



CHILD AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT CENTER

**Hilltop Nursery School, Inc.**  
**Child & Family Development**  
**Center**

# **Parent Handbook**

## **2021 – 2022**

### **WELCOME**

When you enroll your child at Hilltop, your FAMILY becomes part of a cooperative corporation. “Co-operation” in a cooperative means equal sharing in responsibility for the management and maintenance of the school. You assume responsibility for the continuity of the school through your participation. This is often demanding, but it is only by accepting this individual responsibility that we keep Hilltop a true “cooperative.” This responsible participation of its member-families has permitted Hilltop to thrive over the last 70 years.

Hilltop is a part of a much larger network of cooperative nursery schools. We are an active member of the Los Angeles California Council of Parent Participation Nursery Schools (LACPPNS) at the regional level, and belong to Parent Cooperative Preschools International (PCPI) at the international level. These organizations are committed to preserving and fostering the following cooperative principles:

- Democratic oversight by members
- Open membership without discrimination
- Sharing responsibility and work evenly among all members
- Strengthening standards of excellence for parents, children and early childhood educators
- Cooperating with other cooperative organizations

Family participation provides a sense of continuity between home, school and community for young, exploring minds. Through participation, parents become better informed about the different stages of development in each child. Moreover, children feel part of the extended family with an atmosphere of kinship, which allows parents to be confident in how and with whom their children spend their days.

When you become a part of Hilltop, you join a diverse group of families from different economic, educational, racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds who are all working for one common goal: a creative, dynamic school; a school where each child can grow at her/his own pace; a school where each child is respected as an individual and accepted for her/his own unique human values. Hilltop Nursery School is a place where each child is gently guided into becoming a responsive member of the group.

## A MESSAGE FROM THE TEAM

Dear Families,

We are pleased to welcome everyone to the Hilltop Nursery School community. Hilltop has a special place in many people's hearts, and this has been cultivated through the efforts of every staff member and family we welcome into our school. We thank you for trusting us with your children and we want you to know that we are taking the utmost care and consideration for all the children, families, and staff, as well as the general community's health and safety.

This handbook will provide you with key information about policies and procedures to make the transition to school as smooth as possible.

**With the ever-evolving environment we are currently living in, all policies, procedures, and schedules are subject to change** so that we can ensure that we are meeting the guidelines and regulations from the Department of Recreations & Parks (DRP), Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), Community Care Licensing Division (CCLD), Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) for standards and safe practices.

Please know that we will do our best to communicate with you regularly. Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership.

As always, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Warmly,

The Administration & Teaching Team

# FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Hilltop Nursery School follows a cooperative model. This means parents are as vital to Hilltop as the staff and children. This also means your responsibility to the school does not end with payment of tuition and fees. A \$25 fee will be applied for each meeting/hour of volunteer time not met. School business and decision-making is conducted by members through committees and elected officers on the Board of Directors. Giving your all as a parent will help Hilltop thrive while you are here and into the future!

## Hilltop's guiding principles for community:

- Adopt a community mindset
- Be accountable and responsive
- Demonstrate respect and compassion
- Communicate openly and honestly

Hilltop's atmosphere is one where children, parents, and teachers learn the elementary demands and pleasures of group democratic living. Some benefits include the building of friendships, information exchanges and support groups. Ongoing cooperation required from all member-families includes, but is not limited to, the following **mandatory responsibilities**:

- **Attend the monthly membership meeting** to discuss school business and parent education issues. A meeting notice is posted a few days in advance as a reminder. Meetings are usually the second Thursday evening of each month at the school; **AT LEAST ONE PARENT MUST BE PRESENT DURING THE MEMBERSHIP MEETING**. Childcare is provided on the school premises for a nominal fee. **Each family is allowed 2 maximum absences**. A \$25 fee will be applied for each meeting that a family goes over the maximum allowed absences.
- **Join a committee**. Committees are the way we equally share in taking responsibility for managing our school. Each family is required to be an active participant in at least one committee. Most committees meet at the end of each monthly membership meeting in order to communicate and plan specific activities. Committees can also meet during off hours at locations that are mutually agreed upon by the committee members.

- **Maintenance.** Each family is required to perform 12 hours of maintenance per year (Board members are required to perform 3 hours per year), on scheduled maintenance days or on special projects. A \$25 fee will be applied for each hour that a family falls short of that obligation. Families will be billed near the end of the school year for those hours not met.
- **Accept and serve on the Board of Directors if nominated and elected.** Serving on the Board of Directors gives parents an opportunity to really become an active member in the decision-making process and requires a commitment to the ideals of the school and an understanding of our day to day operations.
- **Participation in all FUNDRAISING efforts is mandatory.** Each family is required to volunteer and support each of the major fundraising events. Each family must also commit to raise \$1200. 00/year in the fundraising efforts. . . or more! If at the end of the school year you have raised less than \$1200, you will be obligated to pay the remainder of the balance. **Because we depend on fundraising to meet our budget, it is essential that all member- families work at and support our fundraising events.**
- **Participate by volunteering your time in the classroom on a regular basis.** Hilltop is a Child and Family Development Center which means we believe in fostering the growth and development of our children **AND** our adult family members. Therefore, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other extended family members are invited to join in the cooperative school experience and learn about the work of children's play and discovery, redirecting behavior, social and emotional development, self-help skills, non-violent conflict resolution and more! For families who have limited opportunities to step into the classroom during the weekday, regular project-based learning, community building events, and gardening are alternatives options to volunteering in the classroom.

# COMMITTEES

**At the start of each new school year, the Vice President of the Board assigns all the new and returning families to various committees. All committees are required to adhere to committee responsibilities for the entire duration of the academic school year (August - July).**

*The Board President is ex-officio member of all committees.*

**The following describes each committee and the committee responsibilities:**

**Membership** *Chaired by Vice-President Board Member*

**The Vice-President oversees and supports the President/Director/Committees**

1. Acts as the Chairperson of the Membership and Hospitality Committee
2. Supports the Program Director during the recruitment process/orientation/outreach
3. Informs members of the rules and regulations of the school
4. Oversees and supports mentor families to provide guidance and communication to new families.
5. Assists with the orientation for new families
6. Keeps a log of Family Meeting attendance
7. Keeps a log of committee sign ups
8. Keeps a log of Interest Skill Survey
9. Keeps log of contact information for applicant families for fundraising/events

**Finance** *Chaired by Treasurer Board Member*

**Budget oversight with Financial Operations Administrator and Program Director**

1. Creates and updates all platforms used for school events through tracking expenditures, receiving, and logging any receipts used
2. Maintain log of family fundraising obligation (update families regularly)
3. Organize collection of money from fundraising events
4. Informs the Financial Operation Administrator to bill families for unfulfilled obligation (Fundraising, Maintenance, Family meetings, Co-op responsibilities, etc.)
5. Supports Financial Operations Administrator to develop monthly reports for Board meetings
6. Supports the Operations Administrator and Program Director with annual budget

**Fundraising** *Chaired by Fundraising Board Officer*

1. Assist in Coordinating all Fundraising events
2. Provide Finance Chair with fundraising totals from each event
3. Graphic Designer(s) - Create Invites/cards/flyers/mailers for Fundraising events and as needed.
4. Chairs will come up with a calendar and list of fundraisers and have parents sign up to coordinate specific events such as:
  - Silent Auction
  - Photofest
  - Spelling Bee
  - Casino Night
  - Rummage sale
  - End of the Year mailing
  - E-scrip/Recycling
  - Ebay Auctions
  - Pledge-a-thon style events

**Communications** *Chaired by Secretary Board Member*

Facilitate communication within the school community

1. Chair/Secretary is responsible for keeping minutes at the Board and Family Meetings (Family Meeting minutes can be delegated) and getting copies to the Board/Membership promptly.
2. Create Family Roster
3. *Handstands* newsletter (quarterly or better)
4. Posters/Postings – Monitor various posting spots with-in the school and ‘clean’ them regularly;  
create and post flyers for in house events (family meetings, parties, parent education events, maintenance days, etc. )
5. Inform parents of upcoming Family Meetings, fundraising events, parent education events, maintenance days, etc.
  1. Send communications to membership as needed by the Board/Committee Chairs
  1. Provide updates and totals about family responsibilities to the general membership on a quarterly basis (Family meeting attendance, laundry, fundraising, maintenance, etc. )
  1. Maintain the Website with content/event updates

**Personnel** *Chaired by Personnel Board Member*

1. Work with the Program Director to recruit, hire and evaluate all staff

2. Personnel chair will act as a liaison for the Program Director to assist with staff relations/disputes/disciplinary action as needed
3. Personnel Chair is charged with supporting the Program Director to help staff carry out the personnel policy
4. Personnel committee in conjunction with the Program Director, assists with writing evaluations based on staff and membership feedback.

### **Community Outreach** *Chaired by Development Board Member*

An alumni parent holds this position and is assisted by a current parent. The committee assists the school in keeping in touch with its alumni families.

1. Alumni Board Member provides guidance/information to the board about historical aspects of policies/procedures
2. Alumni Association Mailing
3. Work with Communications Committee to keep a list of alumni contact information
4. Facilitate alumni reunions/events annually
5. Lead/Assist in organizing and follow up on all lease related matters
6. Participates and attends all LACCPPNS meetings, helping the school to stay up to date with parent cooperative models and regulations in the Los Angeles area.

### **Education**

1. Curriculum support – Act as liaison between parents and teachers on curriculum. It is not this committee's job to change/create curricula but to assist the teachers. This would also involve coordinating field trips as needed and doing outreach within the parent community to enrich the program.
2. Parent Education - Bring in speakers on child development, Coordinate (with teachers) an educational component for the family meeting (i.e. discussion topics such as food, sleep, transitions...) coordinate Kindergarten night
3. Organizing and maintaining the school's library books
4. In conjunction with the teachers, create monthly themes for dramatic play outdoors by developing spaces for children to explore/create using the school's resources (i.e. hair salon, restaurant, grocery store, spaceship, bear cave, etc.)

### **Maintenance/Gardening**

Chairs will be overall coordinators of maintenance and gardening for the school and coordinate all school maintenance days at the direction of the school Director. Gardening includes work during summer, parsed out among the families and/or transitioned to next year's committee as needed.

Each member of the committee will sign up to oversee specific areas.

- Front Yard
- Back yard
- Carrot Room
- Beaver Room
- Teacher Resource Room
- Administration's office
- Kitchen
- Children/Adult restrooms
- Plants/Trees/Vines/Garden Beds
- Sprinkler system/hose/timers/etc.
- Recycling

### **Hospitality**

1. Coordinate potluck for Monthly Family meeting (Food, Babysitting, Set-up/Clean-up)
2. Coordinate social events for the community such as Halloween Party, Camping trip, Meal Wheels
3. Coordinate gifts for teacher appreciation week
4. Coordinate with Fundraising committee for fundraising events

# BY LAWS OF HILLTOP NURSERY SCHOOL

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**A-1**

**ARTICLE I. NAME**

This organization shall be known as HILLTOP NURSERY SCHOOL, INC. It is a non-profit cooperative, incorporated organization licensed by the Department of Social Welfare of the State of California. No part of the earnings of this school shall inure to the benefit of any individual.

**ARTICLE II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this organization shall be to provide a nursery school program for children aged two until eligible for kindergarten including, but not limited to those residing in the communities of Silverlake, Echo Park, Franklin Hills, Los Feliz, Historic Filipino Town, and East Hollywood; to further the education of parents and members in the principles of early childhood education and child welfare; to provide childcare for the purposes of allowing parents to work in order to maintain and further their economic independence while at the same time economically developing the community; and to assist the progress of cooperative nursery schools and nursery education. This school shall be dedicated to maintaining an atmosphere for healthy social living and creative expression for the children. The school shall be operated on and dedicated to the furtherance of democratic principles.

## **ARTICLE III. FAMILY MEMBERSHIP**

### Section 1.

#### Membership Classes

There shall be two (2) classes of membership; probationary membership and full membership.

### Section 2.

#### Probationary Membership

A family has probationary membership for the first ninety (90) days following the payment of registration fees, completion of all papers, and attendance of the child at school. Probationary membership may be terminated without cause at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

### Section 3.

#### Full Membership

Full membership is granted upon the satisfactory completion of the ninety (90) day probationary period providing that there are no outstanding issues regarding continuing membership before the Board of Directors. Full membership may be terminated if the member-family commits an act that the Board of Directors deem as a detriment to the welfare of the school.

### Section 4.

#### Termination

Upon notification of termination of probationary or full membership, the child or children of the member-family must be immediately removed from the school.

### Section 5.

#### Membership Resignation

A member must give thirty (30) days written notice of resignation to the Director or the Board of Directors. The resignation shall not be effective until the child or children are removed from the school.

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## **ARTICLE IV. FAMILY MEMBERSHIP VOTING**

### Section 1.

#### Right to Vote

Each member-family shall be entitled to only one vote, which may be by ballot, mail, or any other means prescribed by the membership.

### Section 2.

#### Vote by Majority

The membership shall vote by majority of those present except as hereinafter noted. Fifty percent (50%) of the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at a meeting. Officers shall be elected by majority vote of the entire membership.

## **ARTICLE V. FAMILY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS**

### Section 1.

#### Meetings

Membership meetings shall be held periodically at regularly scheduled times. There must be a minimum of eight (8) meetings per school year.

### Section 2.

#### Absences

Each member-family may miss no more than two (2) meetings in a school year. After the third missed meeting, the member must appear before the Board to be notified of further penalties.

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## **ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS AND THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### Section 1.

#### Number of Members

There will be eight (8) members ("Directors") of the Board of Directors ("Board"). Officers shall be President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Personnel Chairperson, Community Outreach Chairperson, Maintenance, and Fundraising Chairperson. These eight officers shall constitute the Board of Directors.

### Section 2.

#### Responsibilities of the Board.

The Board of Directors is the administrative body and handles all problems regarding the administration of the school or any of its functions. The Board will determine the goals of the Organization. The Board will further establish policies, and procedure as may be required, governing the operation of the programs and other activities of the Organization, and the Board governance. The Board will oversee the programs and other activities of the Organization to ensure that the Organization purposes, goals and missions are supported, and each Director, to the best of his or her ability, support the Organization through time given to improve the programs, offerings, and operations of the Organization, financial contributions consistent with Board policies as may be established, and fundraising efforts.

The Board of Directors has the final authority to provide solutions for the problems of any member-family in regard to participation as it deems advisable upon request of the member-family concerned, Director, Teacher(s), or on its own motion.

### Section 3.

#### Nominations and Elections

At the membership meeting prior to the election meeting, a Governance committee will be selected by the Board. This committee will (1) solicit nominations from the membership for the Board of Directors, (2) confirm the willingness of those nominated to serve if elected and (3) prepare the ballot. It will also cultivate and recruit, on an ongoing basis, a pipeline of qualified candidates for membership on the Advisory Board. The Board shall approve such qualifications in advance. At the election meeting, additional nominations will be taken from the floor for the Board of

Directors. The election committee will count the votes and notify the membership of the results.

### Section 4.

#### Terms

Officers of the Board of Directors shall be elected to one (1) year terms. Elections shall take place in June of each year by secret ballot. New officers shall take office in August. There shall be a joint Board meeting of the old and new Board prior to the new Board members taking office. No limitations will be established on the number of terms any Director may serve.

### Section 5.

#### Recall and Discipline

Any Director of the Board may be recalled by two-thirds (2/3) vote of the entire membership. A Director may be removed if declared of unsound mind by a court of competent jurisdiction, if convicted of a felony, or if deemed by the Board to have failed in carrying out his or her duties, having brought disrepute to the Organization, or having failed to attend meetings or other obligations.

### Section 6.

#### Vacancies

When a vacancy on the Board of Directors arises due to resignation or removal, the remaining Board of Directors will appoint a replacement. This appointment shall be voted on and confirmed by a majority of the membership present at the next feasible monthly membership meeting. The term of the Director so confirmed will be for the remaining term of the vacancy. Should the appointment not be confirmed by a majority of the membership, the remaining Board of Directors shall make another appointment to fulfill the vacancy. The same process described in this Section to confirm such an appointment shall apply.

### Section 7.

#### Board of Director Meetings

The Board of Directors shall have at least one meeting a month in addition to the general membership meeting. The Chair, with agreement of a majority of the Directors, or at the request of one or more Officers, may call other meetings as needed.

#### Section 8.

##### Procedures at Board Meetings

In Board Meetings, when there is a need to vote on an issue, a proposal will first be presented for group discussion. This proposal may be modified. When the issue(s) is fully understood and/or modified, then a motion to accept or reject the proposal can be made and voted upon.

#### Section 9.

##### Voting

Directors may vote in person or by telephone. When necessary, Directors may vote on an issue without a meeting by giving written consent by electronic mail or oral consent by telephone that is later confirmed in writing or by electronic mail. Fifty percent (50%) of the members shall constitute a quorum. A quorum is needed for any vote to pass.

#### Section 10.

##### Committees

The Chair, with Board approval, will establish standing committees to address, as may occur, any needs, challenges, opportunities, or operations of the Organization, so long as it is consistent with the purpose of the Organization. Other temporary committees may be created by the Chair as he or she deems necessary. Current committees are as listed: Fundraising, Personnel, Maintenance, Community Outreach, Green/Education, Hospitality, Snack/Nutrition, and Communications.

#### Section 11.

##### Scholarships

A priority of Hilltop is to serve a socioeconomically diverse group of children through the awarding of scholarships. The goal of the school is for approximately 40% or more of the families to receive some form of need-based scholarship. Applications to the Board should be in written form, and any information therein shall be confidential.

#### Section 12.

##### Financials

The President, Treasurer, Program Director and Financial Operations Administrator are authorized to sign on Hilltop accounts. All accounts must require two (2) of above four (4) signatures for the disbursement of funds.

#### Section 13.

##### Audit

An audit of the school's finances shall be made each fiscal year by the Board.

Section 14.  
Amendments

To amend these By-Laws, the proposed amendment must be read at one meeting and voted on at the next meeting, and will require a majority vote of the entire membership.

## **ARTICLE VII. ADVISORY BOARD AND DUTIES**

Section 1.  
Advisory Board

An Advisory Board will also be appointed that shall include former school alumni, teachers, and outside community members chosen by the current Board of Directors to help expand the Organization's mission. The Advisory Board shall, at a minimum, consist of at least one alumni member, one current teacher member, and one outside community member. The Advisory Board shall provide input and advice and make recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding at-large issues presented to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may delegate tasks to the Advisory Board as needed.

Section 2.  
Advisory Board Terms

There will be established three (3) classes of membership on the Board (each referred to as a "Class") for purposes of ensuring continuity of Board participation, the terms of which will be established so that initially, Class 1 will have a term of one (1) year, Class 2 will have a term of two (2) years, and Class 3 will have a term of three (3) years. Each Director will be elected to one such Class. Thereafter, each Class will have a term of three (3) years. Each Advisory Board member may serve one or two, non-renewable term(s), unless having served a partial term to fill a vacancy.

Section 3.  
Advisory Board Meetings

The Advisory Board shall meet at least three times per school year. The Board of Directors may call other meetings as needed.

## **ARTICLE VIII. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICERS**

Section 1.  
President

The President shall preside at all meetings; shall appoint special committees; shall be ex-officio member of all committees. The President shall give the membership notice of meeting agendas and important questions to be voted on; and shall keep all records required by governmental authorities.

## Section 2.

### Vice-President

The Vice-President shall preside at meetings in absence of the President; shall assist the President and Program Director & committees as needed and requested; shall be the Chairperson of the Membership and Hospitality Committees; shall support the Program Director during the recruitment process; shall inform new members of the rules and regulations of the school; shall oversee and support mentor families in order to provide guidance and communication to incoming families; shall assist on the orientation program for new family members.

## Section 3.

### Secretary

The Secretary shall keep minutes and records of all membership and Board meetings; shall maintain a record of attendance at all meetings, and inform the Program Director of attendance; shall have charge of all correspondence and shall read minutes of previous membership meeting at each membership meeting; shall be in charge of, along with the Communication Committee, all communication to the membership.

## Section 4.

### Treasurer

The Treasurer shall support the Financial Operations Administrator and the Fundraising Chair to create and update all platforms used for school events through tracking expenditures, receiving and logging any receipts used for each item/event/project upon order of the President, Program Director, and/or Financial Operations Administrator; shall report monthly to the Board and quarterly to the general membership; shall Chair the Finance Committee which shall prepare an annual budget in conjunction with the Director and Financial Operations Administrator to be presented to the Board for approval.

## Section 5.

### Personnel.

The Personnel Chairperson shall work with the Program Director and the Personnel Committee to recruit, hire, and evaluate all staff. He/she will act as a resource for the Program Director to assist with staff relations/disputes as needed.

## Section 6.

### Community Outreach

The Community Outreach chair shall build external relationships with organizations and individuals in the local community on behalf of the school, and utilize those relationships to advocate for the school's interests. The focus of this advocacy and relationship-building may differ from year to year, depending on the most urgent needs faced by the school as determined by the Board, Program Director and/or Financial Operations Administrator. Duties may include but are not limited to: seeking and applying for grants, building relationships with and raising funds from alumni, and building strategic relationships with LACCPNS, local government and other organizations to ensure the school's long-term security.

Section 7.

Fundraising

The Fundraising Chairperson(s) shall be in charge of coordinating all fundraising activities.

Section 8.

Maintenance

The Maintenance Chairperson(s) shall be in charge of coordinating and implementing all maintenance tasks/projects needed for the school.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## **ADMISSIONS**

All forms in the enrollment packet and a complete earthquake kit, must be submitted prior to or on your child's first day of school.

Hilltop Nursery School does not discriminate on the bases of race, religion, economic, national or ethnic origin. Hilltop promotes tolerance and diversity, and strives to include families from varied lifestyles to reflect the diversity of our surrounding Silverlake/Echo Park/East Hollywood community.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

To attend childcare, children must have all immunizations up to date as outlined by the State of California Department of Public Health. Please refer to the table of requirements. Parents are no longer able to exempt their child from one or more required immunizations because of their personal or religious beliefs. If a medical exemption is needed, parents must provide an Exemption Form (CDPH 8262) that is completed by an authorized health care practitioner licensed in California. Your child will not be admitted if we do not have a current immunization history or the PBE form on file.

**Signing the exemption form indicates your understanding that during an outbreak of one of the above-specified diseases, your child will not attend school for the duration of the outbreak.**

## **HOURS OF OPERATION**

Hilltop Nursery School is a year-round program, open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The school is closed for dates/weeks in between sessions. Please refer to each year's school calendar for specific dates; other days must be added with approval of the Board of Directors.

The following holidays/breaks are observed yearly:

- Labor Day
- Veteran's Day
- One week Thanksgiving holiday Break
- Winter break including Christmas Day to New Year's Day
- Dr. Martin Luther King's Birthday
- President's Day

Cesar Chavez's Birthday  
Spring Break  
Memorial Day  
Summer Break  
Independence Day  
Change of School Year Break  
Monthly Teacher In-Service Days

In addition to the above listed holidays, any day declared to be a national holiday by the President of the United States, shall also be declared an authorized holiday. When any authorized holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the preceding or following business day respectively shall be considered as a holiday.

A school calendar is given out every September giving the exact dates of each holiday. The calendar also gives the date of the mandatory membership meetings and events (dates subject to change). Please keep this posted somewhere for easy reference or check our website for updates.

### **FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

This time of separation can be intense and challenging. Therefore, we recommend that parent(s) help the child adjust and become comfortable with the new environment by spending some time with the child instead of leaving them right away. It is best if you can plan to spend a few mornings with your child at school. This helps you to know our routine and helps your child feel comfortable about being left with new people.

When you have to leave, it's best to say a calm goodbye, telling your child that you will be back. **Do not ask your child's permission to leave, i.e. "Is it all right for me to go now?" or leave without saying goodbye to your child. Our teachers will help crying and clinging children by holding them at one of our "goodbye windows" so they can wave at departing parent(s). We understand the difficulty leaving your child when (s)he is crying, but we reassure you the crying usually stops in a very short time when the child decides to proceed with "work" (the work of play!) This is the ubiquitous issue of separation that every child deals with at some point. If your child does experience extreme or unusual separation issues, our staff will notify you immediately so everyone can work together to create a plan to alleviate your child's separation anxiety.**

We do everything possible to make the transition from home to school a safe and happy one. Each child is assigned her/his own special cubby located in the child's

classroom. Each has the child's name and is used to keep spare clothing and schoolwork. **Be sure to bring your child's snack/lunch and 3 sets of extra clothes. Place the items in a zip lock bag and ensure the contents are able to fit in your child's cubby. For rest/nap time, please send a sleeping bag your child can grow with over time and a favorite stuffed animal/lovey in a naptime bag with handles.** Please also send diapers and wipes if not toilet trained. **All items must be clearly marked with your child's name.** Please remember to check your child's cubby daily for any artwork and/or soiled clothing; **clean out cubby completely and take rest/naptime bag home each Friday.**

### **DAILY ATTENDANCE**

For your child to best benefit from Hilltop's curriculum, try to have him/her at school by 9:30 am. **This gives you and your child time to play together and permits a reasonable transition period for the children before we begin our morning welcome as a large group at 9:45 a. m.**

**IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS THE PARENT/GUARDIAN TO SIGN YOUR CHILD "IN" AND "OUT" EACH DAY.** This is our primary record of attendance; it is also what we take with us in case of an emergency evacuation of the building. **SIGN your full name and time of arrival and departure next to your child's name. It is a legal requirement in order to maintain the school's license.** If a parent's full name and the time they dropped off and picked up their child are not clearly marked on the sign in and out sheet, the school can be fined and that fine will be billed to the responsible parent/guardian. **Please notify the school in writing, including your signature, or by phone/email if someone other than the parent or person(s) authorized on the Identification/Emergency form will be picking up the child. Without proper notification your child will not be released to others.**

### **PICK UP/DROP OFF**

Children anxiously anticipate the arrival of their parents, and we appreciate your promptness in picking your child(ren) up from school.

**Unless approval and specific arrangements are made with the school at least 24 hours in advance: IF YOU ARE GOING TO BE LATE YOU MUST CALL TO NOTIFY US. When you pick up your child late, a \$25. 00 fee will be applied and you will be billed immediately for all late fees incurred.**

## **TOYS**

Toys from home are discouraged; we have plenty of toys at Hilltop. It's hard for some children to share toys brought from home, which increases opportunities for conflict. **No toy guns, swords or other weapons are allowed at Hilltop.** Should they arrive, teachers will explain that the toy is a "non-Hilltop item" and write a reminder note to parents. The toy will be placed in either your child's cubby or in the office until it's time to go home.

We also discourage female stereotype commercial toys such as princesses or Barbie type of toys.

It is okay for your child to bring a transitional item such as a blanket, stuffed animal, or lovey. This means something that the child NEEDS to have with him/her while going through separation. Sometimes bringing such an item from school helps a great deal. Usually, if the teacher(s) feel such an item is necessary, they will approach you and make such a suggestion. If you have any questions about the transitional item, please ask your child's Teachers or the Program Director.

## **NUTRITION POLICY**

Parents are responsible for providing SNACKS & LUNCHES. These should be well balanced, sugar free meals for the child(ren). A sandwich, fruit, raw vegetable, cheese, salad, etc.

We do not warm up any foods that your child brings for lunch. **Because of parental food preferences and/or allergies, we do not share lunches at Hilltop.**

**Hilltop prohibits any refined sugar items in a child's lunch** (cookies, candy, sweet cereals, capri sun, cake, soda, pudding, gum, sweet rolls, etc.) These items are "home foods" and will be saved until it is time to go home. Please ask us if you have a food-related question. Read labels to avoid dyes & sugars. **Be sure you have notified us in writing on your child's health history form about any food or other allergies.**

## **BIRTHDAYS**

We do not permit parents to bring cakes, cookies, cupcakes, etc. as it conflicts with our "no sugar" policy. Instead, we sing Happy Birthdays during circle time.

## **PARENT CONFERENCES**

Open communication between parents and staff is our primary goal. Each spring we schedule Parent/Teacher conferences. However, if at any time you have any questions or concerns about your child's behavior, you may request a meeting with your child's Teacher and/or the Program Director to be present at this meeting. Additionally, the teaching team may request a meeting with parents to discuss a child's behavior.

## **DISCIPLINE**

**“NO CORPORAL PUNISHMENT IS PERMITTED AT HILLTOP, EVEN PARENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO HIT THEIR OWN CHILDREN AT HILLTOP.** We approach discipline from the perspective that it is a learning opportunity for the child, and a chance for the adult to encourage a desirable behavior. By closely observing activities, we have the opportunity to INTERVENE BEFORE an unwanted behavior occurs. By redirecting in a POSITIVE way, we can focus on problem-solving skills and affirm each child's feeling of self-worth.

**We don't use the phrase “time out,” but will remove a child from the group if he/she is disrupting the group. If a child has to be removed, an adult will always sit with the child until the child is ready to talk about what happened, or has calmed down and is ready to rejoin his/her friends, even if they are not ready to use their words.** We are patient and give the child ample opportunity to get in control. By being patient, we allow time for a child to get “their bodies under control” to be able to identify and express their feelings by using WORDS. We also help other children to LISTEN. Believe it or not, it usually works just fine, and reinforces the idea that problems can be solved in non-aggressive ways. This peaceful conflict resolution is one of the cores of Hilltop's philosophy.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURE/EARTHQUAKE KITS**

In the event of a catastrophe, such as a major Earthquake, we will stay here or in the park (out in the field or at the Recreation Center if our building is unsafe) until your child is picked up. In order to help us be prepared to provide protection for your child, please assemble an earthquake kit and bring it to school in a plastic zip lock bag labeled with your child's name. **Be sure you have written several alternate peoples' names and phone numbers who have your permission to pick up you child on the emergency form that is included in your enrollment paperwork. Be sure to update any changes promptly.**

## **TUITION & FEES**

All families will be enrolled in the Extended Day Program regardless of drop off and pick up time. You may use any hours between 8:00 am – 5:30 pm.

**The 2021-2022 tuition rate is as follows:**

- **August 18, 2021 start date:** Tuition will be \$1,560 each month, for 11 months, starting the first day of school, with the last payment due June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.
- **Paying to hold a spot:** If a family chooses to hold a spot, tuition fees will be the same as starting on the first day of the academic school year. For the 2021-2022 school year, the first day of school is Wednesday, August 18, 2021.
- **Starting due to a vacancy:** If a family starts due to a vacancy becoming available, the tuition rate will begin on the child's first day of school and be prorated if applicable.

**Additionally, families are responsible for paying for the annual school fee. The annual school fee for the 2021-2022 school year is \$550.**

Families who are receiving scholarship must agree to the terms and conditions of the financial contract based on the independently arranged agreement between the family and Hilltop. Both parties agree to honor the contract, or the scholarship can become null and void.

Hilltop is requesting that families commit to a yearlong contract. If the school closes due to a confirmed COVID-19 exposure, we may need to shut down to quarantine and families must continue to pay during short term closures. If the school necessitates a closure for more than one month due to a public health emergency, families will be expected to continue to pay 65% of the tuition.

## **SCHOOL HOURS & SCHEDULE**

Due to limited class sizes, we have removed Part-Time program options at this time. The 2021-2022 school hours are 8:30 am - 5:00 pm.

**\*BEAVER SCHEDULE\***

- 8:30 - 10:00      Arrival of Children to the Back Yard/Free Play  
                         \*Snack at 10:00 am  
                         \*Morning Circle at 10:25
- 11:00 - 11:45      Option time/park/free play activities  
                         \* Lunch at 11:45 - 12:15
- 12:15 - 12:30      Transition into Rest/Nap
- 12:15 - 2:00        Rest/Nap Time  
                         Outdoor Free Play for Awake Children
- 2:00 - 5:00        Front Yard Free Play with Planned Physical Activities  
                         \*Afternoon Snack at 3:00  
                         \*Evening Snack at 4:30

**\*CARROT SCHEDULE\***

- 8:30 - 9:20        Arrival of Children to the Front Yard/Free Play  
                         \*Morning Circle at 9:20  
                         \*Snack at 9:30 am
- 9:50 – 11:20      Option time/ park/ free play activities  
                         \* Lunch at 11:30 - 12:00
- 12:00 – 12:15      Transition into Rest/Nap
- 12:15 –2:45        Rest/Nap Time  
                         Outdoor Free Play for Awake Children
- 3:00 - 5:00        Back Yard Free Play with Planned Physical Activities  
                         \*Afternoon Snack at 3:00  
                         \*Evening Snack at 4:30
-

# WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

Hilltop is requiring that all forms in your child's file be properly completed prior to the first day of school. Please fill them out as soon as possible. Families must also drop off earthquake kits, diapers and wipes, and extra clothes.

- Snacks will not be provided by Hilltop at this time. Please send your child with lunch and 3 snacks to last for the day.
- Please send a water bottle with an appropriate lid that fully covers the mouthpiece - we will refill it as needed.
- Please bring a blanket with your child's name on it. This will be kept and laundered at school. Optional items: pillow and/or lovey. Hilltop will provide crib sheets.  
(If preferred, you may also bring a sleeping bag that will be kept and laundered at school.)
- No other bags, backpacks, or toys will be allowed. Personal toys from home will not be permitted into the school.

## **Prior to the first day of school, please ensure your child has the following:**

- Necessary prescription medications along with a signed medication consent form
- Complete earthquake kit
- Diapers, wipes, and diaper cream/ointment along with signed medication consent form
- Sunscreen along with signed medication consent form
- 3 extra sets of clothing including, shirts, shorts/pants, underwear, socks, one extra pair of shoes, and a sweater for colder months
- Please ensure all items are properly labeled

Please note: Children's extra clothing and nap items will be laundered at school for your child's reuse. This is to limit the number of new items entering the facility. However, **any items soiled with bodily fluids will be bagged and sent home to be washed.** Please send new items to replaced soiled items by the next school day.

## **EARTHQUAKE KIT**

In the event of a catastrophe such as an earthquake, we need to be prepared to provide protection for your child. We must have a complete earthquake kit for each child before they begin the school year. Please gather the following items and bring them to school in a bag that is fully enclosed and labeled with your child's name:

- 1.** Water (3 day supply = approximately 1 liter - 1 gallon per day)
- 2.** Food (3 day supply)
- 3.** One pair of warm pants
- 4.** One warm shirt
- 5.** One warm sweater or jacket
- 6.** Closed toe shoes/sneakers
- 7.** Underwear/diapers and wipes (3 day supply)
- 8.** Socks
- 9.** Family picture
- 10.** Special toy/blanket/pacifier/bottle (optional)
- 11.** Flashlight
- 12.** Prescription medication with instructions (3 day supply)
- 13.** List of person(s) and contact information your child can be released to including at least one person living outside of the L. A. area

Earthquake kits may need to be updated every 6 months to a year. This emergency kit is especially important for the safety and wellbeing of your child. Thank you for your cooperation.

# POTTY TRAINING PROTOCOL

In order to help your child successfully transition into using the potty, it is important that all caregivers involved understand your family's beliefs, your child's readiness to begin potty training, your child's developmental needs, and how to proceed with the potty training process both at home and at school. The Hilltop teaching team has created the following guidelines and would like to ask for your cooperation. Therefore, **please set up a meeting with your child's teacher prior to starting the potty training process.** Understanding each family's beliefs and strategies around potty training contribute greatly to your child's success.

## **How do I know when my child is ready?**

You know your child is ready to start potty training when you are able to check off the majority of items from the potty training checklist below:

- Your child is telling you when he/she is wet or soiled.
- Your child demonstrates interest in using the potty.
- Your child communicates his/her need/desire to use the potty.
- Your child's diaper is dry the majority of the time.
- Your child demonstrates a need for privacy when pooping.
- Your child is able to pull their pants down and up on their own.
- Your child is removing his/her own diaper in an attempt to remove the sensation of being wet/soiled.

## **When is it not a good time to potty train?**

It is not a good time to potty train right now if:

- You have changes to routine in your family (a move, a new baby, a big trip, etc)
- You are weaning from breastfeeding or the bottle
- You, potty trainer, are under a lot of stress
- You or your child is sick

## **When can potty training begin at school?**

Potty training may start after you have completed all of the following:

- You have had a meeting with your child's teacher.
- Your child's teacher has confirmed that all other staff member are informed about your child's potty training transition needs.
- Your child's teacher has confirmed that an action plan is in place to ensure home and school consistency.

## **What items are needed at school during the potty training process?**

5 sets of extra clothes (including socks and shoes)

### **I. Transitioning using the Bare Bottomed/Fast Tracked/"Oh Crap" Method**

This method is intended to work for young children (one writer says the best window of opportunity is 20-30 months), and advocates teaching them directly and quickly. It suggests pull-ups makes it too confusing for your child. This method starts with an

**intense amount of attention from you as the parent.** It is recommended to read references online or the book *Oh Crap, Potty Training* well before starting. There are some variations, but the basic premise starts with one day of at home nakedness, followed by commando or just underwear, followed by underwear under clothes. They sometimes advertise potty training in 3 days, but the complete process takes longer. The *only* thing you will be doing the first 3 days is potty training, then you can weave it into life but with attention.

Teachers can help support the continuation of this method **only** if your child has a good start in this method, but if you have your child start this method at school too early in the process they can backslide. Accidents may happen at Hilltop but everyday accidents will be frustrating for your child. If a child is really understanding potty training, proud of it, but still needs some practice expanding the time between recognizing they need to pee and getting to a potty, they may have accidents at school that are not their fault.

Teachers **CAN** take your child to the potty to try on a regular basis. Teachers will typically do this every 2 hours for potty trained children, but can reduce this interval if needed for your child. Teachers **CANNOT** drop what they are doing and run your child to the potty the second they ask. They often have to check the ratio of teachers to children, which can take a full minute, before they walk your child into the potty. Teachers also **cannot** watch your child like a hawk for their subtle pee dance or look of fear. If you think your child is almost there, we ask that you strongly consider these two options to help your child master their routine: Either stay at school with them and do that work of helping them succeed at school, or keep them at home a little longer.

### **Recommendations:**

- Take a minimum of 1 full week with your child, and if possible, plan to extend this time.
- Give your child your full attention during this week.
- Plan for this time well ahead of time, and get prepared and geared up.
- Teach boys to sit down on the potty.
- Don't allow peeing outside often; carry a pee jar.
- Allow your child to own it, and make that be the reward rather than treats.
- Be aware of juice boxes.
- Make sure your child has plenty of fat in their diet (this helps with poop).
- Help your child to potty with his/her knees above the hips for pooping.
- Refrain from asking your child if they want to potty, rather let your child know it is time to try.

### **Requirements for coming to school in underwear:**

- Your child has been in underwear at least 2 days without any accidents.
- Your child has pooped in their potty and consistently tries to make it to the potty to poop.
- If you are working with nap time/night time training and want your child to be in underwear at naptime, you will need to provide a waterproof mat at school.

## **II. Transitioning using the Pull-Up Method**

### **Moving from Diapers to Pull-ups:**

If your child is in the beginning stages of potty training, you might consider pull-ups until your child is ready for underwear. After having the meeting with your child's teacher, you may begin to send your child in pull ups to school. While your child is in pull ups, we recommend bringing your child in clothing they can easily pull up and down on their own to help foster independence during the potty training process.

Teachers will observe your child. If your child is has been showing the following signs, then your child may be ready for underwear:

- Your child's pull up remains dry for most of the day.
- Your child has been communicating that he/she would like to use the potty.
- Your child has been urinating and having bowel movements in the potty consistently for at least 1 week.
- Your child has been accident free for 10 school days.

Once your child has had 10 successful, no accident school days, teachers will set up a follow up meeting with parents to discuss the action plan of moving your child into underwear.

### **Moving from Pull-ups to Underwear:**

After having the follow up meeting with your child's teacher, you may begin to send your child to school in underwear. During this time:

- Parents should continue the potty training routine at home.
- At arrival, parents should take their child to use the potty before departing.
- Teachers will take your child to the potty at the agreed upon intervals throughout the day.
- Diapers will be used at naptime to avoid soiling the carpets. (An alternative is to bring in a waterproof mat/sheet to place on top of your child's cot.)

### **Remaining in Underwear:**

Your child will remain in underwear at school if he/she remains accident free. If there are 3 consecutive school days with accidents, your child will be moved back into a pull-up and a follow up meeting with your child's teacher will need to take place.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS POLICY

Hilltop will utilize this health policy in conjunction with Covid-19 policy updates to assist us in the event that your child becomes ill but has tested negative for Covid-19.

The aim of our health policy is:

- To keep your child(ren) safe and well cared for while they are sick.
- To prevent the spread of contagious illnesses as much as possible with special emphasis on illnesses that spread easily and cause harm.
- To give clear guidelines that parents and teachers can follow when children are sick regarding when to stay home, when a doctor's visit is needed, and when it is ok to return to school.
- To provide precise directives for administering prescription and nonprescription medications.
- To present a clear understanding of what occurs when injuries or accidents happen at school.
- To inform all families of the California school immunization law.

### **When to keep your sick child at home:**

It is the parent's responsibility to keep a sick child home, seeking medical attention as appropriate. If any of the following conditions occur, please keep your child at home; if they occur at school, you will be contacted and will need to come and pick up your child within 45 minutes.

1. Fever of 100.4 or greater
2. Vomiting
3. Diarrhea
4. Earache
5. Abscess or draining sores
6. Skin rash other than diaper rash
7. Lice, scabies, pinworms, or any other parasitic infection
8. Runny nose, cough, or sore throat that is severe enough to affect your child's ability to participate in school activities.
9. Red eye(s) or discharge/mucus in eye(s)
10. Symptoms of lethargy accompanied with irritability and/or the inability to eat and/or drink.

### **When to return to school:**

1. 72 hours after the last fever subsides without medication.
2. 72 hours after the last episode of vomiting subsides without medication.
3. 72 hours after the last episode of diarrhea subsides without medication.
4. Ear infections are not contagious. Your child may return to school once he/she is feeling well enough to participate in activities, has no other health issues, and is fever free.
5. Once abscess or draining sore is dry and healed and your child is no longer contagious. A doctor's clearance may be required to return.
6. Any rash (including sores in mouth) needs to be evaluated and cleared by a doctor before your child can return to school.
7. When your child is completely free and clear of any parasitic infection including dead nits. Hilltop adheres to a no nit policy.
8. For runny nose and cough, your child should not return until 72 hours after a negative covid-19 result and they can normally participate in all school activities without medication (other than antibiotics).
9. If eye(s) have mucus or discharge in the absence of other viral symptoms, your child needs to be evaluated and cleared by doctor before returning to school. Otherwise, your child should stay at home until 24 hours after mucus/discharge has resolved.
10. Your child may return to school if they are no longer displaying symptoms of lethargy accompanied with irritability and/or the inability to eat and/or drink.

If your child appears lethargic, is having difficulty eating, and seems irritable or out of character, it is likely that he/she may be developing an illness even if there is no fever. If your child is not feeling well, we recommend keeping your child at home, as he/she will experience discomfort at school. Hilltop reserves the right not to accept your child back at school if he/she displays symptoms of lethargy accompanied by irritability, inability to eat and/or drink, illness, or discomfort.

If your child is diagnosed as having a contagious illness, please notify us so we can pass the information on to other parents. Upon returning to school you are required to bring a note from your child's doctor that they are no longer contagious and can return to school. We cannot accept the child back into the program without this note.

Colds, viruses, and childhood diseases are most contagious in the early stages before the most obvious symptoms appear; therefore, a child should be kept at home for at least 72 hours after all symptoms have completely disappeared. Remember that whooping cough often begins with cold symptoms, and a typical whoop may not appear for up to two weeks. If there is severe coughing, or coughing followed by vomiting, seek medical attention.

If your child becomes ill while at school, the teacher has the authority to isolate your child from the group, and you will be called to pick up your child immediately. You have a maximum of 45 minutes to arrange pick up for your sick child. *If we are unable to contact the parent(s), we will phone the person(s) you have designated on the Identification/Emergency form.*

### **MEDICATION POLICY**

The following information is based on The Guide and Process for Medication Administration in a Child Care Setting and the California Childcare Health Program on Medication Administration in Child Care Programs.

California Community Care Licensing (CCL) regulations permit childcare providers to administer medications only under the following conditions:

- All prescription and nonprescription medications must bear the child's name and date.
- All medications must be administered according to the label direction. Permission and instructions must be provided by the parent for each medication. The instructions should not conflict with the label directions and should be filed in the child's record.
- Nonprescription medications require parental approval and instructions provided in writing from the parent. The instructions from the parent cannot conflict with the product label and must be filed with the child's records.
- The childcare provider has a plan to record administration of medication and to inform the parent of daily medication administration.
- When the medication is no longer needed or has expired, all medications are returned to the parent. Medicine is defined as a remedial agent that has the property of curing, preventing, treating, or mitigating ailments or which is used for this purpose.

Common over the counter medications used in day care facilities include:

- Diaper Rash Cream Ointments
- Insect Repellent
- Sunscreen
- Cortisone/Anti-Itch Creams/Ointments
- Medicated Lip Treatments
- OTC Antibiotic Creams/Ointments
- Teething Tablets/Ointments
- Burn Creams/Sprays

**All medications must be brought to the facility by the parent in the original container with a legible label, expiration date of the medication and the child's name on the container.** All Medication will be stored in a locked box or cabinet inaccessible to children.

**Injuries/Accidents:**

If your child sustains an injury at school requiring medical attention, you will be notified immediately. If you or other(s) designated on the Emergency Release form cannot be reached, staff will take your child to the nearest medical facility, Children's Hospital or Kaiser if you are a member. If a more serious injury occurs, paramedics will be called. If your child sustains a head injury, you will be notified of the occurrence and the severity. All injuries are recorded in the INCIDENT BOOK, which is kept in the office. An OUCH Report then goes in your box with a brief description of the injury; how it occurred and what was done. For confidentiality reasons, names of other children are not included on your note, but are recorded in the INCIDENT BOOK for staff only.

**Immunizations:**

No Shots? No Records? **No School**. To protect children against serious infections, the California school immunization law requires them to receive immunizations before entry to childcare and school. In addition, the law requires child-care facilities to enforce immunization requirements, maintain immunization records of all children enrolled, and submit reports to public health agencies. Under the law known as SB 277 (effective January 1, 2016) exemptions based on personal beliefs, including religious beliefs, will no longer be an option for the vaccines that are currently required for entry into child care or school in California.

# PROGRAM UPDATES DUE TO COVID-19

## WHAT TO EXPECT

Hilltop is dedicated to ensuring the wellbeing of all our community members. Therefore, all staff, families, and caretakers must agree to the Community Partnership Agreement and Health Risk Acknowledgement Waiver & Release form which can be found in this handbook. We thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we do our absolute best to limit the exposure and transmission of COVID-19.

\* The following procedures are based on the latest guidelines, recommendations and policies from the State and County.

\*\* We will communicate with you any updates or real-time pertinent information via email and [Flock](#).

\*\*\* All guidelines are subject to change.

## COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS

[The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health](#) (Public Health) has mandated [some regulations](#) which we will incorporate into our day to limit exposure to COVID-19.

### **Class Sizes, Spacing, and Staffing:**

- Class sizes are currently limited to 13 children with 2 to 3 teachers per class.
- Children and teachers remain in the same group throughout the day.
- Physical distancing of 6 feet for children and adults within the classroom will be followed as best as possible when unmasked for napping and eating.
- Circle time and story time will occur outdoors.
- Clear dividers are placed between the children's sinks and toilets.
- Hilltop has air purifiers with HEPA filtration in all indoor rooms.

### **Face Coverings/Mask Policy:**

- All staff wear masks inside the building.
- Face covers are recommended for children 3 years and older indoors. We will do our best to encourage the children to keep masks on, though it is not

required. Please provide multiple masks for your child daily as well as a container or zip lock bag to place in your child's cubby when masks not in use.

- Children with any breathing issues should not wear a face covering.
- Children will not nap with masks.

## **HYGIENE POLICY**

Our hand washing policies follow the strict guidelines and rules proposed by the state and county Public Health and Community Care Licensing. We will continue to follow those guidelines with increased frequency of washing. We will pay special attention to situations and times that may need even more frequent handwashing.

### **Handwashing:**

Hand hygiene must take place at the following times for every person entering the school:

- Arrival to the facility and after breaks
- Before and after preparing food or drinks
- Before and after eating, handling food, or feeding children
- Before and after administering medication or medical ointment
- Before and after diapering
- After using the toilet or helping a child use the bathroom
- After coming in contact with bodily fluid
- After playing outdoors or in sand
- After handling garbage
- Handwashing will include soap and water with vigorous scrubbing for 20 seconds during each wash. An alternate use of a 60% alcohol-based hand foam or gel is also acceptable when sinks are not readily available.
- Teachers will assist children with handwashing and wash their own hands after.
- Children will be encouraged to wash or sanitize more frequently, especially after blowing their nose, coughing, sneezing, and before or after eating. Children will be supervised when using hand sanitizer to prevent ingestion.
- Reminders in each class regarding procedures for changing diapers are already in place.

### **Food Hygiene:**

- Hilltop will not be offering snacks at this time. Families must **pack 3 snacks and 1 lunch per day**, per child. Please refrain from using glass containers.
- Please ensure all food containers are easy for your child to open, close, and store independently. This will help decrease any possible contamination from others trying to assist with mealtime.

- Please also **include a water bottle for your child that has a proper lid that fully covers the mouthpiece.** Water bottles that do not have this will not be permitted for use. Teachers can help refill water bottles throughout the day.
- Please include appropriate eating utensils for your child.
- Please ensure all food sent to school is packed properly at safe temperatures whether including an ice pack for chilled items or a thermos for warm foods.

#### **Surface Hygiene:**

- Classrooms will be cleaned and/or disinfected daily.
- Cleaning products are EPA- approved for use against the virus that causes Covid-19.
- Cleaning materials are kept secure and out of reach of children.

#### **HEALTH SCREENING & WELLNESS POLICY**

- Please take a temperature check at home for yourselves and your child/ren prior to bringing your child/ren to the center.
- **Anyone with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should remain at home in [isolation](#) for a minimum of 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND 24 hours without fever (without fever-reducing medications) AND symptoms have improved (for example, cough or shortness of breath).**
- Children and staff's temperatures will be taken again upon arrival and as needed.
- **If your child has a fever, runny nose, cough, fatigue, muscle aches, vomiting, or diarrhea we will assume it could be COVID-19 related.** You will be asked to pick up your child and keep them home for 72 hours from when symptoms began. You will also be required to provide a negative covid test result before returning.
- If your child shows symptoms while at school, they will be separated from the rest of the children and you will need to **pick him/her up within 45 minutes.**
- If you have multiple children, and one child has a fever or symptoms at drop off, your other child will not be able to attend.
- If you, your spouse, or other members of your family have a temperature or are sick, we respectfully request that you keep your child at home.
- If your child has tested positive for COVID-19, your child may return to school after it has been 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND 24 hours without fever (without fever-reducing medications) AND symptoms have improved (for example, cough or shortness of breath).

## PREVENTION, CONTAINMENT, AND MITIGATION MEASURES

The following protocols are recommendations taken from [The California Department of Social Services](#) (CDSS) and the [Los Angeles County Department of Public Health](#) for childcare centers.

### **The Implementation of Prevention & Containment Measures:**

- Hilltop will continually review and update our emergency disaster plans to ensure the staff and children are well versed to act in the event of an emergency.
- Hilltop will communicate to families and staff through emails and Flock to keep everyone informed.
- Families, teachers, or staff who have traveled to an area identified by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as [Level 3 Travel Health Notice](#) may not enter the facility for 14 days. Additionally, those who have been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 may not enter the facility for 14 days from the day of their last exposure to the infected person.
- Staff who have a fever and/or respiratory infection symptoms will be required to go home immediately.
- If a child appears to have respiratory infection symptoms, parents or authorized guardians will be notified to take the child home immediately. The child will be separated from others in a “sick area” until they go home.
- **If more than one teacher is out sick per classroom, Hilltop will notify families immediately that care will not be available until we have proper teacher placement.**
- If a staff member has any symptoms of COVID-19, Hilltop will follow reporting requirements and care may not be available until we are told it is safe to resume.
- The public health department will be contacted immediately if we notice any concerning clusters of three or more children or staff have respiratory disease, or spikes in absenteeism.
- We encourage all children, families, and staff to take everyday prevention actions:
  - ❖ Stay home when sick, even with mild symptoms.
  - ❖ Remain at home until fever has been gone for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicines and for 10 days from the onset of symptoms.
  - ❖ Seek immediate medical care if symptoms become more severe, e. g. , high fever or difficulty breathing.
  - ❖ Use “respiratory etiquette” such as covering your cough with a tissue or sleeve.

- ❖ Wash hands frequently.
- ❖ Use alcohol-based hand sanitizers to supplement routine hand washing.
- ❖ We encourage the flu vaccine for those persons over 6 months of age who have not had it this season to reduce illnesses.

### **Implementation of Mitigation Measures: School Closures**

Due to new regulations, if we experience an exposure, we may be required to close our center. If this happens, staff will do our best to notify you of any school closures as soon as possible to allow for you to make alternate arrangements for your family.

Hilltop will proceed with the following measures if a child or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 and exposes others at the facility.

- In consultation with the public health department, Hilltop may close for an appropriate length of time, if warranted, based on the risk level within the community, as determined by the local public health officer.
- Hilltop will immediately notify our Child Care Licensing Local Regional Office.
- Hilltop will communicate plans for facility closure through email and Flock.
- Hilltop will maintain regular communications with the public health department.
- Hilltop will consult CDC guidelines including the [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations and Reminders for Using Disinfectants at Schools and Child Care](#) to determine what additional cleaning protocols, if any, should be used at the facility, prior to reopening.
- Hilltop will determine the timing of return for children, staff, and if any additional steps are needed to reopen, in consultation with the public health department.
- During the closure, Hilltop encourages all staff and families to continue to social distance.

If a family member tests positive, they must notify the school and the child in that family must stay home for a minimum of 14 days and we advise he/she also get tested. If the positive family member cannot fully isolate and exposure to household members cannot be avoided then the child will need to stay home for the entire time the family member is ill or required to isolate if asymptomatic (10 days from test date), plus 14 days from when the person has completed their [isolation period](#) as mandated by Public Health. For information on quarantine, review the [Public Health fact sheet](#)

Please Note: It is not legal for Hilltop to share the name of the infected individual.

### **SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 TO LOOK OUT FOR**

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

This list does not include all possible symptoms. Hilltop will continue to update this list as we learn more about COVID-19 and we encourage you to visit [Covid19info.lacounty.gov](https://www.lacounty.gov/covid19info) for more information.

**When to Seek Emergency Medical Attention:**

If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately.

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- Confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

\*This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

**COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT**

The purpose of this agreement is to limit the exposure and spread of COVID-19 and demonstrate to our Hilltop community members that we care for and respect one another.

**COMMITMENT TO HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Hilltop pledges to take the utmost care in ensuring your child and family's health and safety through our daily practices, policies, procedures and cleaning and sanitation methods. We believe COVID-19 is real, is not a hoax, and that infection is potentially fatal.

As part of your co-op family responsibilities, we ask all families to form a partnership with us, committing to do your very best to uphold the highest standards of health and safety during this pandemic. This commitment requires a working partnership between the school and every family member. As partners, we agree to the following:

- We endeavor, at home and outside the home, to avoid contracting COVID-19.
- We commit to daily temperature checks for the whole family before leaving the house for school every morning.
- We commit to taking all COVID-19 symptoms seriously, staying away from school when they are present in any family member, and getting tested as soon as possible.
- All adults and children ages 3 years and up commit to wearing masks as recommended by DPH, CDC, and Hilltop.
- We will do our best in our work environments to avoid potential transmission from anyone who may be infected and/or an asymptomatic carrier.
- We will do our best to maintain small and infrequent social activity during this time, seeing no more than family members, dear friends, and playdates within our unique Hilltop group of ten – and even then taking best precautions to avoid potential viral transmission.
- Knowing that an outbreak is always possible, we agree to not lay blame on any one person or family if and when it happens; conversely, we commit to collectively support any family who has contracted the virus, to the level of our comfort.



## **HEALTH RISK AND WAIVER**

We are asking families and staff to sign the waiver enclosed stating that they are at the school of their own free will and understand the potential risk involved with being at the preschool. Please sign and return to the school on the first day.

### **HEALTH RISK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT WAIVER & RELEASE**

Given the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in anticipation of my child's enrollment at Hilltop Nursery School, a child care provider ("Facility"), I hereby make the following waiver, release and other representations and covenants set forth herein, on behalf of my child, and in favor of this Facility.

Acceptance of Risk; Release; Indemnification.

The safety and security of the children in its care remains a top priority of the Facility. I understand that there is a risk associated with my child's return to care at the Facility, including but not limited to, increased social contact and interaction with the Facility employees and other children. To help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to protect the Facility employees and other children, the Facility encourages all children and parents to adhere to all safety and health guidelines for the prevention of COVID-19, including those issued by the California Department of Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. All persons should engage in frequent hand washing using soap and water for at least twenty seconds (or, if soap is not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer), sanitize surfaces and objects frequently used. Staff will wear personal protective equipment such as face masks and gloves and follow any and all other preventive measures recommended by applicable authorities.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, I understand that the above guidelines do not completely eliminate my child's risk of exposure to COVID-19 and, should my child experience any COVID-19 related symptoms (such as fever, cough, body aches, or shortness of breath), I am advised to keep my child home, not to bring my child to the

Facility, and follow the advice of my healthcare provider, clinic, or hospital. In such cases, I will immediately alert the Facility of such symptoms.

Regardless of any steps taken by the Facility to reduce the risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, I am fully aware that there are a number of risks associated with my child's care at the Facility during the COVID-19 pandemic, including without limitation, being exposed to and contracting COVID-19 from other individuals, surfaces and/or airborne particles. I understand that my child's contracting of COVID-19 could result in serious medical symptoms requiring medical treatment in a hospital or even death.

On behalf of myself and my child, I knowingly and freely, assume all such risks, both known and unknown, relating to my child's care at the Facility arising from or relating to COVID-19, including all illnesses, injuries, damages or death arising therefrom, and I hereby forever release, waive, relinquish, and discharge the Facility, along with the Facility's officers, directors, members, managers, officials, partners, agents, contractors, employees, affiliates, or other representatives, and their successors and assigns (collectively, the "Facility Representatives"), from any and all claims, demands, liabilities, rights, damages, expenses, and causes of action of whatever kind or nature, and other losses of any kind, whether known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen, (collectively, "Damages") arising from or relating to COVID-19 as a result of my child's care at the Facility, and including but not limited to claims based on the alleged negligence of any Facility Representative or any other person. I further promise not to sue the Facility or any Facility Representative for any illness, injury, death or other Damages arising out of or related to COVID-19 and agree to indemnify and hold them harmless from any and all Damages resulting therefrom as a result of my child's care at the Facility.

If any provision of this Waiver and Release of Liability is declared invalid, the remaining provisions remain enforceable. I may seek advice from legal counsel before signing this Waiver and Release of Liability. By signing this Waiver and Release of Liability, I acknowledge that either I have sought the advice of legal counsel or wish to waive the opportunity to seek the advice of counsel before signing.

# **CHILD ABUSE IDENTIFICATION & REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

**Teachers and Administrators at Hilltop Nursery School are Mandated Reporters.**

**Mandated Reporters are legally responsible by law to report any type of abuse to the appropriate law enforcement or social service agency. Mandated reporters are required to report the incident themselves. They are not required to investigate any known or suspected case of abuse.**

**Failure to report is a crime and designated professionals are required by law to report. Failure to report is a misdemeanor crime punishable by up to six (6) months in jail and/or up to a \$1000 fine.**

The following guidelines are issued by the California Department of Education (CDE), in conjunction with the California Department of Social Services, to help all persons, particularly those persons who work in our children's schools, to be able to identify signs of suspected cases of child abuse and/or child neglect and to have the tools to know how to make a report to the proper authorities. These guidelines are issued in conjunction with an extensive training module, specifically aimed at training school employees and educators on their obligations as mandated reporters of child abuse.

## **Identification of Child Abuse and Neglect**

Child abuse is more than bruises or broken bones. While physical abuse often leaves visible scars, not all child abuse is as obvious, but can do just as much harm. It is important that individuals working with and around children be able to know what constitutes child abuse or child neglect and know how to identify potential signs.

## **Child Abuse and/or Child Neglect Can Be Any of the Following:**

- A physical injury inflicted on a child by another person other than by accidental means.
- The sexual abuse, assault, or exploitation of a child.
- The negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for the child's welfare under circumstances indicating harm or threatened harm to the child's health or welfare. This is whether the harm or threatened harm is from acts or omissions on the part of the responsible person.
- The willful harming or endangerment of the person or health of a child, any cruel or inhumane corporal punishment or any injury resulting in a traumatic condition.

One does not have to be physically present or witness the abuse to identify suspected cases of abuse, or even have definite proof that a child may be subject to child abuse or neglect. Rather, the law requires that a person have a "reasonable suspicion" that a child has been the subject of child abuse or neglect. Under the law, this means that it is reasonable for a person to entertain a suspicion of child abuse or

neglect, based upon facts that could cause a reasonable person, in a like position, drawing, when appropriate, on his or her training and experience, to suspect child abuse or neglect.

Red flags for abuse and neglect are often identified by observing a child's behavior at school, recognizing physical signs, and observations of dynamics during routine interactions with certain adults. While the following signs are not proof that a child is the subject of abuse or neglect, they should prompt one to look further.

### **Warning Signs of Emotional Abuse in Children**

- Excessively withdrawn, fearful, or anxious about doing something wrong.
- Shows extremes in behavior (extremely compliant or extremely demanding; extremely passive or extremely aggressive).
- Doesn't seem to be attached to the parent or caregiver.
- Acts either inappropriately adult-like (taking care of other children) or inappropriately infantile (rocking, thumb-sucking, throwing tantrums).

### **Warning Signs of Physical Abuse in Children**

- Frequent injuries or unexplained bruises, welts, or cuts.
- Is always watchful and "on alert" as if waiting for something bad to happen.
- Injuries appear to have a pattern such as marks from a hand or belt.
- Shies away from touch, flinches at sudden movements, or seems afraid to go home.
- Wears inappropriate clothing to cover up injuries, such as long-sleeved shirts on hot days.

### **Warning Signs of Neglect in Children**

- Clothes are ill-fitting, filthy, or inappropriate for the weather.
- Hygiene is consistently bad (unbathed, matted and unwashed hair, noticeable body odor).
- Untreated illnesses and physical injuries.
- Is frequently unsupervised or left alone or allowed to play in unsafe situations and environments.
- Is frequently late or missing from school.

### **Warning Signs of Sexual Abuse in Children**

- Trouble walking or sitting.
- Displays knowledge or interest in sexual acts inappropriate to his or her age, or even seductive behavior.
- Makes strong efforts to avoid a specific person, without an obvious reason.
- Doesn't want to change clothes in front of others or participate in physical activities.
- A sexually transmitted disease (STD) or pregnancy, especially under the age of fourteen.
- Runs away from home.

### **Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect**

Community members have an important role in protecting children from abuse and neglect. While not mandated by law to do so, if child abuse or neglect is suspected, a report should be filed with qualified and experienced agencies that will investigate the situation. School volunteers, while not mandated reporters, should also be encouraged to report any suspected cases of abuse and neglect. The training offered online to mandated reporters, is equally available to school volunteers.

### **Obligations of Mandated Reporters**

A list of persons whose profession qualifies them as “mandated reporters” of child abuse or neglect is found in California Penal Code Section 11165. 7. It includes all school/district employees, administrators, and athletic coaches. All persons hired into positions included on the list of mandated reporters are required, upon employment, to be provided with a statement, informing them that they are a mandated reporter and their obligations to report suspected cases of abuse and neglect pursuant to California Penal Code Section 11166. 5.

All persons who are mandated reporters are required, by law, to report all known or suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. It is not the job of the mandated reporter to determine whether the allegations are valid. If child abuse or neglect is reasonably suspected or if a pupil shares information with a mandated reporter leading him/her to believe abuse or neglect has taken place, the report must be made. No supervisor or administrator can impede or inhibit a report or subject the reporting person to any sanction.

To make a report, an employee must contact an appropriate local law enforcement or county child welfare agency, listed below. This legal obligation is not satisfied by making a report of the incident to a supervisor or to the school. An appropriate law enforcement agency may be one of the following:

- A Police or Sheriff’s Department (not including a school district police department or school security department).
- A County Probation Department, if designated by the county to receive child abuse reports.
- A County Welfare Department/County Child Protective Services.

The report should be made immediately over the telephone and should be followed up in writing. The law enforcement agency has special forms for this purpose that they will ask you to complete. If a report cannot be made immediately over the telephone, then an initial report may be made via e-mail or fax. A report may also be filed at the same time with your school district or county office of education (COE). School districts and COEs, however, do not investigate child abuse allegations, nor do they attempt to contact the person suspected of child abuse or neglect.

### **New Required Training for School Employees**

Effective January 1, 2015, Assembly Bill 1432 (D-Gatto) requires all local educational agencies (LEAs) to train all employees each year on what they need to know in order to identify and report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect. “All employees”

includes anybody working on the LEA's behalf, such as teachers, teacher's aides, classified employees, and any other employees whose duties bring them into direct contact and supervision of students. LEAs must also develop a process to provide proof that employees received training.

### **Rights to Confidentiality and Immunity**

Mandated reporters are required to give their names when making a report. However, the reporter's identity is kept confidential. Reports of suspected child abuse are also confidential. Mandated reporters have immunity from state criminal or civil liability for reporting as required. This is true even if the mandated reporter acquired the knowledge, or suspicion of the abuse or neglect, outside his/her professional capacity or scope of employment.

### **After the Report is Made**

The local law enforcement agency is required to investigate all reports. Cases may also be investigated by Child Welfare Services when allegations involve abuse or neglect within families.

### **Child Protective Services**

The Child Protective Services (CPS) is the major organization to intervene in child abuse and neglect cases in California. Existing law provides for services to abused and neglected children and their families. More information can be found at Child Protective Services.