

Texoma Christian
Preschool
Parent Handbook



Texoma Christian School
3500 W. Houston
Sherman, TX 75092
Phone: 903-893-7076
Fax: 903-891-8486
<http://www.texomachristianschool.org/>

Table of Contents

Philosophy and Background	2
Gift Year	3
Statement of Faith	4
Mission Statement	4
Statement of Non-Discrimination	4
Accreditation	5
School History	5
Hours of Operation	6
Application Process	6
Withdrawals from TCS	6
Age for Preschool	7
Parent Orientation	7
Individual Visits	7
Communication Policy	7
Parent/Teacher Fellowship	8
Parental Participation	9
Immunization Requirements	9
Doctor's Statement	9
Dress Code	10
Personal Possessions	10
Field Trips	10
Parent Chaperone Guidelines	10
Birthdays	11
Lunch/Snacks	11
Holidays and Parties	11
Drop-off Procedures	12
Pick-up Procedures	12
Parking Lot Traffic	12
Matthew Principle	13
Giving a Good Report	13

WELCOME TO TEXOMA CHRISTIAN PRESCHOOL

Philosophy and Background

The preschool program at Texoma Christian School (TCS) began in the fall of 1981. We are proud of the program, which was developed for three and four year olds. We are thankful for the gifted teachers God has provided to work in this area. TCS believes children are a blessing from the Lord (Psalms 127:5), and we are honored that you have chosen TCS to help you train them. (Proverbs 22:17)

Every parent has many questions about the preschool program and what TCS is all about. Usually, parents are uncertain about exactly what a preschool should provide. We hear questions such as, "Will my child learn to read?" "What academics do you teach?" We even hear "Do you offer a foreign language?" Sometimes parents are very reluctant to let a three year old out of the safe, protective, nurturing nest of home.

At TCS, we have developed a solid preschool curriculum that includes a multitude of activities. The program unfolds throughout the year as the child grows, develops, and becomes prepared for his or her formal school years.

First, we believe a three year old should be allowed to be three and a four year old should be allowed to be four. Let us not hurry our children's childhood. Yes, there are many very smart children. Some children this age have the interest and ability to begin learning skills such as the alphabet, phonic skills, or writing on lines with a pencil. That is nice but is not unusual. A child of three or four may not be interested and cannot yet sit still or does not have fine motor skills to hold a pencil. This also is not unusual.

What should preschool really be? Three and four year olds are wonderful. They are ready to learn. They are eager to learn about themselves and the world around them. They are becoming social creatures and are learning to enjoy playing with friends. Everything is brand new and "oh so exciting." We believe in teaching the whole child, the physical, social/emotional, intellectual and spiritual (Luke 2:52.) Preschool will introduce the student to the seasons, the holidays, God's world of exciting animals, who God is and His love for each other.

Daily activities will center on seasons of the year and units of study. For example, the week of the ladybug unit will include songs, finger plays, stories, art experiences, food and games, all about ladybugs. The children will count ladybugs, do literature activities about ladybugs, and enjoy many bug stories.

Through the year, the child will grow and develop social skills, listening skills, and pre-reading skills. He or she will increase vocabulary skills and the awareness and understanding of "what life is all about." Small motor skills will be developed by using many interesting manipulatives that are made available during work time. During these activities, the teacher is working on developing good character traits, such as kindness, honesty, and patience. (Galatians 5:22.) The student will soon love school, new friends, and the teacher. The safe loving nest that mother provides is still present and very important. Preschool has become a stepping-stone for the independence each child must ultimately gain. Teachers and parents help the children develop self-control and self-help skills.

What do we do with academics? In our three-year old program, the teacher will begin introducing the alphabet around the middle of the year. By that time many children

have watched 'Sesame Street' or have received encouragement at home and are able to recognize the letters of the alphabet. You will begin to see some papers coming home which show they are "talking about ABC's and numbers." But only a limited amount—the other stuff is so much more important when you are three!

In the four-year old class, each week the teachers discuss a new number or letter. We will stress the letter sound, which is a building block for phonics. Many activities revolving around letters and numbers will be available to the children in inviting ways. We do not pressure the child. Many times, even at 4 and 4 ½ the interest is not there...and again, at this stage, other skills are so much more important—listening, following instructions, getting along with friends, using scissors and crayons, doing puzzles, working with paints, play-dough, and role playing.

Each day is a busy day! Some may think we are just playing, but learning is taking place. The children are growing and developing through their experiences.

Gift Year

We are excited to be offering this program at TCS. Many of you may have heard a little about the "Gift Year," but we wanted to explain a little further. The Gift Year is designed for those children who have completed a four-year-old program but are not yet developmentally ready for the kindergarten program.

The Gift Year will be a time for the child to grow and mature developmentally, while allowing them to continue their academic growth. Since most of these children have completed a preschool program, we will start the year with a focus on letters as well as letter sounds. We will continue to provide opportunities for the children to develop their writing ability through numerous fine motor activities including tracing and writing practice. The year in math will review 1-10 and one to one correspondence and will progress through addition and beginning subtraction for those children who are ready for those concepts.

The "gift" of Gift Year is giving the child the opportunity to grow socially and emotionally in an environment that is specifically designed for children not quite ready to sit in a chair for long periods of time or to follow a long series of directions. The work will be predominately hands on. Just as Jesus let his followers participate in His lessons in faith (John 6:1-13), we believe young children should participate in their learning process. They are encouraged to explore and engage in thoughtful discovery learning. We need to give our children every advantage possible in their future school experiences to develop self-confidence.

Statement of Faith

Texoma Christian School endorses the Statement of Faith of the *National Association of Evangelicals*. Biblically based and evangelistic in nature, the following statement establishes a foundation for TCS families from a variety of Christian denominations:

We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible authoritative Word of God.

We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.

We believe that for the salvation of the lost and sinful people, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.

We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

We believe in the resurrection of both saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life, and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mission Statement

Texoma Christian School offers the children of our community an excellent, biblically based education that promotes in our students the highest standards of academic excellence, character, vision, and service to others. The following statement expresses the mission of Texoma Christian School:

Texoma Christian School exists to develop fully the student's God-given spiritual, intellectual, and physical potential to influence the world for Jesus Christ.

Statement of Non-Discrimination Regarding Student Admissions

In the administration of its educational policies, admissions practices, or other school administered programs, TCS does not discriminate on any basis for any reason. Children of any religion, national, cultural, or racial background are welcome to enroll in the school as long as they and their parents accept the basic position of Texoma Christian School in its efforts to provide a Christ-centered education and Christian training for TCS students. All children are required to participate in daily Chapel/Bible times. Admission to the school constitutes a given acknowledgement by students and their parents to comply willingly with the school's regulation in all matters of personal conduct and respect for authority.

Accreditation

As we strive to bring glory to God, we have worked faithfully to receive the Preschool Accreditation through the Association of Christian Schools International. This accreditation goes beyond the state's minimum standards and addresses the preschool in the social/emotional, academic and spiritual areas. In 2005, we were proud to be one of only eight preschools to have received this accreditation in the state of Texas. As a result of this accreditation, we are exempt from licensing by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Service. The faculty and staff at TCS continue to strive to improve their program through on-going self-monitoring through the accreditation process for compliance.

Local Licensing Office: 2205 Los Rio Drive
Plano, TX 75074-3422
(972) 633-6600

PRS Website: www.dfps.state.tx.us
Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline: 1-800-252-5400

School History

Texoma Christian School began in 1982 when a group of Sherman Bible Church members approached the leadership with their vision for a Christian school. After nine months of planning, hiring preschool teachers and selecting curriculum the school began in the fall of 1982 with two classrooms. The dream then and the goal now, is a vibrant Christian education that challenges its students and provides a superior scholastic experience. Mrs. Sue Hall served as the first director with 41 students.

In 1989, as the enrollment of TCS spanned preschool through fourth grade, a group of parents saw the need to expand enrollment to include a middle school. Several local churches hosted the middle school from 1989 to 1994. In 1996-97 the sixth year of its existence, the enrollment of the two schools had reached 250 students. Kathy Curry, the middle school director, and Sue Hall, lower school director, worked together with their respective boards to create one Christian school district. The school received full accreditation by the Association of Christian Schools International in 1998. During that year the decision was made to add a high school, one grade level per year.

In August, 2003, TCS opened the doors of its newly constructed facility to approximately 325 students. The new facility includes a state of the art gymnasium, full commercial kitchen, 36 classrooms, well-equipped playground, soccer field and all-purpose track. Long range plans include permanent buildings for the lower campus, upper campus, and administration building. Future plans include a fine arts building and additional sports facilities that include tennis, baseball, football and softball.

Hours of Operation

The Preschool, Extended Day and Prime Time classes will follow the school calendar. There will be no Extended Day or Prime Time on school breaks or teacher in-service/work days. If school is dismissed early for weather or early release days, Extended Day and Prime Time will also be dismissed, unless parents are otherwise notified. If school begins late on a bad weather day, Extended Day and Prime Time will also begin late. Please watch or listen to the local TV and radio stations for closing and/or delays. On regular school days, the Extended Day and Prime Time hours will be 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Application Process

The following are the enrollment procedures for TCS. If these procedures change, the parents will be notified by a note from the administration.

New Students:

Except in cases relating to out of town applicants, individuals may request an application form from the TCS main office in the Administration Building. The application must be filled out completely and signed appropriately. The application must be accompanied by a non-refundable registration fee. Applications not fully completed or not accompanied by the registration fee will not be considered. In addition to the completed application form, TCS must receive previous school records, immunizations records, and a doctor's statement of health.

Registration of Current Students:

Beginning the first school day in the month of February, registrations for the following school year are accepted from families of currently enrolled TCS students on a first-come, first-serve basis. If more registrations exist on the first day than available spaces, preference will be given to families who have attended TCS the longest. On the first school day in March, new family registration will be accepted.

Students Entering During the Current School Year:

Registration and material fees remain the same. Tuition will be prorated, and the Head of School will establish monthly payment programs.

Withdrawals from TCS

TCS families must commit themselves to a full-year enrollment. As an annual charge, tuition is payable for a full school year and is carefully budgeted. Tuition helps to pay salaries and expenses. If a family finds it necessary to withdraw a preschool child, the entire monthly payment is due for any month that is attended. When a preschool student withdraws, a month's notice is requested, when possible, so that the opening may be anticipated and the vacancy filled. In cases of financial stress, an appeal may be made to the Head of School.

Age for Preschool

Texoma Christian School requires all students entering Preschool-3 be three years old no later than September 1. TCS will not enroll three-year-old students who have not been potty-trained. Four-year-olds must be four by September 1, and Gift Year and Kindergarten students must be five years old by September 1. Screening will be done to determine readiness for kindergarten during the spring semester of the four-year-old's preschool. All new kindergarten applicants must be screened as well.

Parent Orientation

Every parent of a Preschool and Gift Year child is urged to attend the first Parent/Teacher Fellowship (PTF) meeting of the school year. This get-acquainted meeting is planned before the first day of school, not only to orient new families, but also to update everyone regarding changes and plans for TCS. This is a time to meet teachers and other parents. Teachers will explain expectations and goals so the entire TCS family can work together as a team to help meet every child's needs. The support staff will introduce parents to their program. PTF will give opportunities to volunteer for the year's projects and activities. The school does not provide childcare for that evening.

Individual Visits

The preschool teachers will try to set up individual classroom visits with each new student to our preschool program. The teachers will contact parents in August to set up appointments.

Parents are welcome to visit TCS classes during the day. It is preferred, but not required, that you call the teacher in advance to set up a visit. All visitors must sign-in at the office and receive a visitor tag to be on campus. Parents visiting classrooms should be considerate of teachers working in their classrooms and make every effort to not interfere with the teacher's program.

Communication Policy

Your child's teacher will send monthly newsletters through the RenWeb program that parents can have access to. The teacher will also send daily notes and reminders this way. You will be able to send notes to your child's teacher through RebWeb as well.

Texoma Christian School believes open communication between parents and the school is vitally important. The school's desire and intent is to keep the lines of communication open and free flowing. Nevertheless, even under the best of circumstances, breakdowns sometime occur and information gets bottlenecked. Should this happen, please be forgiving. Misinformation can be extremely harmful to the school and its mission. It can also be personally damaging to individuals.

Accordingly, TCS has established a designated line of authority for the appropriate treatment and solution of communication problems. In order for the school family to operate in harmony, should your child come home complaining about a policy or a matter of discipline, please follow this procedure:

1. Make every effort to give the school the benefit of the doubt.
2. Remember that students do not always have full access to all the facts or complete information related to some situations. Your child's report may be incomplete or possibly emotionally biased.
3. Recall that the school has specific reasons for its rules. The rules apply across the board to all students, and the school does make every effort to enforce them without favor or bias.
4. Do not discuss the matters with other parents or individuals without attempting to resolve the issue first and directly with the responsible person.
5. Try to support your child's teacher and the school; please call the teacher for any information that might help clarify all the facts.
6. If necessary, make an appointment with the teacher first to seek resolution of the issue.
7. Please follow the appropriate chain of resolution. If you cannot resolve the matter with the teacher (or other TCS individual, please make an appointment with the Director who will make every effort to correct the situation. If the issue still cannot be corrected at that level, the affected parties should visit with the Head of School. Remember: Teacher first; Director second; Head of School third.

Parent/Teacher Fellowship

At TCS, the Parent/Teacher Fellowship (PTF) is vitally important for the accomplishment of the school's mission. This partnership is essential in assisting TCS parents fulfill their God-given responsibility to educate their children in the ways of the Lord.

Parents are automatically members of the Parent/Teacher Fellowship when they enroll their child at Texoma Christian School. PTF serves the purpose to strengthen and enhance all the programs offered by TCS. Many of the extra events would not be possible without the assistance of parent helpers. Each year's plans and activities are announced at the beginning of the school year. Parents are invited to become involved as their schedules allow.

Parental Participation in School Activities

A distinctive difference between Christian and secular education is the partnership between the Christian school and the parents in the home. Parents are welcome to become involved in the various aspects of TCS life. Many of the unique activities of a Christian school are made possible by the voluntary efforts of the parents and other individuals.

Parental involvement in the school does much to ensure that the TCS educational program is a rich, total learning experience for each student. Some of the activities of parent-student interaction relate directly to the classroom education of TCS students. For example, parents may volunteer to assist teachers in the preparation of their class materials by grading papers or monitoring exams, serving from time-to-time in classroom instruction, participating as a chaperon on school field trips, helping in chapel services, assembling instructional equipment, working with the students in school organizations, and carrying out of school-based social activities.

Immunization Requirements

The State of Texas requires each student's personal immunization record (showing the dates and kinds of immunization received for each student) be retained on file in the school office. All immunizations must be validated by the doctor or health clinic. In accordance with this law, no child will be admitted without certification of the required immunizations. A health form is kept in each student's file. Vision and hearing screening will be available at TCS each fall for Preschool 4's.

Doctor's Statement

The State of Texas requires that all preschool children have in their files a statement from their doctor that they are physically able to participate in a preschool program. This is separate from the immunization record and should be written on an official letter head. This document needs to be turned in along with immunizations before the student may start school.

Discipline and Guidance Practices

You received a copy of our discipline and guidance practices with your application form. You must sign that you have received and read these practices when you turn in your application.

Medical Procedures

The application form includes an "Emergency Medical Authorization." This form also contains a place for the name of each child's physician, the physician's phone number, and other emergency numbers. Please be sure these have been completed. If a child should become ill and TCS personnel are unable to contact parents, the child will be isolated and cared for until the parents can be notified or until they arrive at pick-up time.

If the child needs medication at school the parents must send the medication in its original container, with the child's name on it. We must have a signed and dated note with specific instructions for amount and time the medication is to be dispensed. If the container is a prescription, we still need the signed and dated note. This medicine can be given directly to the teacher or taken to the TCS office.

If a child is sick, please call the office that day to let the teacher know that he or she will not be at school. The child must not be allowed to return to school until he or she is symptom free for 24 hours and is able to participate fully in the preschool program.

Dress Code

Preschool and Gift Year children do not wear uniforms. Dress your child in comfortable clothing suitable for indoor, outdoor, and messy activities. The child should be able to manage his or her own clothing without assistance. Please have your child wear tennis shoes with backs. Make sure to send coats and jackets whenever necessary because the children go outside every day possible for at least a few minutes. On field trips, we will wear the TCS Care-a-Thon tee-shirts.

Personal Possessions

Teachers will announce *Show and Tell* times but other than that toys are not allowed at school. They become a distraction and are many times difficult to determine ownership within the classroom. Children who stay for Extended Day will be allowed to bring a small pillow and blanket to leave at school. Each child will receive a jumbo plastic bag to keep the items in, and if a small stuffed animal will fit, the child may bring one for rest time only. (We recommend small baby pillow and blanket sets.) They will be sent home frequently to be washed. Mark all gloves, hats, and coats with your child's name.

Field Trips

Field trips are an integral part of our curriculum. When students enroll at TCS, parents are required to complete a permission form for field trip transportation. This form is kept on file in the school office. Parents are informed in advance of any field trip that might be scheduled, and a notice will be placed on the extended day bulletin board. All children in the three and four year old class must be in a car seat. All other children must have a seat belt and seat belts must be used. Due to liability issues, siblings cannot accompany parents on field trips.

Parent Chaperone Guidelines

Texoma Christian School deeply appreciates the participation of its parents in all activities that occur throughout the school year. School simply cannot function effectively without the participation of parents and constituents. The following guidelines are designed to establish consistency across the grade levels regarding parental involvement and the school's expectation of their responsibility.

Officially and legally, teachers are in charge of field trips and extracurricular activities. They will establish or approve itineraries and agendas for all field trips. The state requires that all drivers have a background check, get an affidavit notarized, and have it on file with the school before they can accompany a field trip. You may check with the preschool director or the office to fill out the form for the safety of all our children. The school must also have a photocopy of a valid driver's license and proof of insurance in the office before any parent may drive for a school trip.

School field trips are considered as extension activities of the school and classroom. Therefore, the rules, regulations, and guidelines that apply to the school and the classroom also apply for the trip or the extracurricular activity. Under the teacher's authority, assisting parents must demonstrate and require student compliance and proper respect. The chaperones must be willing to aide the teacher in watching and controlling the children and limit visiting with other parents and teachers. **Due to liability issues, younger siblings cannot accompany parents on field trips.**

Birthdays

Birthdays are special for children. Working together with parents, we like to have a special snack in honor of the child's birthday. Please do not be too elaborate; let the child choose what they would like. **(We ask that you not send cupcakes or cakes because they are so messy.)** A child whose birthday is in the summer months may celebrate a special "pretend" birthday party during the school year. Please do not send birthday party invitations to school unless every child in the class is included in the invitations.

Lunch/Snacks

All preschool classes have a snack time. The children will rotate taking the "snack bag" home each week and the parent will send snacks for the entire class for the next week. Teachers will send notes at the beginning of the year to let you know amounts and types of snacks desired. Paper goods may be requested occasionally as well. Extended Day will provide midmorning and midafternoon snacks.

The parents of extended day students need to send a sack lunch which includes a drink with the child when he or she comes to school. Include food from the four basic food groups and use adequate caution in food selection as no refrigeration is provided. TCS is not responsible for the child's lunch time nutritional needs. Please do not deliver fast foods at lunchtime.

When possible, TCS will work with the lunch coordinator to provide hot lunches for the preschool students. Details will be sent home to inform parents of details if and when this service is available.

Holidays and Parties

Classroom parties during the year include Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter. The Christmas party will emphasize the birth of Christ. The Easter Party is in conjunction with Grandparent's Day. **TCS does not recognize Halloween in the classrooms** or on campus. Party favors for classroom parties are provided by parent volunteers.

Drop-off Procedures

AM Extended Day students may be dropped off as early as 7:30 a.m. at the Extended Day building. Your child must be walked in and brought into the Extended Day building and signed in. We ask that you **DO NOT** park in the fire lane. Visitor parking places are available across from the building and are reserved for drop off and pick up only. **If you arrive after 8:00 a.m., whether your child is in extended day or not, please pull in the Pre-K line** and drop off your preschool child with the aide. She will sign him or her in.

Preschool 3's and 4's who are not enrolled in the extended day may be dropped off as early as 8:00 a.m. at the Extended Day building. **Please do not drop off your child unless you can see the aide.** Children will remain with the aide at the front of the building until the teacher picks them up at 8:20 a.m. If you arrive after 8:30 a.m., you will need to park and walk your child to the classroom.

PM Preschool 4's and Gift Year students may be dropped off as early as 12:00 p.m. at the Extended Day building. **Please do not drop off your child unless you can see the aide.** They will be picked up by their teachers at 12:15 p.m. If you arrive after 12:30 p.m., please walk your child to the classroom.

Pick-up Procedures

Morning Preschool will be picked up in front of the Extended Day building at 11:30 a.m.; afternoon students will be picked up at the same location at 3:15 p.m. Extended Day students picked up at 3:15 p.m. will be picked up with their class. The teacher or aide will sign them out.

Preschool students who are not picked up by 11:45 a.m. or 3:30 p.m. will be taken to their classroom for supervision. Parents must come into the building to ask for their child and at that time pay a late fee of \$10. Extended Day students are to be picked up no later than 5:30 p.m. A \$5 charge will be added at 5:35 p.m. and another \$5 charge will be added for every 10 minutes thereafter until the student is picked up.

Parking Lot Traffic

All preschool classes will be picked up in front of the Extended Day building. Drive to the end of the driveway and pull up to receive your child.

It is absolutely essential that parents refrain from visiting with or conferring with teachers at dismissal time. Parents who wish to speak with a teacher should set up an appointment to meet at another time. TCS teachers are on duty at that time, and they should not be distracted from watching out for the safety of all TCS students.

Parents should refrain from visiting with each other in the parking lot at arrival or dismissal time. Not only does this increase congestion in the parking lot, it creates inadequate supervision of our students. TCS appreciates parents who understand and cooperate with this so the risk of accidents is minimized.

If your child is to ride home with someone other than his or her usual ride, please notify the teacher in advance with a written note. For the safety of all students, we will not release a child to an unknown or unauthorized person. Please make sure that the person's car is marked with a TCS decal. When a teacher or aide is unfamiliar with the person picking up a student, TCS reserves the right to ask for photo identification before releasing the child. A child will not be released to a person without parental permission.

Matthew Principle

Students, parents, or teachers who are offended by the words or actions of another, should go first to the offending individual and share this with him or her. Matthew 18:15 *“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.”* If there is no reconciliation after consulting together and praying for mutual understanding, they should agree to go together to counsel with the Preschool Director for resolution. If there is still no resolution of the matter, then go to the Head of School for final disposition of the matter.

Giving a Good Report

A Critical Texoma Christian School Policy to Follow

In obedience to the Word of God, we hereby commit ourselves to the goal of giving a good report. When this is not possible, **we commit ourselves to remain silent or to go privately to the person**, confirm our goal, and explain the offense that would hinder us from giving a good report. We hereby intend to approach an offender in a spirit of genuine love having first examined and corrected our own attitudes and actions. Only if we are unable to restore an offender will we share the problem with others according to the principles of Scripture. When we violate this goal, we purpose to ask forgiveness knowing that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.

You will be asked to sign on the enrollment packet that you have read and will adhere to the Matthew principle. Our signatures, as parents, recognize our accountability to God for each of our words, our awareness of the lasting damage of an untamed tongue, and our commitment to the struggles and rewards of learning to give a good report.