ Discussion with other professionals Date: _____
Summary:

Guidance Plan Meeting Date: _____
Persons in attendance:

Summary of strategies to be tried:

Set up date of follow-up meeting: Date: _____

Summary of Results and any changes in Guidance Plan as of first date: _____

Follow-up Meeting or Review Date: _____
Persons in attendance:

Effort/Progress shown by child:

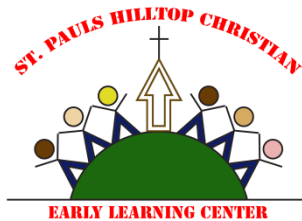
Progress is still needed:

Any changes in the plan:

Summary of Results and any changes in Guidance Plan as of second date: _____

Final Meeting Date: _____

Final summary of results: Celebration of success or additional actions needed:



FAMILY HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

- ☐ I have received the Parent Manual for St. Paul's Hilltop Christian Early Learning Center. I have read and understand the manual and policies and agree to abide by them.
- ☐ I have read and understand the Abuse and Neglect Policy.
- ☐ I have read and understand the Discipline Policy provided in this handbook.

Child's Name _____

Parent Signature _____

Print Name _____

Date _____