

Cottage Hill Christian Academy

Early Education Center and Preschool Handbook



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Head of School

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Parent Contract

I have read the Cottage Hill Christian Academy Preschool and Early Education Center Handbook and agree that I will abide by all policies and procedures set forth in this handbook.

Parent Signature

Date

Child's Name

Teacher's Name

** After signing the contract, please tear this page out and return it to your child's teacher.

Cottage Hill Christian Academy Preschool and Early Education Center Handbook

Program Overview:

We value a challenging and stimulating learning environment, where the wonder and curiosity of learning provide a foundation for lifelong achievement. We believe the early childhood learning experience should be an enjoyable journey, not a race. This journey will develop the child spiritually, intellectually, and socially, allowing the growth of a strong sense of self worth and confidence. The child will carry these attributes into every other life experience.

Goals of the Preschool and Early Education Center:

- To inspire an awareness and appreciation of God and His great love for everyone.
- To develop a print rich environment, with an integration of all disciplines.
- To provide opportunities for self expression and acquisition of a positive sense of identity.
- To encourage respect for self, others, and the world around them.
- To encourage and provide for hands-on learning and a discovery of social and educational core concepts.

Licensing Status:

Cottage Hill Christian Academy Early Education Center/Preschool is a ministry of Cottage Hill Baptist Church and is exempt from licensing as a childcare facility. We will continue to comply with the State Department of Human Resources regarding the operation of the program. Cottage Hill Christian Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded and made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship programs, athletics, or other school-administered programs.

Enrollment Policies:

A child is considered enrolled in CHCA Early Education Center/Preschool only after the registration fee has been received, the director has confirmed the availability of space and the required paperwork is received and reviewed. This includes basic enrollment and health information. Any change to this information must be communicated to our CHCA Early Education Center/Preschool Director immediately. This is for the safety of your child. A medical form, blue card, signed by your child's physician stating your child's physical status must be received within 15 days of admission.

Required Documents for Enrollment:

The following documents are also required within 15 days of admission to CHCA Preschool/EEC:

- Up-to-Date Alabama Immunization Form – Blue Form
- Photo Copy of Social Security Card
- Photo Copy of Certified Birth Certificate.
- Photo Copy of Health Insurance Card.
- Copy of Custody Papers, if applicable.

Attendance (Preschool):

Regular attendance is required. It is important to keep in mind that it is best for the child to have consistency in attendance. If your child is enrolled in our Preschool Program (K2-K5) and is out due to illness, please send a doctor's excuse or parent note upon return to school. Our school day begins at 7:45. Attendance is taken daily at this time. If your child arrives late on a consistent basis, a meeting with the director will be required. We do not want your child to miss out on any exciting activity we have planned, so make it a priority to arrive at school on time each day.

Birthdays:

Birthdays are special and important occasions. You are welcome to bring in cupcakes, doughnuts, or cookies to share with your child's class. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher ahead of time so this can be a special day for your child. **If your child is not allowed to partake in these birthday celebrations due to food allergies, please notify your child's teacher in writing.**

Child Health Policies:

- **Allergies:**
Please notify your child's teacher and the director if your child has allergies or health conditions. In some cases, we may ask for additional information from you and your child's physician. We may also issue notification to classmates, in order to avoid certain food allergies such as peanuts. If your child has a severe allergy that requires an Epi-Pen, you must supply Preschool/EEC with an Epi-Pen to keep on hand in case of emergency.
- **Illness:**
Children will not have a positive day if they are not feeling well and, therefore, should not attend school. When your child is ill, please do not bring him/her to school. A child who appears to be ill upon arrival will not be allowed to stay. Any child who becomes ill during attendance will be isolated promptly from the group and the parent(s)/guardian will be notified to come for their child. If the parents cannot be reached, someone from the child's emergency contact list will be contacted.

It is a firm policy that if a child has fever or has vomiting or diarrhea, they must remain out of school the following day. For example, if a child is sick on Monday, they must remain out of school on Tuesday and may return on Wednesday only if there was no fever, vomiting or diarrhea on Tuesday.

Keep in mind that consideration is the key to stopping the needless spread of many infections.

Communicable Childhood Diseases:

Signs of illness may include but are not limited to:

- *Vomiting or diarrhea**
- *Inflamed mouth and throat**
- *Runny nose**
- *Unusual crying/fussiness**

Please Note: If your child is sent home with fever, vomiting/diarrhea, cold or any sickness or rash, they must be free of all symptoms for 24 hours including the following school day. For example if your child had fever on Monday and was sent home, they must remain out on Tuesday and can return to school on Wednesday only if symptom free on Tuesday. This is for the well being of your child and our care givers/teachers.

- **Colds:** From onset, a cold typically lasts 3 or more days. A runny nose that produces yellow or green mucous suggests an infection that should be seen by a physician. If a child has nasal discharge that interferes with the daily routine and classroom hygiene, the child should not attend school and will not be allowed to stay. If a child appears to be wheezing or having labored breathing, the child will need to be sent home.
- **Fever:** A child must be fever free for **24 Hours** including the following full school day before returning. If your child had fever on **Monday**, they must be out on Tuesday and can return to school on **Wednesday** only if your child was fever free on Tuesday. *Fever Free means a child cannot have Advil, Tylenol, or any other fever-reducing medication in his/her system to make him/her fever free.*
- **Vomiting/Diarrhea:** If a child vomits once at school, he/she will be sent home. If a child has two or more diarrhea diapers, he/she will be sent home. A child should not return to school for at least **24 hours** after symptoms have disappeared.
- **Strep Throat:** This is a highly contagious infection and the child should be on antibiotics for **48 Hours and Fever Free** before returning to school.
- **Chicken Pox/Shingles:** Children exposed may break out 10-21 days after exposure. He/she may feel ill for two days prior to the appearance of the skin rash. A child cannot return until no new lesions have appeared for 48 hours and all spots are dry and healing (about 7-10 days).

- **Pinkeye:** A child must be diagnosed and on medication for 24 hours and the eye must be cleared and free of discharge prior to his/her return to school.
- **Impetigo:** This is a bacterial infection of the skin. Blisters will appear first followed by brownish colored scabs. It will spread slowly to other body areas and is contagious to others. A doctor must diagnose and treat this infection. The child may return to school after the use of medication and the infected skin area is clear.
- **Lice:** A child must remain home during the treatment period (2 days). All nits must be removed and a "Return to Class Slip" must be issued by our Director. Treatment should be repeated 7 days later to kill any new nits or newly hatched lice. If lice are discovered while the child is at school, the parents will be notified and the child will be sent home.
- **Fifth Disease:** This is a bright red rash on the cheeks followed by a lace-like rash on the extremities, which can come and go for 1-5 weeks. The child must stay home if fever is present or if the rash is itchy.
- **Giardia:** This is an active intestinal parasite that appears 5-25 days after exposure. Symptoms include mild or severe diarrhea, fatigue, occasional vomiting, and may come and go over a period of time. The child cannot return to school until he/she has taken all of the medication (5-10 days) and has two negative tests three days apart. We also need a written confirmation from the doctor that the tests were negative.
- **Shigellosis:** This is a bacterial infection of the intestinal tract. Mild to severe diarrhea is the prominent symptom. The child cannot return until he/she has been treated with medication and the diarrhea is gone.
- **Ringworm:** This fungus is contagious and easily spread. The child should see a doctor for medication. After 24 hours of application of the medication, the child may return to school. However, the area must be kept covered while at school.
- **Measles:** This is contagious for 4-5 days after the onset of the rash. The child cannot return until he/she is fever free and the rash has been gone for three full days.
- **Hand, Foot, & Mouth:** This disease is a mild, contagious viral infection and is characterized by sores in the mouth and a rash on the hands and feet. There is not specific treatment for HFM disease. You can reduce your risk of infection by practicing good hygiene. HFM may cause the following symptoms: fever; sore throat; painful, red, blister lesions on the tongue, gums and inside of cheeks; a red, non-itchy rash on the palms of the hands; sores on the feet and buttocks; irritability in infants and toddlers; and loss of appetite. The incubation period for HFM is 3-7 days. A fever is often the first sign of HFM, followed by a sore throat and not feeling well. One to two days after fever, sores in mouth and a rash on hands and feet may appear. The child cannot return to school until he/she is fever free and the sores/rash has been gone for two days, or as a doctor's note.

*All **skin infections** including scratches, scrapes, and abrasions that have become infected must be covered during the time the child is at school.

Classroom Requirements (Early Education Center):

- Formula/Milk/Drinks in Non-Breakable Bottles or Sippy Cups – All formula must be in liquid form. We will not mix powdered formula in bottles.
- Diapers
- Wipes
- Bibs
- Eating Utensils (Spoons for Baby Food)
- Change of Clothing (We Recommend Two Sets of Clothes.)
- Lunch Box (Healthy Lunches Please)
- Healthy Snacks with Water, Milk, or Juice
- Healthy Breakfast (If Arriving Prior to 7:30a.m.)
- **Label ALL Clothing, Bottles, Cups, Lunch Boxes, Snack Bags, and Diaper Bags!**

Classroom Requirements (Preschool):

- Lunch Box (Healthy Lunches Please) **with ice pack**
- Healthy Snack with Water or Juice in a brown paper bag
- Diapers/Pull-ups and Wipes (K2 Students Only)
- Change of Clothing (Including Socks) -This **MUST** stay in the child's back-pack at all times. We recommend putting them in a 1-gallon plastic bag.
- Nap Mat (We prefer the fabric roll up type, but the thin red and blue four fold mat is also acceptable).
- Back Pack or Preschool Tote Bag
- School Supplies (Supply Lists may be found on www.chcacademy.com)
- **Label All Clothing, Lunch Boxes, Snack Bags, and Supplies!**

Clothing:

Students who are in the K3-K5 classes will wear school uniforms as specified on our school website, as well as, in the Family Handbook. Our 6 week-K2 students will wear comfortable play clothes. Suitable footwear is recommended. Tennis shoes or school shoes are acceptable. Please no flip-flops. All clothing must be bathroom accessible by the student, (Ex. Shorts with elastic instead of zippers, buttons and belts). All students must have an extra set of clothing, including underwear and socks, in their back packs at all times. If your child is a 6 week – K2 student, you may send an extra set of play clothes for your child. If your student is a K3 – K5 student, we ask that you send an extra spare uniform for your child. This saves your child from embarrassment if they have to change clothes; other students will not notice the change if an additional uniform is sent. If your child's clothes become unsuitable to wear and your child does not have a change of clothes, we will call you to come pick up your child and/or bring more clothes.

Communication:

You know your child better than anyone and we welcome all communication between parents and teachers. This is truly a partnership to guide our children/students as they start or continue this journey of learning.

As your child is transitioning to us each morning, we want to give him/her our undivided attention. If you have something specific to share with your child's teacher, please send this information in note form. This allows our teachers to give your child that special attention at the beginning of the day without distraction. It will also provide them the opportunity to review important information as needed. Email is the easiest form of communication for our Preschool teachers. Please make sure to sign up for our school App and or Remind 101.

Discipline:

When a child exhibits unacceptable behavior or attitudes, he/she is instructed as to what is wrong and then directed to a positive alternative approach/behavior. Along with these new attitudes and behaviors, the child is guided in the direction of self-discipline by encouraging him/her to make as many decisions as possible within limits. The limits are as follows:

* If a child is disruptive, he/she will be respectfully asked to stop the behavior. If the child persists to the point of disruption again, he/she will be reminded of his/her behavior and how it affects others. If the disruption continues, and the child willfully refuses to yield to instruction, he/she will be separated from the other children. After the child has been separated from the class activity for a short period of time (2 to 5 minutes) he/she will be invited to rejoin the class to cooperatively participate with their classmates.

* If a child hits or strikes another child or teacher, he/she will be removed from the room and the parents will be contacted.

* If a child is brought to the administrator three or more times in one week, a conference will be requested with the parents to discuss the child's future at CHCA.

Please Note: Our discipline at Cottage Hill Christian Academy Preschool and Early Education Center is always age appropriate. Each teacher will also utilize a specific behavior management plan for her classroom.

Weapons may not be brought to school at any time. If your child brings a gun, sword, knife, or any other type of item that could be used as a weapon, your child will be dismissed from our program.

Biting:

We recognize that biting is a means of expressing frustration for young children; however, biting will not be tolerated at Cottage Hill Christian Academy Preschool and Early Education Center.

As with any behavior, how biting is dealt with depends upon the ages of the children involved, the reason for the biting (if it can be determined), frequency of biting and many other specific circumstances. General guidelines for biting include:

- Helping the bitten child feel better or providing appropriate first aid, if warranted.
- Completing an accident report.
- Discussing the situation with the biter's parent and the parents of the child who was bitten.

Depending on the ages and circumstances involved, additional actions might include:

- Discussing how to use our mouths and teeth to talk and express our wants with words.
- Separation of involved children.
- Ensuring that the environment provides enough challenging activities and toys.
- Carefully observing the involved child to identify precipitating events and prevent recurrences.
- Maintaining a log, to track when the behavior occurs.
- Conferences with parents to discuss the child's actions at home, parental discipline techniques.

Children who bite multiple times in the same day will be sent home.

At that time the parents will be informed that if the biting continues with multiple days in a row or multiple times per day, the child will be dismissed from the program. This decision will be at the director's discretion.

Early Morning Drop Off/Afternoon Pick-Up:

Early Education Center: Upon arrival, parents must sign their child in at the front desk and walk their child to his/her classroom. When picking up, parents must sign their child out at the front desk.

Preschool (K2-K5) students: Please refer to the Drop-off/Pick-up map for times on morning drop off and afternoon pick up. This map is handed out to the students, by the teacher, at the beginning of the school year.

***6 weeks-K5:** If someone other than the parents will be picking up the child, the parents must send a note to the teacher and they must make sure that the person picking up is on the purple pick-up permission form. You will receive this purple form in the information package at the beginning of school and turn it into the front office.

Extended Care (Preschool):

Cottage Hill Christian Academy Preschool offers Extended Care for our preschool students. Morning extended care will begin at 6:00a.m and end ten minutes prior to start of school. At that time, K2 students will be picked up by their teacher from the morning care classroom and K3-K5 students will be walked to their classrooms. Afternoon extended care will begin at 2:45p.m and last until 6:00p.m. When students are picked up after 6:00p.m., a Late Pick-Up Fee will be charged. Please see Martha Winter for pricing and Extended Care Enrollment Form.

Field Trips (Preschool):

Throughout the year, our preschool students will take field trips that will be organized for the children's educational interests. Each student must have a parent, family member, or guardian to accompany them on each field trip. Safety for each child is our highest concern; therefore each child must be transported by a family member to and from each field trip in an appropriate child safety seat. Field trips are for our Cottage Hill Christian Academy Preschool students only. We believe that field trips are a great opportunity to spend one-on-one time with your child exploring and learning new things. Only non-walking siblings are permitted to attend Cottage Hill Christian Academy Preschool field trips.

Life At Preschool

Children learn by participating in a great variety of activities. The most natural way for a child this age to learn is through play, by observation and by doing things themselves.

At Preschool children are encouraged to:

- express themselves and communicate with others
- form basic concepts which help them understand their world
- develop self-confidence
- make friends
- share and co-operate with others
- develop physical skills
- develop a positive attitude toward learning
- grow in their spiritual development

Many people still remain unsure as to just what Preschool is all about. Preschool is not "child minding" – it is about the development of important skills – those which are needed in everyday living, in relationships with other people, and in being ready for school. We strive to have each child working to his or her full potential, in all areas, and to have them feel good about themselves, and the prospect of school. We want each child to have developmentally appropriate experiences that build excitement about the learning process.

A child's play is his/her work. It is the one way he/she has of making sense of the world in which he/she lives, and of developing their skills – emotionally, socially, intellectually and physically. Due to the unique nature and capabilities of each child, we cannot expect them to have all reached the same level at the same time. What we can strive for though, is to capture the learning interests and curiosity of each child, through the educational experiences we offer, and through providing an environment in which the child feels free to explore and learn without fear of failure. We use a “process centered” approach in our teaching which means- what is extremely important is the process by which the child discovers and learns. If we can instill good ways of learning things now, it will equip them in their learning experiences all through life.

Our goal is to:

- provide an environment which is Christ centered and based on Biblical values
- provide a creative learning environment, which encourages children to participate in concrete learning activities
- be a great resource for parents of small children
- create a learning environment which is welcoming, safe, and fun
- celebrate all learning experiences – (no matter how big or how small);
- provide a program which is based on Developmentally Appropriate Early Childhood Teaching Practices .

Lunch:

Early Education Center: Our EEC students should bring a lunch from home each day. All formula must be in liquid form and in non-breakable bottles clearly labeled with your child's name. All other drinks and milk should be sent in non-breakable sippy cups clearly labeled with your child's name. A nutritious lunch should be send for our toddlers with snacks and plenty to drink in a lunch box clearly labeled with your child's name.

Preschool: At CHCA, our students may either bring lunch from home or they have the opportunity to order lunch from the CHCA Cafeteria. Everything that is brought from home must be clearly labeled with your child's name.

If you are sending a lunch from home for your child, please send a nutritious, filling lunch for your child with water, milk, or juice to drink. Each child's lunch box should have an ice pack in it to keep all items cold. Students are not allowed to bring food that needs to be heated up for lunch. Our teachers are not permitted to heat your child's food in a microwave.

If you wish you may order a lunch card to be kept on file in the cafeteria. All Preschool Lunches are \$4.00 a day. You can load the lunch card with 10 lunches for \$40. You may use the lunch card as little or as often as you need. When your lunch card gets within two lunches left, you will be contacted to re-load. A lunch menu will be on the school website. Checks should be made payable to Cottage Hill Baptist Church.

Parents in the E.E.C. and Preschool:

There are a number of ways you can assist us in providing your child with the best possible education at Preschool:

- Praying for your child/children and their teacher(s). Please join our Warrior Prayer Pals. This is a simple way to stay connected with your child while you are apart. Ask your teacher about this great ministry.
- Supporting and encouraging your child to develop a positive sense of self-worth as they discover God's love for them.
- Discussing any problems or worries directly with the teacher.
- Reading the class goal sheet and school communications.
- Offering to share any hobbies, interests, or expertise you may have with the children and teachers.
- Become a room mother or assistant room mother.
- Become a Reading Warrior. *Grandparents make GREAT Reading Warriors!*

Our CHCA Preschool aims to provide a program and environment that will assist the children as they begin to make a smooth transition from the naturalistic learning environment of the home to the more formal learning environment of school.

Potty Training (Preschool):

*K2 - We will work closely with parents to encourage each child in their independent potty habits. Our trained staff is happy to help every child become independent.

*K3 - We require our K3 students to have full control and be able to tell the teacher when they need to "go." We understand that many three year olds are still learning. The K3 teachers plan many times in each day, as restroom breaks, but a child may visit the restroom as needed. We understand that accidents will happen and they will be dealt with in a kind and loving manner.

*K4 & K5----We expect our four and five year old students to be independent in this area. On rare occasion the K4 or K5 student will have an "accident." Thus, it is imperative to have an extra set of clothing in your child's backpack at all times.

*All students K2-K5 should have an extra set of clothes, including underwear and socks, in their backpacks at all times.

*If a K3-K5 student soils their clothing due to a bowel movement, parents will be called to pick up the student or to assist in the cleaning process.

Rest Time (Preschool):

Our students in K2-K5 rest each day. Each child will need his/her own nap mat to be kept at school each day. Fabric nap mats will be sent home each Friday to be washed. It is imperative that nap mats be sent back to school each Monday. We do not have extra nap mats to supply to children. While the time students take naps differs, the rules are the same. Students must be lying down and quiet at all times. All students may not sleep, but they all need down time. Our K2-K-4 students may bring a small "lovey" from home to sleep with, if needed. Please do not send additional blankets or pillows.

Separation from the parent:

The process of separation from the parent as the child enters and attends the Early Education Center or Preschool is one of the most important accomplishments for a child. At each age level, a child will react differently. As children mature, they begin to identify themselves as independent personalities. In separating from you, the parent, your child is learning:

- To develop an interest in activities of the E.E.C and Preschool
- To feel comfortable with others at the. E.E.C and Preschool
- To understand that his/her parents will come back and pick him/her up

When your child is having anxiety about you leaving him/her at school, here are some suggestions that may help you in making your child more comfortable:

- Provide a secret handshake or a bright red kiss on their hand. Do something that will be visible all day.
- Place an emphasis on what the child will be doing at school rather than what your activities will be while you are away.
- Ask the teacher for help. She is well trained and will be a great source of comfort and security to your child.
- Tell your child when you are leaving, avoid prolonged good-byes.

Snack:

Early Education Center: Parents should send the appropriate amount of snacks/bottles depending on the amount of time your child will be staying in our program each day. Our children will snack several times throughout the day.

Preschool: Please send a healthy snack and water or juice in a disposable brown bag with the child's name on it. Our preschool students are not allowed to have soft drinks at school. Please refrain from sending sugary foods and/or candy for snack. Please note that our teachers do not have extra snacks or snack drinks available for your child.

Treasures from Home:

TOYS may be brought from home on DESIGNATED DAYS. Treasures can be lost and broken, while we do not wish to dampen your child's enthusiasm, we would appreciate it if your child would leave their jewelry and toys at home on other days. Your child is encouraged however to bring any type of INTERESTING SPECIMEN/OBJECT ex. rocks, shells, flowers, or insects to enrich the Science program. All electronic devices used in the learning process will be provided by the classroom teacher. Please **do not** send any electronic devices with your child to school. CHCA will **not** be held accountable for any damaged or lost devices.

Weather Related Closure:

In the event that inclement weather forces a cancellation of regular activities, notification will be given through email or text message and through local media. Most decisions will be made by 5:30 a.m. on the day of the inclement weather. Please be aware that on the rare occasion, we will request you pick up your child by a specific time due to emergency weather conditions.