



# Hunter Mill Country Day School Parent Handbook

## Our Mission Statement

Hunter Mill Country Day School is a special place where your child can interact, explore, learn, and grow in a unique, loving environment; where children are constantly learning through play and fostering long-term friendships and creativity—a home away from home. As a parent-assisted organization, we remain sensitive to the needs and interests of HMCDS families.

We welcome you to our school.

Sharon M. Hayeck  
Director

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# The History of Hunter Mill Country Day School

In 1967, “The Kitchen Farm” at 2021 Hunter Mill Road was purchased by Captain and Mrs. Klare, both educators, and Hunter Mill Country Day School (HMCDS) was born.

Starting as a small preschool, HMCDS also provided extended daycare. Owing to its then-remote location, a station wagon was used to pick up and return the children from as far away as Fairfax City, Greenbriar and Great Falls. This journey was made three times a day for a total of 100 miles each day! Later, two small yellow buses were purchased to transport the children to and from the school. As fate would have it, the driver of one of those buses had spent his boyhood years with his family in the little white house that is located near the school building. As development in Northern Fairfax County intensified and the school’s enrollment grew, HMCDS was no longer as isolated and the buses were sold.

The Klares originally had visions of building a private school in the area where the barns are located, offering classes from kindergarten to high school. However, after many successful years, the Klares decided to retire and hired a series of Directors, none of which had both the business and people skills necessary to run a school. The school began losing money and many families withdrew their children from HMCDS. Things looked pretty grim until Judith Beattie came along and with her devotion, love of children, concern, and hard work, made HMCDS the fun place it is today!

In 1978, Mrs. Beattie purchased the business and rented the property. Enrollment was only about 35 children and the school was in poor financial condition. Gradually, enrollment picked up and improvements to the school were made, mainly through the help of HMCDS families. A Parents’ Group was established and two parents held seats on the school’s Board. In the fall and spring, the school held clean-up days.

In 1980, the property owners informed Mrs. Beattie that they wished to sell and that she had the right of first refusal. After discussing this with Ira Saul, one of the parents who handled the legal work for the school, it was decided to purchase the property. Negotiations continued for two years.

The school’s first Board members were elected by the parents. Ira Saul, with the help of another parent, Jack Conner, guided the process to establish a parent directed center.

Over the years a number of improvements have been made to the facilities. What is now the library was once part of the playground. In 1972, that area was enclosed to make space for a first-grade classroom, which was later used as the Director’s office. All of the barns were cleared of trash (they were full), the fields were regularly mowed, and the carpeting was replaced many times. The bathroom were also refurbished.

Finally, with the school bursting at the seams, it was decided to add a room for after-school programs. This process took about 2½ years and included modifying the driveway, buying a fire hydrant, and a number of other improvements. The cost was \$170,000—about one-third of that was for the actual room, the rest went towards meeting Fairfax County regulations and completing

exterior alterations. Improvements have continued through the years, with the most recent being the complete renovation of the Red Barn.

In 2012, after several years of complying with Fairfax County regulations and requirements, Mrs. Beattie's vision for the future finally became a reality - a new addition was added onto the current school building. In addition, all three existing classrooms on the main floor were enlarged and private bathrooms were added for each room. Down the hallway the large addition was constructed, creating two large, beautiful, new spaces along with a movable partition wall that opens up for special events and functions. Extra outdoor water fountains were installed on the playgrounds and a large outdoor deck was added onto the small playground side of the building. The school actually remained open during construction to the delight of the children who were able to watch dump trucks, diggers, and a large crane lifting the roof frame onto the new addition.

In 2014, after over 40 years of dedication and devotion to HMCDS and the countless number of children whom she has loved and cared for as though they were her own, Mrs. Beattie sold her beloved school to Sharon Hayeck, a long-time staff member, teacher and administrator who has been with HMCDS for 10 years. Mrs. Hayeck looks forward to continuing all of the many customs and traditions that has made Hunter Mill Country Day School such a special place for children and families alike.

# About the Program

## Curriculum

At HMCDS, each child is viewed as a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth and development. Different levels of ability, development, and learning styles are expected, accepted, and used to design age-appropriate activities.

We provide children with a variety of planned active learning experiences that meet children's needs and stimulate learning in all developmental areas.

Our curriculum centers around weekly topics or themes. Activities which are incorporated into these themes include group time, creative art, music and movement, indoor and outdoor play, field trips, science and nature study, snacks, and play with equipment and creative materials. They also attend weekly Spanish and Movement classes in addition to pony rides.

Involvement in these activities will engage children in a total learning process developing skills in language development and literacy, socio-emotional development, physical development, cognitive development, and aesthetic development.

## Philosophy & Goals

Preschool is a very important time for your child. The activities that we use are designed to provide the children with a love of learning, a sense of self-worth, and respect for others. At HMCDS, we are committed to providing an environment where children can develop as individuals and acquire a comfortable, realistic concept of self. With a positive awareness of self, a child is then freer to develop intellectually and can work toward a happier relationship with others.

We believe children learn best when they are happy and relaxed and when the activities are meaningful to them. Our classrooms are filled with safe, age-appropriate games, books, art supplies, and other learning tools. Our outside play areas provide special opportunities for exploring nature, planting, and learning about and handling small animals.

## Staff

Our teachers and staff are carefully chosen, not only for their expertise in child development and education, but also for their commitment to caring for children. The teachers' task is to help children to acquire happy, useful patterns of behavior and a sense of wonder and trust, which will help them to become productive, creative adults.

## Play

Our program is founded on the belief that play is the most developmentally appropriate and productive avenue for young children's learning.

Have you ever heard someone remark about an early childhood program—even ours, perhaps—that “all the children do there is play?” At good early childhood programs there is a lot of play—and there should be!

Years of research on children’s learning and development document the many benefits of play for children’s intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and language development. Children at play are actively involved in creating themes, exploring and establishing environments, solving problems, and developing shared understandings.

Children play in many ways. They play independently, sometimes near each other but with each child engrossed in his/her own activity. They engage in what is called “parallel play,” perhaps using each other’s toys or even talking, but not coordinating their play. They also play cooperatively, organizing roles and scenarios for group play. As they get older, children are capable of more cooperative, coordinated play. But all kinds of play are valuable.

As kids play with each other, they learn to see other children’s points of view and begin to become more empathetic and caring. They come to understand customs and rules in their own culture and to appreciate those of others. They learn to use language in new ways to describe their play and to interact with others. And in play, children develop their muscles and coordination.

Adults support children’s play by providing space, opportunity, and materials. We set up areas where kids can play without fear of damaging furniture or injuring themselves. We make sure that they have the time to choose and to become engaged in their own play activities. And when we provide them with simple, interesting materials—no newfangled, expensive gadgets required—kids take it from there.

Play is fun. But it also is serious business that pays big dividends to its eager young investors.

## Enrollment Options

HMCDS is open from 6:30am – 6:30pm and is licensed to care for children between the ages of 2 and 12. Children between the ages of 2 and 6 are eligible for full-day care and preschool programs. Children who attend the morning session only participate in the preschool program, which runs from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. each day. Day care services—both early morning and afternoon—are wrapped around this program. The school operates year-round, with separate registrations for school-year and summer sessions. While the school-year session is more structured and focused on traditional school-day activities, the summer session offers opportunities for a variety of summer-time activities, such as swimming and nature lessons.

Before and after school care is available for children ages five to twelve who attend public school. With this program, children are bussed by Fairfax County between HMCDS and Oakton Elementary School in the morning and afternoon. Sunrise Elementary School children are bussed to HMCDS when Fairfax County designates us as a bus stop. After-school care children are provided with time to complete their homework assignments, have snacks, engage in fun outdoor activities and spend time involved in a variety of indoor quiet activities. Children who participate in this program may also attend *full-time* during the summer session, school breaks and teacher workdays, as space allows and for an additional fee —except for the ten HMCDS holidays.

## Class Groupings

Children are grouped into the following classes by age:

- Tadpoles:** 2 year olds
- Penguins:** Late 2s/Early 3s
- Dolphins:** Mid 3s – Mid 4s
- Tigers:** 4 ½ and older, 1-5 days a week
- Blue Whales:** 4 ½ and older, 5 days a week
- Unicorns:** School-age

These ages are approximate and may vary from year to year based on the number of children of each age that are enrolled.

## Discipline

We believe that a stimulating and loving environment that intrigues and involves children, that affords them the right to make choices, and protects the rights of individuals helps promote inner control and self-discipline. Classroom rules are designed to protect children and their property and to promote pro-social behavior.

Our primary means for effective behavior management is positive reinforcement. If problems do arise, however, the teachers will:

1. remind the child in terms of acceptable behaviors,
2. redirect the child's activity to an area that may be more calming or involving, and/or,
3. remove the child briefly until he/she decides he/she is able to regain self-control.

### **Unacceptable Forms of Discipline include:**

1. Any form of physical punishment or any attempt to enclose a child in any confined space;
2. Punishment by another child;
3. Separating a child from the group so that the child is away from the hearing and vision of a staff member;
4. Withholding or forcing of food or rest;
5. Demeaning verbal statements;
6. Punishment for toileting accidents;
7. Punishment by applying unpleasant or harmful substances.

## The School Day & Special Events

Hunter Mill is located at 2021 Hunter Mill Rd, Vienna VA 22181. The Director and staff can be reached during business hours, 6:30am to 6:30pm, at (703) 281-4422.

### Arriving & Departing

When dropping off and picking up your child, please park your vehicle, ***turn off your engine***, and enter through the front door. Always use the front door to drop off and pick up your child. ***Never*** use any other entrance, gate or exit. The speed limit in the parking lot and driveway is ***10 MPH***. Children must be walked in and brought to their class. Please do not ever drop off your child in the circle or parking lot area and leave them to walk in alone.

For those attending the morning session only (9:00-1:00), children should arrive between 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. Children should be picked up promptly at 1:00 p.m.

For those attending all day, children may arrive as early as 6:30 a.m. Children *must* be picked up no later than 6:30 p.m.

**Please stop at the front desk and have your child cross off his/her name on the list as you depart.**

Please note that late charges will be assessed for failing to observe the stated pickup times, as noted on the Tuition and Fee Schedule.

### Snacks & Meals

Daily snacks are provided by the school at 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. If you would like to send a snack for a special occasion—such as a birthday—please make arrangements in advance with your child’s teacher.

Children should eat breakfast before they come to school. Lunch is prepared at HMCDS and is served at noon. Lunch menus are available in the monthly newsletter and posted within the school on various bulletin boards at the beginning of each month. If your child is on a special diet for medical reasons, please let us know.

HMCDS is a **nut free environment**, which means that none of the meals or snacks will contain nuts nor are any outside foods allowed on campus if it contains nuts. **Please note that this rule also applies on field trips.** If your child brings in a food item containing nuts (ie. Peanut butter, Nutella, etc), they will not be allowed to open or eat it. They will instead be provided a meal prepared by HMCDS staff.

\*\* If your child has any allergies, please inform the teacher personally in addition to writing the allergy in the school forms. Please provide your child’s teacher with a recent photo of your child so that the teacher may post his/her photo with detailed allergy info in the classroom for your child’s safety.



## Clothing

To ensure that the children can enjoy both indoor and outdoor play, it is important that clothing be casual, durable, and washable. Children go outside daily, weather permitting; therefore outerwear should be appropriate for the time of year. **All clothing should be clearly marked with the child's name, including gloves and hats.** In addition, please provide a complete change of clothes in your child's cubby or backpack. We also ask that parents launder and return any borrowed clothing, promptly.

## Items from Home

The school cannot be responsible for personal items brought from home. If your child is planning to bring in a toy, such as a favorite stuffed animal he/she sleeps with, make sure it is tagged with the child's name.

## Celebrations

We have a number of celebrations throughout the school and summer:

- Halloween - children make their own costumes & we have a parade
- Thanksgiving - parents are invited to a Thanksgiving lunch with their child
- Winter Holidays - Santa visits each child around Christmas
- The Fourth of July (summer session)
- School-year kick off & end of summer celebration – Children enjoy a moon bounce/inflated water slide and ice cream.
- Other special events during the school year may include: Chinese New Year, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day and Easter.

We are *always receptive* to learning about and celebrating other cultures' special holidays with assistance from parents. Please speak to your child's teacher if you have ideas.

## Birthdays

Please notify your child's teacher if you wish to provide a snack for a special day. You may want to try some healthy alternatives to cupcakes too, such as fruit, muffins, etc. Reminder: We have a "no nuts" policy throughout the school grounds.

## Field Trips

Each class tries to take periodic field trips to places that are tied in with our units of study (post office, bakery, etc.). Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend. A signed Field Trip Transportation Consent form must be on file in order for a child to go on a field trip. Suggestions for places to visit are always welcomed. If a field trip is scheduled on a day that your child does

not attend, you and your child are welcome to join the class together on the field trip. Teachers make every attempt to schedule field trips on different days of the week through the year to try and ensure that all children who come part-time will be able to enjoy some of the field trips.

## **Parents Night and Parents Day Out**

This is an opportunity for parents to have some free time outside of school hours. It is held approx. once a month and run solely by HMCDS teachers, not by HMCDS. Sign up sheets are put out in the lobby two weeks ahead of time. There is a minimal charge for participation and is open to currently enrolled students and their siblings, age 2 through 12.

## **Holiday House**

This event usually happens the first weekend in December and is meant to be a fun holiday event including pictures with Santa, letters to Santa, Pony Rides, holiday crafts and games, followed by a singing performance by our own wonderful HMCDS children. More information can be found in the fundraising section on page 10. Parent participation is encouraged and welcome!

## **Spring Picnic**

More information can be found in the fundraising section on page 10. Parent participation is encouraged and welcome!

## **Information Sources**

In addition to this Parent Handbook, there are many places you can get information about what's going on at HMCDS.

### **On the Screened-In-Porch**

- The baskets contain copies of our Monthly Newsletter and Lunch Menu.
- The white board is updated frequently with announcements and reminders of various current events.
- The Calendar white board highlights monthly activities, special events, class field trips, puppet shows, etc.

### **Front Office**

- The front counter will have various sign-up sheets and interesting relevant articles for parents interested in learning more about our Play-Based philosophy.
- Staff photos are posted on the bulletin board so that you may become familiar with and recognize your own child's teacher as well as other teachers at HMCDS.
- We also have hot coffee for parents during the school year on the front counter – Enjoy!

### **Newsletter**

The HMCDS newsletter features articles from the Director as well as from the teachers of each class on upcoming events, topics of study and reminders. It also contains notices from the various Parent Advisory Board Committees on their

accomplishments and goals for the year. The newsletter is emailed monthly to all parents and a few printed copies can be found in the baskets in the front porch.

## Online

- **HMCDS Website**

Visit [www.hmclds.com](http://www.hmclds.com) for additional information about our school including all the necessary forms to enroll your child or register for Summer camps. Our website also has a password protected calendar that parents can use to keep track of upcoming events at HMCDS and can also sync it with their own Google calendar. The password can be found each month in the Web/IT section of the Newsletter.

## Parent Involvement

### Parent Participation

HMCDS encourages—and welcomes—parent participation in school activities so they not only become a part of their children’s preschool/day care experience, but also get to know the teachers, the other children, and the parents who make up the HMCDS family. If you would like to assist in field trips or present a special program on a hobby or special interest, job, travel, etc. for your child’s class, please indicate your willingness to your child’s teacher.

### Parent Advisory Board (PAB)

HMCDS maintains an Advisory Board comprised of volunteer parents. Any and all parents are welcome to attend and provide input. PAB’s purpose is to provide advice to HMCDS on the operation of school affairs in the best interests of the enrolled children and their parents. Parents become members of the PAB by simply attending monthly meetings.

Topics the Board addresses include, among other things: long-range planning; maintenance and improvement of buildings and grounds; fundraising ideas and planning; educational events to supplement the curriculum; and general school policies.

The PAB currently has four standing committees: Education, Buildings & Grounds, Social & Fundraising, and Web/IT. These committees discuss and present recommendations on issues within their purview to the PAB for action. While the PAB makes only non-binding recommendations, the school Director traditionally relies upon the PAB’s guidance.

### School Visits

Parents are welcome to visit their child’s classroom at any time; however, to ensure that teachers can devote their full attention to the needs of the children, we request that parent/teacher conferences or any pro-longed discussions be conducted at prearranged times—not during special visits or at drop off. Although we maintain an “open door” policy, visits must be scheduled through the office and/or your child’s teacher in order to minimize class disruptions.

## Conferences

Two parent/teacher conferences are scheduled each year—in the fall and the spring—to discuss goals for your child and overall developmental progress. Should you desire a conference at any other time, please speak to your child's teacher.

Some parents have asked what questions they should ask the teachers at conferences. The following are some things you might want to know—suggestions only:

1. Does my child seem happy at school?
2. Does he/she interact appropriately with the other children?
3. What are his/her favorite activities?
4. Does he/she follow directions?
5. Is he/she able to (or learning to) wait and take turns?
6. What types of activities are appropriate for me to do at home that would build on school activities?

## Parent Programs

Workshops and other informational meetings for parents are scheduled throughout the year based on interest and parental input. These programs are planned by the Advisory Board's Education Committee. Examples of some past workshops are: Positive Discipline, CPR/First Aid and Kindergarten Readiness.

### Clean-up Days

HMCDS holds two Saturday clean-up days annually, one in the fall and one in the spring, conveniently scheduled to coincide with Parent/Teacher Conference days. All parents are encouraged to participate. Childcare is usually available for a portion of the day. A list of tasks is typically posted prior to the cleanup day, so volunteers can choose the tasks at which they are most comfortable—painting classrooms, spreading mulch, raking leaves or making playground/building improvements. The spring cleanup also includes planting flowers. Special past projects have included building new pens for the rabbits, trimming trees and installing classroom cubbies. *Anything parents can do to avoid hiring outside assistance helps hold down the cost of tuition.* Parents with particular interest in sharing special expertise, tools or talent are welcome to share their ideas with the staff.

## Fundraising

HMCDS holds various fundraising activities throughout the year. Below is a description of the major events. These fundraising activities benefit the entire school and are one of the ways we keep tuition costs low. Parent participation is welcomed and encouraged!

### **Fall Auction**

This event has been one of the biggest fundraisers for HMCDS and is normally held on a Saturday in early November. It is an adult-only event with a dinner buffet. There is a silent auction followed by an exciting live auction to auction off the amazing paintings made by each class. The funds raised by this event are used for holiday bonuses for the staff, for upgrading equipment on the playgrounds, and other necessary items to benefit our HMCDS children. Parents Night Out is usually held on this same night and fills up fast! Plan ahead!

### **Spring Picnic**

This annual event is one of the major highlights of the year for kids and parents alike. The all-school picnic is held on a Saturday in early June and features food, a moon bounce, children's games and activities, pony rides and the parents' favorite—a singing recital by each class on the outdoor stage. There is also a bake sale and silent auction of gift baskets and other items. Quality children's books are also available for sale at the picnic – the school earns books for its library and classrooms based on the number of books sold at the picnic. Lunch is also available for purchase.

### **Other Fundraising Avenues**

From time to time, HMCDS conducts various low-key fundraisers comprised of items for sale. In the past it has included pizzas, plants, and toys for sale as well as our monthly Salon Days where your child (and parents too) can get their hair cut. Order forms and necessary brochures are made available at the front counter for those interested in supporting the school. The school uses funds generated from these sales to buy new furniture and supplies as needed. We have also been able to purchase some special equipment, like the pottery wheel and kiln and large magnetic dry erase boards for each class, with the funds we have raised. If you would like to help or can think of a fundraiser we haven't thought of, please discuss your ideas with the Fundraising Committee.

# Administrative Issues & Policies

## School Sessions and Billing

### School-Year Session

The HMCDS school year begins the day after Labor Day and ends on the last day of school for Fairfax County Public Schools and follows the FCPS schedule. The annual tuition for the school year is divided into 10 equal monthly payments. This method evens out the payments even though the number of days/weeks of school varies from month to month. Please be aware that if your child attends for both the school year and the summer session, you will receive 2 bills in June. Invoices are emailed approximately 1 week prior to the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. Payments are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month, with a 5 day grace period. Late fees will accrue if not paid by the 5<sup>th</sup>. Note: HMCDS is researching the possibility of converting to an automatic tuition payment system for the convenience and benefit of HMCDS's families.

### Summer Camp Session

The HMCDS Summer Camp Session generally begins the day after the close of Fairfax County Public Schools and ends the Friday before Labor Day. All children who will attend during the summer, including those currently enrolled for the school year, will need to be registered separately for the summer session. Registration for the summer session, which takes place in March/April, is subject to space availability based on priority tiers: preschoolers enrolled during the school year are registered first, followed by school-age children enrolled during the school year. Siblings and others not enrolled during the school year are registered last as well as families from outside HMCDS. Please note that the number of spots available for the school-age children and for those not enrolled during the school year may be limited.

The summer session is organized by individual weeks. This system gives families the benefit of not having to pay for weeks their children will not be at HMCDS, while allowing the school to fill any vacancies. ***By registering, however, you commit to pay for the weeks for which you have registered. No withdrawals can be made after the registration deadline. Staffing is scheduled early to ensure we have quality summer staff and is based on the # of children registered at that time. Days can always be added on a space available basis and must be approved in advance by the Director.***

The summer is divided into two billing periods. Dates for billing may vary from year to year depending on the # of summer weeks designated by FCPS dates. Tuition payments are due within 5 days of the beginning of each billing period.

Additional details concerning Summer Session registration procedures are distributed prior to the registration period and are include on the Summer Registration Form and Summer Tuition Rates form.

## Registration Forms

### Required HMCDS Forms

Prior to your child's first day of attendance at HMCDS, the following forms must be completed and returned to the Director:

- Annual Enrollment Contract – completed yearly
- Student Registration Form
- Commonwealth of Virginia School Health Entrance Form – 4 pages completed by your child's pediatrician and submitted upon enrollment. An updated Immunization form is required when your child turns 4 years old.
- Teacher Information Form
- Illness/Communicable Disease Form

Additionally, the Director must verify proof of birth by examining the **original** birth certificate (copies are NOT acceptable) for each child to be enrolled. Please show your child's birth certificate to the Director before your child's first day of attendance as well as a picture ID of one parent.

### Optional HMCDS Forms

The following forms must be completed and returned to the Director before your child can participate in the related activity:

- Field Trip Policy for Parents & Transportation Acknowledgement
- HMCDS Equine Activity Release Form (Pony Rides)
- Snow Activity/Sledding Release Form
- Parental Consent Form For Medication (if applicable)
- Swim Assessment & Release Forms – (Summer session only)

## School Holidays

HMCDS is closed on the following days: Labor Day, Columbus Day, 2 Days at Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day and Independence Day. If the holiday falls on a Saturday the school will be closed the preceding Friday; if the holiday falls on a Sunday the school will be closed the following Monday.

## **Pick-Up Policy**

Children will only be released to their parent, guardian, or other responsible persons as designated on the Annual Enrollment Contract or Registration Form. Pickup by any other person requires special arrangements made in advance with the Director. A driver's license or other government issued picture ID will be required at pick up from these person(s). If your child is not picked up by their required pick-up time and we are unable to reach the parent(s), we will call those persons listed as Emergency contacts as designated on the Enrollment Contract and Registration forms. Late fees will be assessed.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

HMCDS will follow Fairfax County Public Schools closings for snow or other inclement weather in the sense that you will need to check your email for HMCDS' decision - an email will be sent out by 5:30am or earlier on the day in question notifying families that either (1) we have decided to follow the FCPS decision and close, (2) we have decided it is safe to open at our regular 6:30am time, or (3) we have decided to have a delayed opening so that our driveway can be plowed/salted to make is safe for our families. The decision will also be posted on our Facebook page as well. We are trying to find a balance that will ensure the safety of our staff and children on snowy/icy days but still be able to provide care every day possible for our families.

If FCPS has a delayed opening, HMCDS will be delayed for the same amount of time. For example, if FCPS has a 2 hour delayed opening, HMCDS will open at 8:30am instead of its usual 6:30am opening. Please call the school or check for an email if you are unsure whether it is open.

If HMCDS decides it is necessary to close early due to inclement weather, an email will be sent out and children should be picked up within the hour. Parents should notify the school immediately if they are unable to get to the school within one hour. It may be necessary for HMCDS to contact designated Emergency contacts to pick up your child if the parent(s) is unable to do so.

## **NATURAL DISASTER POLICY**

In the event of a natural disaster, children will be retained at the school until parents are able to pick them up. We will ensure that they are taken to the safest part of the building depending on circumstances (i.e., the basement in the case of a tornado). Parents will be notified by the best means possible depending on the circumstances at that time. Children should be picked up as soon as possible. It may be necessary for HMCDS to contact designated Emergency contacts to pick up your child if the parent(s) is unable to do so.

## **FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS**

- Fire drills are held weekly during the first month of school and monthly thereafter.
- Diagrams showing the exit routes are posted in all classrooms. Upon hearing the fire alarm, children are taught to remain quiet and calmly, but quickly, exit the building



following the teacher in charge. Children learn to form a line at a designated area so attendance can be taken. Children will remain outside until given the signal to return.

- In the event of a bomb scare, the building will be evacuated and children will assemble in their designated area (same as fire drill location).
- Should it be necessary, in an emergency evacuation situation, the children will seek shelter in the Red Barn. If children on a field trip are unable to return to the school, they will go to and remain at the Oakton Library where parents can pick up their children. Teachers will communicate via cell phones if necessary.
- Tornado drills are practiced both in the early fall and spring seasons.
- Other emergency plans are available for parental review in the school office.

## **CRISIS MANAGEMENT/EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

A Crisis Management/Emergency Preparedness Plan has been developed and approved. All employees have been trained accordingly.

## **ACCIDENTS AND FIRST AID**

Parents will be notified of minor injuries sustained by their child by written notice at pick-up time, giving the date/time of the injury, the treatment provided, and shall be signed by both the parent and the teacher present at the time of the injury. The Injury form shall remain in the child's file and a copy provided upon request by the parent.

The parents of a child who has sustained a more serious injury will be notified by the Director or Director's designee as soon as reasonably possible, taking into consideration such factors as the apparent severity of the accident/injury and the priority of providing assistance to the child.

If an incident results in a medical condition or injury which can be reasonably known to the appropriate staff member and/or the Director, HMCDS and its staff are authorized to render reasonable basic first aid if such direct medical assistance would, in the opinion of the school, serve to minimize the severity of the injured person's condition. In addition, staff may secure professional diagnosis and/or treatment if such action, in the opinion of the school, appears to be reasonably warranted.

The school and school officials shall be expressly held harmless from any liability costs or expenses associated with the professional diagnosis and/or any treatment or first aid provided (including but not limited to the cost of transportation), such costs or expenses being the responsibility of the injured party or, if a minor child, the minor child's parents.

## **HEALTH & ILLNESS POLICY**

At HMCDS, we believe that the health of the children in our care is the combined responsibility of parents and the school. We ask that parents not send children to school when they are ill. HMCDS

always notifies parents when their children become ill at school or have been exposed to a contagious disease. Likewise, we expect parents to notify the school if their child has been diagnosed with a communicable disease—such as chicken pox—so that we can notify other parents.

### **When a Child Becomes Sick at HMCDS**

If a child becomes ill at school, the School Director will contact the child's parents by telephone. Parents are expected to pick up a sick child with one hour or as soon as possible.

*Children with fevers or contagious or infectious diseases* will be sent home promptly and excluded from school while in that condition, per Virginia Department of Health regulations.

Once the student is confirmed to be free of communicable illness by a healthcare provider or is fever free and symptom free for 24 hours without taking anti-fever medications, the student may return to school, afterschool and extracurricular activities.

*Children who are ill in the morning should remain at home.* Sending a sick child to school hampers learning and spreads infection. The school should be informed of any contagious diseases or conditions (i.e. chicken pox, measles, strep throat, fifth disease, lice). Children should be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school.

*A student who has experienced vomiting and/or diarrhea* should likewise be free of these symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school.

If students become ill or injured at school, to the extent that they can no longer fully participate, parents will be asked to pick them up from school within one hour. Children will be released only to an authorized person. In extreme cases, students will be taken directly to the hospital by ambulance.

### **Food or Other Allergies**

HMCDS provides a hot lunch and milk plus several snacks daily. Water is always available and encouraged. A Lunch Menu is emailed with our monthly Newsletter and is also posted in various places throughout the school. HMCDS is a NUT-FREE environment. Please list any and all allergies your child may have on the Registration Form, pg. 2. Also please notify your child's teachers directly of any allergies and provide a recent photo of your child so that your child's photo and allergy information can be posted in the classroom and seen by all staff.

## **MEDICATION ADMINISTRATION OVERVIEW**

HMCDS will have appropriate MAT-trained personnel administer needed medications to your child. Parents are required to fill out a Medication Form (available in the office) before the appropriate personnel may do so.

All trained staff are required to administer medication within the guidelines set forth by the Virginia Department of Social Services Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers and summarized here.

All prescription and over the counter (OTC) medications may be administered during the school day under the following conditions:

1. When the need for administration of medicines during school hours has been confirmed by the parent, Director or MAT-trained staff member;
2. After the first dose of any medication has been given at home;
3. When the parent/guardian provides and transports the medication to and from school and the medication is given directly to the Director or MAT-trained staff member;
4. When there is a health care provider's written order signed by the parent/guardian requesting the school to administer medication;
5. When the medication is brought to the school in its original container stating the name of the student, the dosage and method of administration prescribed by a physician. It is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to notify the school of any changes to the original prescription. The new prescription must also be brought to the school in the original container as stated above;
6. When the appropriate medication authorization form has been completed, signed and accompanies the medication;
7. For any medication, parents must document the number of tablets or dosages to be secured for administration. If tablets are to be divided, the parent or guardian is responsible for dividing the tablets that are to be divided in order to achieve their child's proper dosage.

All OTC and prescription medications are to be kept locked in the school office and be administered only by the MAT-trained staff member. No child is to carry/possess medications in their backpack or on their personal belongings.

No medication will be administered unless the school has received a signed copy of the Medication Authorization Form. OTC medications do not require a health care provider's signature unless the medication is required for ten (10) or more consecutive days.

Children are NOT permitted to self-medicate. The school does not assume responsibility for medications taken independently by the student. Exceptions may be made on a case by case basis for older children who demonstrate the capability to carry and self-administer emergency life-saving medications (e.g. inhaler, Epi-pen).

Within one week after expiration of the effective date on the order, or on the last day of school, the parent/guardian must personally collect any unused portion of the medication. Medications not claimed within that period will be destroyed.

## **INFECTIOUS/COMMUNICABLE DISEASES**

Parents must notify the school within 24 hours if their child or any member of the immediate household has developed a communicable disease. Parents must notify the school immediately if the disease is life threatening. Parents must pick up their sick or injured child in a timely manner

when contacted. If the parent cannot be reached, emergency contacts will be called to pick up the child.

The protection and welfare of each individual child is of importance to HMCDS. In an effort to enhance protection of students:

1. No daycare/preschool child may attend class without documentary proof of adequate immunization in accordance with Virginia Department of Health's school entry requirements (or modified schedule as approved by licensed health care provider) on the Virginia School Entrance Health Form (MCH-213 ).
  - a. Parents or guardians who object to the administration of immunizing agents for their child on the grounds of conflict with their religious tenets or practices must produce a notarized Certificate of Religious Exemption CRE-1 form, which will be retained in the student health record.
  - b. Students who have traveled to or resided in a foreign country for five months or more during the last three years are required to provide documentation of a recent tuberculosis skin test result prior to starting school.
2. Students with fevers and/or contagious or infectious diseases will be sent home promptly and will be excluded from school while in that condition, according to Virginia Department of Health regulations. Once the student is confirmed to be free of communicable disease or is fever free/symptom free for 24 hours without taking anti-fever medications, the student may return to school.
3. HMCDS will follow the Virginia Department of Health Communicable Disease Chart, when referring suspected cases of communicable disease to the local health department for excluding or readmitting a student.

## **OVER-THE-COUNTER SKIN PRODUCTS**

All non-prescription drugs and over-the-counter skin products shall be used in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations. Non-prescription drugs and over-the-counter skin products shall not be kept or used beyond the expiration date of the product.

For all over-the-counter skin products:

- written parent authorization noting any known adverse reactions shall be obtained;
- shall be in the original container labeled with the child's name;
- does not need to be kept locked but shall be inaccessible to children under five years of age;
- any center-kept sunscreen shall be hypo-allergenic and have a minimum SPF of 15;
- children nine years of age and older may administer their own sunscreen if supervised.

When insect repellent or diaper ointment is used, a record shall be kept that includes the child's name, date of use, frequency of application and any adverse reaction. Manufacturer's instructions for age, duration and dosage shall be followed.

## **LICE**

All students determined to have an active case of lice will be excluded from school until they receive proper treatment. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide appropriate and adequate treatment for the child and home environment as recommended by their health care professional. Readmission to HMCDS is determined by the Director based upon re-inspection and the effectiveness of treatment. Follow-up treatment is expected and verified as necessary.

At HMCDS, in the case of a confirmed lice infestation, all students in that classroom will be checked for lice by the Director and/or teacher. Parents of the students in that classroom will be notified that a case of lice exists. The notification will not provide the child's name with reported lice. Please respect the privacy of the child and family.

Before readmission to school, the Director (or in the Director's absence, a teacher appointed by the Director) must re-inspect the child's hair. If the child is found to have active lice or nits (eggs), the parent/guardian will be required to take the child home to retreat the infestation. The child will not be readmitted until free of all lice and nits.

If there are questions, please speak with the Director.

## **POLICY FOR REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

We are licensed by the State of Virginia and are required by law to report to the Virginia Department of Social Services all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect.

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

In compliance with state regulations for state licensed programs, a custodial parent shall be admitted to any child day program. Such right of admission shall apply only while the child is in the child day program (63.2-1813 of Code of Virginia).

## **LICENSING INFORMATION**

The Commonwealth of Virginia helps assure parents that child day programs that assume responsibility for the supervision, protection and well-being of a child for any part of a 24-hour day are safe. Title 63.1, Chapter 10 of the Code of Virginia gives the Department of Social Services authority to license these programs. While there are some legislative exemptions to licensure, licensed programs include child day centers, family day homes, child day center systems and family

day systems. The state may also voluntarily register family day homes which are not required to be licensed.

Standards for licensed child day centers address certain health precautions, adequate play space, a ratio of children per staff member, equipment, program and record keeping. Criminal record checks and specific qualifications for staff and most volunteers working directly with children are also required. Standards require the facility to meet applicable fire, health and building codes.

Compliance with standards is determined by announced and unannounced visits to the program by licensing staff within the Department of Social Services. In addition, parents or other individuals may register a complaint about a program which will be investigated if it violates a standard.

Three types of licensing may be issued to programs. Conditional licenses may be issued to a new program to allow up to six months for the program to demonstrate compliance with the Standards. A regular license is issued when the program substantially meets the Standards for Licensure. A provisional license, which cannot exceed six months, is issued when the program is temporarily unable to comply with the standards. Operating without a license when required constitutes a misdemeanor which, upon conviction, can be punishable by a fine of up to \$100 or imprisonment of up to 12 months or both for each day's violation.

If you would like additional information about the licensing of child day programs or would like to register a complaint, please contact the Regional Office of Social Services closest to you.

Fairfax Licensing Office  
3701 Pender Drive, Suite 125  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
(703) 934-1505

Abingdon Licensing Office  
190 Patton St.  
Abingdon, VA 24210  
(540)676-5490

Northern Virginia Regional Office  
320 Hospital Drive, Suite #23  
Warrenton, VA 22186  
(540) 347-6345

Central Regional Offices  
1604 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 130  
Richmond, VA 23229-5008  
(804) 662-9743

Eastern Regional Office  
Pembroke Office Park  
Pembroke Four Office Building, Suite 300  
Virginia Beach, VA 23452-5496  
(757) 491-3990

Verona Licensing Office

Post Office Box 350  
Verona, Virginia 24482-0350  
(540) 248-9345

Piedmont Regional Office  
Commonwealth of Virginia Building  
210 Church Street, S.W., Ste. 100  
Roanoke, VA 24011-1779  
(540) 857-7920