



# Middle School

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## Parent and Student Handbook 2025-2026

810 VanRaalte Dr SW Grand Rapids, MI 49509

(616) 241-5202 | [www.tphgr.org](http://www.tphgr.org)

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## **MISSION**

The Potter's House provides a Christ-centered education for students of all ethnic heritages and income levels, equipping them to serve God and society to their fullest potential.

## **VISION**

The Potter's House, as a community of learners, will relentlessly pursue deeper discipleship with Jesus Christ and continually discover new ways to equip students to follow God throughout a lifetime of faithful service in the kingdom of God. We envision The Potter's House as a place to continue fostering deep relationships with all in our community. Through dependence on prayer, we will expand our voice and advocate for a model of Christ-centered education in under-resourced neighborhoods.

## **NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The Potter's House does not discriminate based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, height, weight, handicap, or disability of limited English proficiency in any of its programs or activities. Any questions or inquiries related to the nondiscrimination policy should be directed to the Superintendent's Office: The Potter's House, 810 VanRaalte Dr. SW, Grand Rapids MI 49509, (616) 241-5720.

## **PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT**

The Potter's House is an innovative Christ-centered school in a multi-cultural urban setting. The school is non-denominational and evangelical; our main purpose is to provide solid Christ-centered education for a broad range of children who might not normally have the opportunity to attend a Christ-centered school. To ensure a diverse social and cultural mix within the student body, tuition is based on a percentage of the parental income rather than on a fixed rate.

The Potter's House offers a Christ-centered education. Since God is the center of reality, the Bible will be taught as having significance in all areas of life. Christian discipleship and decision-making will be emphasized. The basics will be taught with sensitivity given to each child's learning rate and interests.

At The Potter's House, we strive to form students as writers, readers, speakers, mathematicians, scientists, and disciples to equip them to serve God and society to their fullest potential. In developing these identities, we want to guide them joyfully to understand God's creation and establish His Kingdom in our neighborhood, city, and world.

The Potter's House considers the first 4 to 6 weeks of school a probationary time for new students. During this time administration will monitor the student's progress (academic effort and social behavior) to confirm proper placement. If it is determined that a different placement is more suitable, the administration will advise parents and make the necessary adjustments. The Potter's House administration will determine the final placement.

The Potter's House believes that education is most successful when the family environment is supportive of learning. For this reason, parental participation will be required at The Potter's House. Parents will be required to make a commitment of service to the school on a regular basis.

## **WELCOME TO THE POTTER'S HOUSE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

We are looking forward to a great year together in middle school. First and foremost, we are excited to draw closer to Jesus, together in community, through all that we do. This year, we will focus our worship times on the book of James. Together we will see what the Kingdom of God looks like here on earth.

As a middle school student, there will be high expectations for what you do inside and outside of the classroom. We believe the best in every student and want to give them the opportunity to succeed in every way possible. You will be known and cared for as an individual.

Together, we will encounter Jesus, learn to be like Him and do His good work here at school and in our communities. We look forward to all that God has in store for us this school year.

## **A PORTRAIT OF POTTER'S HOUSE GRADUATES**

### **Resilient Followers of Jesus:**

Potter's House students will perpetually pursue becoming like Jesus by seeking the presence of God in prayer, loving their neighbors through sacrifice, and participating in the beloved community with universal hospitality.

### **Compassionate Discerners of Truth:**

Potter's House students will be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry when journeying with their neighbor towards truth.

### **Equipped Kingdom Influencers:**

Potter's House students will actively contend for the world as highly capable and knowledgeable doers of justice, who love mercy and walk humbly with their God.

### **Joyful Overcomers of Challenges:**

Potter's House students will approach difficulties with grit and perseverance, grounded in humility and thankfulness for the grace of God as expressed in the sacrificial love of Jesus. They will choose joy over despair.

### **Humble Pursuers of Excellence:**

Potter's House students will be active stewards of the minds and bodies that God has given them, continuously pursuing growth in better loving and serving God and their neighbors.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **ATTENDANCE/MORNING TARDIES**

It is important for you to be here at school when school is in session. When you are absent, you miss the learning that had been planned for you. As a middle school student, it is your responsibility to check with classmates and teachers for missing work and plan for when things need to be completed.

School begins at 8:25 in the morning, and this is the time that students are expected to be in their classrooms ready to learn. If you are tardy, you will need to check in with the middle school office for a late slip before coming to class. Tardies in the morning will be recorded. If you continue to be tardy in the morning, tardy notices will be sent home, and a face-to-face parent/guardian conference will be requested to create an action plan for you to arrive at school on time.

## **WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL**

We want you to be able to have everything that will help you learn to the best of your ability. Please do not bring anything expensive and valuable. Items that are not necessary for learning should stay at home. We prefer that students do not have electronic devices (including cell phones, cameras, tablets, and earbuds) at school. If parents determine you need a cell phone, it must be in your locker at all times. Teachers will confiscate electronics that are visible at any point during the school day or in a student's pocket while in the school building. Teachers or staff will lock them safely in the office for a parent to pick up after school.

## **MEDICATIONS**

Any medication needed must be given to the middle school office with written instructions and permission from your parents. Students may not keep medication (including general pain-relievers) in their possession.

## **TEXTBOOKS AND SUPPLIES**

We are pleased to provide some outstanding learning materials for you to use this year including textbooks, literature books, magazines, and limited school supplies such as folders and journals. You will be responsible for all materials you use and will be expected to bring supplies communicated by teachers in the summer. Textbooks will be assigned in some classes (books may be shared). Any school owned supplies and materials damaged or lost will need to be replaced at your expense.

## **BREAKFAST, LUNCH, AND SNACK**

We offer a breakfast and lunch program at no cost. If you choose to eat breakfast here at school, make sure you are here on time at 8:10 to eat before school begins at 8:25. Middle School students will have a mid-morning snack break. Food may only be eaten in designated classrooms and not in the hallways. Students must have their lunch card with them when they get to the line each day for counting purposes, this is extremely important to maintain our free lunch for all students.

## **FOOD ALLERGIES**

If a doctor has determined that your child has an allergy, and the allergy would prevent the child from eating the regular school meal, the school will make any substitution prescribed by a licensed physician at no extra charge. The physician's statement, including prescribed diet and/or substitution, must be submitted to the food service department at your school. For further information, contact the Food Service Coordinator at the Middle School Campus.

## **LOCKERS and BACKPACKS**

We are pleased to make lockers available to all middle school students. Students may bring a lock to school; however, they must provide a key/combination to their homeroom teacher. Students will be responsible for keeping lockers clean and organized. While, in general, teachers will respect lockers as your personal space, occasionally teachers may inspect your locker and random checks for cleanliness may take place. Administration holds the right to search a backpack or locker with reasonable cause at any time.

## **CHROMEBOOKS**

All our middle school students will be provided a chromebook to borrow and use for the school year. The chromebook must remain at school and will not be taken home at any point during the school year. Chromebooks are stored in carts inside each homeroom and should never be in students' lockers. Any lost or damaged school equipment will result in a fee for replacement.

## **DRESS CODE**

The Potter's House has high standards for its students in areas of academic performance, behavior, and appearance. Our students should always represent themselves and the school in a positive manner. We also desire to promote an atmosphere that is conducive to learning and does not distract from the purpose of the school in any way.

### **TOPS**

- Button-down dress shirts with a collar or polo-style shirt must be a solid color. Logos must be smaller than 2x2 inches. Shirts may be short or long-sleeved.
- Cardigan, crew neck, or quarter zip (non-athletic) must be solid color and worn over a dress code polo shirt.
- TPH Dress Code Puma gear with logo on the left chest, purchased through one of the approved TPH Dress Code websites is permitted, as well as solid color, crew neck Puma gear worn over a dress code polo shirt.
- No full zippers or hoods are permitted.

### **BOTTOMS**

- Relaxed-fit khaki, navy blue, or black pants.
- Female students have the option of wearing skirts (khaki, navy blue or black) that extend to their longest fingertip (with navy, light blue, black, or white leggings for cold weather).
- Khaki, navy blue, or black shorts that extend to the longest fingertip.
- NOT PERMITTED: Jean material of any color (including black), skintight pants, athletic pants, cargo pants, yoga pants, sweatpants, jeggings, leggings or pants with drawstrings.

### **SHOES**

- Closed-toe shoes only, such as athletic and casual shoes. No outdoor winter boots, rain boots, or slides are permitted.

\*\*\*There will be certain days throughout the school year when students will be expected and invited to wear different clothing. Those days will be communicated with students and home in a timely manner.

\*\*\*Students not in dress code will be asked to go to the office to change into clothes provided at school. If they are unable to find clothing that fits, they will be asked to call home for a change of clothes to be brought to school. If students are unable to do so, they will receive a detention.

## **BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

Each day, the expectation is that students are ready to learn: to be Prompt, Prepared, Productive, and Polite. Students earn a behavior mark by not meeting the expectation of one of the four P's (our day-to-day values)

Students will earn a behavior detention (tracked on the online Behavior Board) by

- One warning and two behaviors in one class
- Four behaviors in a day
- Six behaviors in a week

If students do not regain self-control after correction:

- Student may be sent to the Dean of Students with work to do.
- Student may be escorted to a safe place by the Dean of Students if demonstrating significant dysregulation.
- Student may take part in a restorative process with the Dean of Students.

The following detention to suspension scale will also inform administrative action. Accumulated detentions in a 4-week period will result in additional consequences by the scale below.

<b>Detentions</b>	<b>Suspension consequences</b>
3	1 day in school isolation
6	2 days out of school; reinstatement mtg with parents; behavior plan
9	3 days out of school; reinstatement mtg with parents; behavior plan
12	5 days out of school; reinstatement mtg with parents; behavior plan; possible dismissal from school.

Additional behavioral guidelines are found in the Student Code of Conduct.

## **OTHER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES**

### **MORNING PROGRAM**

We offer the opportunity for students to come before school and participate in a wellness program in the gym. Students may arrive any time after 7:00 am and report directly to the gymnasium and must remain in the gymnasium until they are dismissed to their homeroom class.

### **SPORTS PROGRAM**

Our 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade students will have the opportunity to participate in interscholastic sports. Boys will practice and compete in soccer, cross country, basketball, track and field, and baseball. Girls will compete in volleyball, cross country, basketball, track and field, soccer, and softball. 6th graders will have the opportunity to participate in cross country and track and field.

### **8<sup>th</sup> GRADE CAREER AWARENESS**

As an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student, you will participate in several career seminars given by professionals in our community. Through these seminars, you will be encouraged to reflect on your talents and interests to develop your own career goals. These seminars will help you to discern some important information regarding various careers.

### **WEDNESDAY OPPORTUNITY CLASSES**

In addition to the core curriculum at The Potter's House, you are encouraged to enroll in our Wednesday afternoon program. We are fortunate to network with various art programs throughout the city for Wednesday classes. Each class meets for one academic calendar trimester. You will have the opportunity to register for a different class each trimester. Students will be able to go off-campus for some classes, and you will be responsible for giving your best cooperation as representatives of The Potter's House.

### **DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAM**

We believe it is important for our students to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Our weekly Discipleship Program is where we learn from parents and community members about how to be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what Jesus did. We will learn and practice spiritual disciplines (such as memorizing verses and journaling) and build spiritual character. You also will be part of a small group with peers and mentors that will give you an opportunity to learn, discuss, and practice personal Christian living.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

We are privileged to schedule many learning experiences away from The Potter's House throughout the school year. Each activity will have a specific learning purpose, and your commitment to giving your best will always be expected. This includes exemplary behavior and focused engagement. School rules and procedures apply to all field trips. .

### **SUMMER SCHOOL**

Students who have one or more failing grades for core classes (Math and ELA) at the end of the school year and/or students who miss a significant number of school days will be required to make up for their missed learning time through our Summer School program. (Decisions will be made in conversation with parents/guardians.)

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL CLASS TRIPS AND FUNDRAISERS**

Our class trips are a unique opportunity as well as a learning requirement. It is a privilege for us to be able to plan these trips for our students. Each of these trips has been planned according to the guidelines given to us by our school board. We are committed to providing an extended learning experience away from school that all will enjoy.

Since these trips are a special privilege, students are expected to also earn their trip by demonstrating responsibility in their academics and behavior. Since the school plans these trips well in advance, student payments toward class trips cannot be refunded with cancellations.

Our purpose is to provide a quality learning opportunity that is positive for everyone. Parental support, involvement, and encouragement are appreciated. Parents should communicate with us any questions or concerns they may have regarding your participation with us for these valuable trips:

8th grade: Washington D.C. \$750

7th grade: Chicago \$250

6th grade: Shipshewana \$65

Students may choose to participate in any (or all) fundraisers planned to help them earn money for their class trips. Students are not required to participate in fundraisers. If students earn more money than is needed for their trip, the excess balance will be carried over for a future trip.

A student account accurately records all monies earned through fundraising. A calendar of fundraising events will be established and distributed to all students. Parents willing to help with any projects are greatly appreciated.

## RPC STAFF DIRECTORY

Name	Title	Email
Ackerman, Carla	Director of Educational Support Specialists	cackerman@tphgr.org
Baker, Amanda	Elementary Academic Interventionist	mbaker@tphgr.org
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Booy, John	Advancement Founder	jbooy@tphgr.org
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Escabi-Johnson, Neomi	Elementary/Middle School Morning Program Coordinator	nescabi@tphgr.org
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Figuroa, Tricia	Robotics Coach	tfiguroa@tphgr.org
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Gauger, Ronda	English Language Learner, Title 1 Teacher	rgauger@tphgr.org
Green, Andrea	Grade 6 Language Arts, Social Studies Teacher	agreen@tphgr.org
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Helm, Randy	Director of Finance	rhelm@tphgr.org
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Taylor, Rosie	Kindergarten Teacher	rtaylor@tphgr.org
Troeger, Tony	Grade 8 Bible, Mathematics Teacher	ttroeger@tphgr.org
Veenstra, Sarah	Grades 4-8 Spanish Teacher	sveenstra@tphgr.org
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Visser, Gabby	Grade 2 Teacher	gvisser@tphgr.org

## THE POTTER'S HOUSE | 2025-2026 CALENDAR

12-14 New Staff Orientation  
14 MS Student Orientation  
14 Back-to-School Bash  
18-21 District Worship & PD  
19 HS Freshman/New Student Orientation  
21 PS-8 Parent Night  
25 1st Day of School-Half Day  
27 No Wednesday After-School Classes  
27-28 Freshman Basecamp  
29 No School-Labor Day

1 No School-Labor Day  
4 HS Parent Night

14-16 PS-12 PTC  
16 High School End of 1st Quarter  
17 No School

4 PS-8 Open House  
6-7 No School-Teacher PD  
14 PS-8 End of 1st Trimester  
26-28 No School-Thanksgiving Break

16 -19 High School Final Exams  
19 High School End of 2nd Quarter  
22-31 No School-Christmas Break

1-2 No School-Christmas Break  
5 School Resumes  
19 M.L.K. Jr. Day-Full Day  
27-29 PS-12 PTC  
30 No School

AUGUST 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

SEPTEMBER 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

OCTOBER 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

NOVEMBER 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

DECEMBER 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

JANUARY 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

FEBRUARY 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

MARCH 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

APRIL 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

MAY 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

JUNE 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

JULY 2026						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

16 No School-Mid-Winter Break  
27 PS-8 End of 2nd Trimester

6 High School End of 3rd Quarter  
13 Half Day-Teacher PD

3-10 No School-Spring Break  
21-23 PS-12 PTC  
24 No School

14-15 Senior Exams  
21 High School Graduation  
25 No School-Memorial Day  
26-29 High School Final Exams  
29 High School End of 4th Quarter

1-5 High School May Term  
2 8th Grade Graduation  
3 Kindergarten Graduation  
5 Last Day of School-Half Day  
8-9 Teacher PD

**Color Code**  
• Yellow-School Day  
• Green-No School  
• Pink-Half Day, *Noon Dismissal*  
*No Lunch Service*  
• Blue-No School, Teacher PD

## **GRADE LEVEL SCHEDULES**

Half-Day (HD) / Full-Day (FD)

Preschool 2 HD	Tuesday & Thursday 8:30-11:30 am
Preschool 3 HD	Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8:30-11:30 am
Preschool 5 HD	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30-11:30 am
PreK 2 HD	Tuesday & Thursday 8:30-11:30 am
PreK 3 HD	Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8:30-11:30 am
PreK 5 HD	Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 8:30-11:30 am
Preschool/PreK FD	2-, 3-, and 5-Day 8:30-3:30 pm
Y5 3 FD	Tuesday & Thursday 8:25 am- 3:30 pm   Wednesday 8:25 am-1:15 pm
K 3 FD	Monday & Friday 8:25 am- 3:30 pm   Wednesday 8:25 am-1:15 pm
Y5-8th Grade	Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 8:25-3:30 pm   Wednesday 8:25-1:15 pm
High School	Monday–Friday 8:00 am-3:25 pm   Wednesday 8:00 am-1:15 pm

## **DAILY ARRIVAL / DISMISSAL TIMES**

7:00 am	Morning Wellness Program   Middle School Gymnasium
7:20 am	Shuttle leaves HS   Pickup at HS main office doors
7:40 am	Shuttle leaves EL/MS   Pickup at administration office doors
7:30 am	Employee Morning Devotions   7:20 am Tuesdays and Fridays
8:00 am	High School Start Time
8:25 am	Middle School Start Time
8:30 am	Preschool and Pre-K AM Session Arrival
11:30 am	Preschool and Pre-K AM Session Dismissal
3:30 pm	Shuttle leaves HS   Pickup at HS main office doors
3:25 pm	High School Dismissal   Wednesdays at 1:15 pm
3:30 pm	Middle School Dismissal   Wednesdays at 1:15 pm
3:50 pm	Shuttle leaves EL/MS   Pickup sidewalk / bottom of hill / Chicago Drive

### **Arrival**

Middle School: School begins promptly at 8:25 am. We suggest that students arrive between 8:00 and 8:20 am. Students who attend the wellness program may enter at 7:00 am. No adult supervision will be provided for students arriving before 7:00am.

### **Dismissal**

Middle School dismissal is at 3:30 pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, and Wednesday dismissal is at 1:15 pm.

### **Driveline**

Driveline is a school dismissal system designed to manage student pick-up and drop-off, particularly in car lines, using an app and a Family ID system. The Potter's House uses Driveline to streamline dismissal processes, enhance safety, and reduce stress, according to the parent/guardian provided information.

### **How Driveline Works**

Family ID: Parents and guardians are assigned a Family ID number, which is displayed on a placard in their vehicle window.

Staff Dispatch: A staff member uses the Driveline Dispatch app to enter the Family ID of each arriving vehicle.

**Student Release:** The Driveline system displays the corresponding student's name(s) in the classroom, indicating which student(s) can be released to their awaiting vehicle.

**Safety and Order:** This process helps ensure students are released safely and efficiently, reducing chaos and exposure to traffic. Here are some important reminders:

- No parking on Van Raalte Dr.
- You must have your Family ID card; otherwise, you will need to park and come into the office with your Family ID card.
- When you arrive, form two tight lines so we can keep the passing lane on the left clear.
- Parents picking up preschool students need to enter the parking lot from Cesar E. Chavez Ave, park in the lot, and enter through the side door, where a staff member will be stationed.
- Once you are through the lines, use any of the exits to leave campus.

Please continue to be patient and gracious with other drivers.

*Please pick up your student promptly; there will be a \$30 late fee charged to the family account of students who are not picked up by 4:00 pm (or 30 minutes after any designated dismissal time).*

### **Student Attendance at School-Sponsored Events**

Middle School students may not attend school-sponsored activities (sports games, plays, concerts, etc.) unless accompanied by a parent or guardian who is 18 or older. For your children's safety, students may not stay after school dismissal unsupervised or be dropped off for an event alone.

### **Parent Service Commitment**

Every family, at the time of enrollment, makes a commitment to serve at The Potter's House for a minimum of 25 hours. Our purpose for having Parent Service Commitment Hours is two-fold. First, we feel it is vital for parents to show an interest in their student's school. Second, it helps us to minimize our operational costs.

It is the parent's responsibility to complete their service commitment. After an assignment is completed, fill out a Service Commitment Voucher (available in the office), have the appropriate staff member sign the voucher, and turn it into the main office to receive credit. A charge of \$15 per hour will be added to your tuition statement for hours not completed by the end of the school year.

### **Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Parent/Teacher Conferences play an integral part in the academic growth of your child. These mandatory conferences are held three times per year in the fall, winter, and spring. Parents do not need to wait for scheduled conference times to have a conference. Conferences may be scheduled whenever the need for one arises. Communication between home and school is vital, so feel free to call or visit the school. We are here to serve you and your children.

### **Conference Policy/Joint Custody**

Separate parent/teacher conferences will not be held for parents with joint custody of their children. It is the sole responsibility of the parents to inform one another of scheduling and arrange conference times with the teacher. This is in the best interest of the child.

### **Conference Policy/Legal Guardian Only**

Parent/Teacher conferences will only be scheduled with the parent or legal guardian. Teachers will not discuss students with any relative or unrelated adult, regardless of a current living situation.

### **Non-Custodial Parent Policy**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) sets out requirements designed to protect the privacy of parents and students. In brief, the law requires a school district to: 1) provide a parent access to the records that are directly related to the student; 2) provide a parent an opportunity to seek correction of the record he or she believes to be inaccurate or misleading; and 3) with some exceptions, obtain the written permission of a parent before disclosing information contained in the student's education record.

The definition of parent is found in the FERPA implementing regulation under 34 CFR 99.3.

*"Parent" means a parent of a student and includes a natural parent, a guardian, or an individual acting as a parent in the absence of a parent or a guardian.*

Section 99.4 gives an example of the rights of parents.

*An educational agency or institution shall give full rights under the Act to either parent, unless the agency or institution has been provided with evidence that there is a court order, State statute, or legally binding document relating to such matters as divorce, separation, or custody, that specifically revokes these rights.*

This means that, in the case of divorce or separation, a school district must provide access to both natural parents, custodial and noncustodial, unless there is a legally binding document that specifically removes that parent's FERPA rights. In this context, a legally binding document is a court order or other legal paper that prohibits access to the education record or removes the parent's rights to have knowledge about his or her child's education.

Custody or other residential arrangements for a child do not, by themselves, affect the FERPA rights of the child's parents. One can best understand the FERPA position on parents' rights by separating the concept of custody from the concept of rights that FERPA gives parents. Custody, as a legal concept, establishes where a child will live, and often, the duties of the person(s) with whom the child lives. FERPA, on the other hand, simply establishes the parents' right of access to and control of the education record related to the child.

### **Medication Administration**

Only necessary medications that must be given during regular school hours will be administered. All medications, whether prescribed or over the counter, require a Medication Permission form (available in the office) completed by the parent/guardian. The form must be renewed each school year and updated upon any change in medication or dosage.

Though we encourage a physician's written permission in all cases, a physician signature is required under the following conditions:

- Any possession or use of an inhaler or epinephrine injector
- Any self-possession or self-administration of any medication

Parents must give a copy of any prescribed treatment or care plan to the office. An emergency care plan from the physician is required for asthma, diabetic, seizure, and epinephrine medications.

Prescribed medications must be delivered to the school in the original container. The label must include the dosage and frequency of administration (as prepared by the pharmacy). Over-the-counter medication must be in the original package and have the student's name affixed to the package. <sup>[1]</sup>~~[SEP]~~ The medication supplied to the school must be in the exact dosage prescribed, so the individual administering medications is not responsible for dividing or splitting pills. Parents must pick up all medication at the end of the school year. Any medication not picked up will be discarded.

### **Report Cards**

Parents receive a report card three times a year at the end of each trimester. The dates for the end of each trimester and parent/teacher conferences are on the school calendar. Teachers make every effort to communicate regularly with parents regarding student progress, particularly if a student is struggling academically. Progress reports will be sent home with the students before parent/teacher conferences, and final report cards will be mailed home at the end of the year.

### **SAFE SCHOOL**

Providing a safe school environment for its students, staff, parents/guardians, and volunteers is of the utmost importance to The Potter's House. By implementing the following policies, our goal is to protect the students from incidents of misconduct or inappropriate behavior while also protecting staff and volunteers. The Potter's House will incorporate information regarding safe school policies into school employee training programs and handbooks.

### **Volunteers, Parents, Guardians, And Relatives**

The Potter's House has an outstanding parent participation and volunteer program. Education is most successful when family and community environments are supportive of learning. For this reason, parental and volunteer participation is encouraged, and the following policies have been established to provide a safe, secure environment for students, parents/guardians, volunteers, and staff.

#### **Volunteers:**

The volunteer coordinator is responsible for recruiting community volunteers, reviewing their capabilities, and making appropriate placements. Prospective volunteers must complete and sign a written application form that will provide basic information.

Upon completion of the application, a face-to-face interview will be scheduled with the applicant to discuss their eligibility and the school's expectations. Before the applicant is permitted to work with children, they will be asked to sign a background check authorization form allowing Potter's House to run a criminal background check through the central registry for child abuse and neglect; Sex Offenders Registry (SOR) list and the Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT) criminal history records check. The volunteer coordinator will check two of their personal references. Documentation of the application, authorization, and reference checks will be maintained in confidence on file in the volunteer coordinator's office.

#### **Parents/Guardians and Program Volunteers:**

A comprehensive background check will be required of all persons (parents, guardians, program volunteers, and relatives) who desire to work with students in our programs and activities.

Parents/guardians will be asked to sign a background check authorization each year at enrollment. Those who have given authorization will be screened through the Sex Offenders Registry (SOR) list, and the Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT) criminal history records check. The background check authorization and all reports will be maintained in confidence on file in the business office.

If an individual declines to sign the authorization form, they will not be able to work with children at The Potter's House. The business office will alert administrators to any disqualifying offense that will keep an individual from working with children.

#### **Parent/Volunteer Driver Qualifications**

Parents/guardians and volunteers who would like to chaperone on field trips must be screened through the Sex Offenders Registry (SOR) list, and the Internet Criminal History Access Tool (ICHAT) criminal history records check.

Parents or volunteers who wish to drive for student field trips must have a copy of their driver's license and proof of car insurance on file in the business office. They must also meet the following qualifications:

- Have a valid driver's license and be at least 21 years of age.
- Have full automobile liability insurance coverage.
- Have enough seat belts and approved booster seats for children who are both under eight years old and less than four feet nine inches tall to transport their assigned students.
- Be able to follow all instructions provided by the teacher or the school.

### **Abuse And Neglect Reporting**

ALL staff and volunteers of The Potter's House are considered mandated reporters and are required under Child Protection Law to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect to Child Protective Services immediately.

The Child Protection Law requires mandated reporters to make an immediate verbal report to DHS upon suspecting child abuse and neglect and submit a 3200 form (available in the office).

- The reporter is not expected to investigate the matter, know the legal definitions of child abuse and neglect, or even know the name of the perpetrator.
- Mandated reporters must also notify their direct supervisor of the report.
- However, reporting the suspected allegations of child abuse and/or neglect to their direct supervisor does not fulfill the requirement to report directly to DHS.

### **Communication**

The Potter's House believes that transparency in communication is critical in helping to keep parents, teachers, and staff informed and encouraged to always report any issues or concerns that may impact the school community. Our goal will be to be timely, correct, and credible when communicating about issues that may impact the children we serve.

The Potter's House has adopted a communication policy that will allow the superintendent or appointed building leader to immediately provide information to parents through email if there is a credible issue brought to the attention of school leadership. While names and details will always be left out until appropriate authorities can advise and guide the school leadership; effective and timely communication will serve to keep all informed, even if allegations are found to be false.

The Potter's House will routinely review the accuracy, speed, and fullness of the communication process to ensure that parents, faculty, and staff find it effective and to remain faithful to protecting the rights of everyone involved. The Potter's House believes that transparency strengthens and unifies the Potter's House community.

### **School-Related Incidents of Abuse or Neglect Procedures**

If an incident of abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred by a Potter's House employee, volunteer, or visitor during a Potter's House program or activity, the following procedures will be implemented: The employee or volunteer alleged to be the perpetrator of the abuse or neglect will immediately be removed and placed on leave pending an investigation and instructed to remain away from the premises during the investigation. He or she will be instructed to have no contact with the victim or with witnesses.

All allegations of abuse should be reported to the police, Child Protective Services (3200 form completion), the parent/guardian, and, when appropriate, school counselors. The Potter's House will comply with the state's requirements regarding mandatory reporting of abuse as the law then exists and will fully cooperate with the investigation of the incident by police authorities.

The insurance company will be notified, and the Potter's House will complete an incident report. All documents received relating to the incident and/or allegations will immediately be forwarded to the insurance company.

The Potter's House Superintendent will serve as the spokesperson to the media concerning incidents of abuse or neglect. The advice of legal counsel will be sought before responding to media inquiries or releasing information about the situation to the school community. All other representatives of the school should refrain from speaking to the media.

Individuals convicted of crimes listed in Section 2 of the Sex Offender Registry Act, M.C.L.A. 28.722, shall not be allowed to work in the schools or in the district. Individuals convicted of a felony not listed in the Sex Offender Registry Act may not continue to work at the Potter's House, unless or until they have received written approval from both the Superintendent and the Board of Directors. Pending such approval, employees shall be placed on administrative leave.

### **SCHOOL SECURITY**

All parents, visitors, and volunteers must sign in at the school office immediately upon entering the building and wear a name badge. Prior to leaving the building, they must sign out at the office. Office personnel must escort first-time visitors through the building or office personnel may call the requested staff member to the office to meet their visitor. Employees will wear school-issued identification during the school day.

For the safety of our students: All students, family members, volunteers, and visitors are expected to enter the building using the controlled entrance in the office. Other entrances should not be unlocked or blocked open at any time.

### **Leaving During School**

For your children's safety, students should never leave school for any reason during the day without checking out through the office. Only the parent / guardian may sign-out or give permission for a student's early dismissal. Only family or authorized adults listed in the school management system may pick-up a student with parent / guardian permission.

Middle School Procedures:

- The parent / guardian or authorized adult will be required to come to the office and complete the Early Dismissal log and Early Dismissal Authorization slip.
- Teachers may not release a child to an adult without an Early Dismissal Authorization slip.
- Students are not permitted to walk home alone during school hours. The parent / guardian or an authorized adult must pick up the student at school.
- Adult school employees may take a student home with permission from the student's parent / guardian.
- Students will not be released to a person other than a parent / guardian during school hours or school dismissal without permission from the parent or legal guardian. Teachers may not release a child to the noncustodial parent without permission from the custodial parent. Separated or divorced parents may not use the school as their meeting place.

## **DEFINITIONS**

### **Bullying**

Bullying is the intentional and repeated abuse of an individual over a period of time. Bullying can take many forms including, but not limited to, any combination of physical, emotional, written, and verbal abuse. Bullying is repeated, intentional, harmful/abusive behavior that involves a power imbalance (is one-sided). Bullying may harm a student's educational journey by creating fear, emotional distress, and/or may negatively affect a student's physical or mental health.

### **Cyberbullying**

The intentional abuse of an individual through a social media platform that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Publishing or texting a false statement about another that is damaging to their reputation
- Publicly disclosing a private fact about another
- Breaking into someone's account
- Purposely causing someone emotional distress by posting a recorded video

### **Harassment**

Harassment is conduct, whether intentional or unintentional, that subjects another person to unwanted attention, comments, or actions because of race, national origin, age, sex, physical characteristics, or disability, robs the person of dignity, and is not permitted. Harassment creates a hostile or unwelcoming atmosphere so severe it prevents a student from participating in an educational activity. Harassment of any kind by student, employees, or volunteers to other students, employees, or volunteers is not permitted.

### **Threat**

A statement or action, either physical, written, verbal or posted online, intended to or with connotations of inflicting harm on another person or the school. Threats will be followed through on with appropriate discipline (see levels 3-5), as well as with a Behavioral Threat Assessment. Threats of any kind cause a substantial disruption to the learning environment and will be taken seriously.

### **Cheating**

Students have a significant responsibility in honesty regarding all schoolwork. Cheating is when a student misleads or purposely acts dishonestly on homework, tests, quizzes, etc.

### **Plagiarism**

A form of academic dishonesty in which one person steals another person's ideas or words and falsely presents them as their own. There are many forms of plagiarism, including but not limited to:

- Using the exact language of someone else without the use of quotation marks and/or without giving proper author credits.
- Presenting the sequence of ideas or arranging the material of someone else's event though the material is written first person or in one's own words, without giving appropriate acknowledgment.
- Submitting a document written by someone else but representing it as your own.

### **Public Display of Affection (PDA)**

The Potter's House recognizes that genuine feelings of affection may exist between two students. However, students shall refrain from all Public Displays of Affection (PDA) while on campus or while attending and/or participating in a school-related activity. This type of behavior, while innocent on some levels, can quickly devolve into a distraction for the students engaging in the practice, as well as other

students who witness these public displays of affection. PDA includes, but is not limited to, prolonged hugging, cuddling or handholding, and kissing which are prohibited behaviors and are subject to disciplinary action.

### **Staff Intervention**

Staff Intervention may be done by any staff member in consultation with their principal (or designee) where it is believed behavioral, social, emotional, or academic intervention is appropriate.

### **Administrative Intervention**

Administrative Intervention may be done where it is believed behavioral, social, emotional, or academic staff intervention has been exhausted, or the administrator deems this is the necessary next best step.

## **STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT**

Whether walking in front, alongside, or sitting next to a student, The Potter's House desires to disciple students to be resilient followers of Jesus. We place an intentional and strategic focus on providing support and interventions for students when responding to student behavior. We have high expectations for our students in the areas of spiritual formation, academic performance, social behavior, and physical effort. We understand, however, that there are times when behavior is exhibited in a manner which disrupts the learning environment. In these instances, we need our students, our parents/guardians, and our educators to work together to maintain a positive and effective learning environment and caring culture. We believe that students need to do everything they possibly can to make the most of their educational opportunities and reach their full potential.

This handbook contains all the basic student expectations for all grades 6th-8th that includes all extra-curricular activities. Any students found to be in violation of this handbook, in part or whole, will be subjected to discipline and additional consequences may apply as it relates to participation in extracurricular activities.

With the help and interest of their parent/guardian, students will:

- Attend class regularly, on time, with the necessary supplies and materials to fully participate in class.
- Complete homework and assignments in a timely, responsible manner.
- Be courteous, polite, and cooperative with staff members and other students.
- Accept responsibility for their behavior and the decisions they make relative to behavior, effort, performance, attendance, etc.
- Know and adhere to general school rules as outlined in the student handbook, including all attendance rules and regulations.
- Know and adhere to specific teacher and course requirements, rules, and regulations.
- Familiarize yourself with the Student Code of Conduct and behave accordingly.
- Take pride in their school building and its equipment. Attempt to leave the building in as good or better condition than you found it. Students must pay for damages to school property.
- Support athletic teams and performance groups in positive ways without booing, jeering, degrading officials, or singling out individual players, other teams, or fans from other schools.
- Attend and participate in morning prayers, chapels, and discipleship.
- Use technology appropriately.

We will not accept any behavior that detracts from the appropriate educational atmosphere at school or inhibits students from reaching their full potential and performing at their highest level of achievement. The administration will direct interventions to ensure academic support as necessary for students' success.

Students will not:

- Disrupt the educational atmosphere at school.
- Challenge the authority, either verbally or physically, of school personnel or volunteers.
- Interfere with a teacher's ability to teach or a student's ability to learn by being rude, disruptive, or uncooperative.
- Waste class time, teacher time, or their own time during the school day.

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner representing the mission of The Potter's House School on and off-campus. This includes behavior made public through posting to the internet or any electronic communication that causes a substantial disruption to the learning environment. These behaviors will be addressed. It is our goal to provide a safe and stimulating learning environment in which each student will be challenged to reach high standards. Teachers and students must be committed to finding a solution when attitudes or behaviors interfere with the goals stated in the Student Code of Conduct.

Students are expected to be responsible for their behavior and to always contribute in a positive manner. Students should speak and act in an appropriate, Christian manner, treating each other with respect and looking out for the interests of others. If these expectations are not met, teachers will work with students to correct the problem. If a problem is repeated or is excessive, disciplinary action must be taken.

### **Disciplinary Action**

Disciplinary action, when necessary, will be firm, fair, and consistent, with a measure of common sense to be the most effective in changing student behavior. In determining the appropriate disciplinary action, school personnel authorized to impose disciplinary penalties will consider the following:

- Nature of the offense and circumstances that led to the offense.
- Student's prior disciplinary record
- Effectiveness of past disciplinary action
- Information from parent/guardian
- Information from teachers
- Other extenuating circumstances

In addition, authorized school personnel have the responsibility to investigate, interview, and document information from anyone with possible knowledge of misbehavior. Parents and staff should work together to use positive guidance techniques such as modeling, encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to acceptable behavior, and setting clear limits.

*Please note: The Student Code of Conduct has been established as a set of guidelines, however in all cases, administrators make the final decision on all misbehavior, suspensions, and dismissals. The administration reserves the right to determine what constitutes appropriate behavior and dress.*

## **GRADES 6-8 DISCIPLESHP AND DISCIPLINE: SCHOOL RESPONSES TO STUDENT MISBEHAVIOR**

Please find below what will guide our responses to student misbehavior.

**Level I Misbehavior:** These acts of misbehavior include those students' behaviors that are generally described as mildly disruptive, committed without malice, not purposefully disrespectful, but which disrupt the orderly educational process in the classroom or on school grounds. This level includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Absent from class for more than 10 minutes
- Failure to carry out directions, follow classroom and/or school guidelines
- Improper dress (e.g., wearing hats, bare feet, immodest/extreme/exhibitionist dress, sagging pants, inappropriate logos/advertisements/language on apparel, gang apparel), Dress Code Violation
- Inappropriate internet or computer use, including, but not limited to:
- accessing inappropriate sites, publishing, or producing material not related to a school or class assignment, creating inoffensive but inappropriate images on the student's screen or the screens of others, playing computer games during class or study hall time
- Littering
- Running and/or making excessive noise in the hall or building
- Throwing objects (e.g., pencils, stones, food)
- Unacceptable physical contact (e.g., rough play, minor horseplay)
- Public Display of Affection (PDA)
- Unauthorized use of electronic device (first offense)
- Visible cell phone or cell phone in use (see Use of Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices)

**Level I Response:** Disciplinary action for Level I acts of misbehavior may include the following:

### **First Occurrence**

#### **Minimum**

- Staff Intervention
- Teacher-Student Conference
- School Detention

#### **Maximum**

- Teacher-Student-Parent/Guardian-Counselor Conference

### **Repeated/Flagrant Occurrences**

#### **Minimum**

- Teacher-Student-Parent/Guardian-Counselor Conference

#### **Maximum**

- Staff Intervention
- In-school Suspension

*Note: Students who demonstrate repeated Level I acts of misbehavior may also be re-taught the expectations and receive targeted instruction in social skills.*

**Level II Misbehavior:** These acts of misbehavior include those students' behaviors which are described as intentional, and which disrupt the orderly educational process in the classroom or on school grounds. This level includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Continuation of unmodified Level I acts of misbehavior
- Cheating on tests, exams, or school projects (in this instance the students shall also receive a failing grade)
- Creating or displaying profane, obscene, indecent, immoral, or offensive language, gestures, or material
- Failure to cooperate with school personnel
- Leaving the classroom or school grounds without permission
- Inappropriate internet or computer use, including, but not limited to generating an expense of up to fifty dollars (\$50), publishing offensive material on the internet or the TPH internal network, creating offensive images, defamation of an individual or a group
- Posting, distributing, or possessing unauthorized material

**Level II Response:** Disciplinary action for Level II acts of misbehavior may include the following:

**First Occurrence**

**Minimum**

- Staff Intervention
- Teacher-Student-Parent/Guardian-Counselor Conference
- School Detention

**Maximum**

- Administrative Intervention
- In-school Suspension

**Repeated/Flagrant Occurrences**

**Minimum**

- Out-of-school/program Suspension (1-3 School Days)

**Maximum**

- Disciplinary Reassignment

*Note: Students who demonstrate repeated Level II acts of misbehavior may also be re-taught the expectations and receive targeted instruction in social skills.*

**Level III Misbehavior:** These student behaviors clearly disrupt the orderly educational process in the classroom or on school grounds. In many cases, these behaviors are illegal. This level includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Continuation of unmodified Level II acts of misbehavior
- Purposeful disrespect toward teachers, staff, guests, and volunteers
- Forgery/falsifying information, making false reports, giving false information that may compromise student and staff safety.
- Gambling (playing games for money)
- Hostile actions (including inciting a fight or other disruptive behavior)
- Inappropriate internet or computer use, including, but not limited to modifying TPH programmatic files or web pages without authorization, creating a web page without authorization, using another person's password or account, unauthorized disclosure of test questions.
- Interfering with school authorities and programs through behavior including, but not limited to walk-outs, boycotts, sit-ins, trespassing, social media pranks/challenges.
- Harassment and verbal abuse
- Profane, obscene, indecent, immoral, sexual, or offensive language, and/or including gestures, racial or ethnic slurs, or biased language, illustrations, or behavior (creating a hostile environment)
- Smoking, vaping, or possession of chewing tobacco or other tobacco products
- Vandalism (graffiti, tagging and so on) or destruction of property that generates an expense less than one-hundred dollars (\$100).
- Written, verbal, or posted threatening language

**Level III Response:** Disciplinary action for Level III acts of misbehavior may include the following:

**First Occurrence**

**Minimum**

- Administrative Intervention
- In-school Suspension

**Maximum**

- Administrative Intervention
- Out-of-school/program Suspension (1-3 School Days)

**Repeated/Flagrant Occurrences**

**Minimum**

- Out-of-school/program Suspension (1-3 School Days)

**Maximum**

- Out-of-school/program Suspension (6-10 School Days)

**Level IV Misbehavior:** These acts of misbehavior include those student behaviors which very seriously disrupt the orderly education process in the classroom or on school grounds. In many cases, these behaviors are also illegal. This level includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Continuation of unmodified Level III acts of misbehavior
- Fighting
- Inappropriate internet or computer use, including, but not limited to generating an expense under one-hundred dollars (\$100), sexual harassment, spreading confidential information
- Making a false report of sexual harassment (creating a hostile environment)
- Possession or lighting of fireworks
- Possession or distribution of pornographic materials as defined by the Supreme Court, including possession or distribution of pornographic material through electronic form
- Possession or sale of stolen property
- Racial or ethnic harassment (creating a hostile environment)
- Sexual harassment
- Theft under one-hundred dollars (\$100)
- Unauthorized use of an electronic device (repeated offense)
- Use of force, intimidation, or coercion
- Vandalism generating an expense under one-hundred dollars (\$100)
- Written, verbal, or posted threatening language that causes a substantial disruption to the learning environment

**Level IV Response:** Disciplinary action for Level IV acts of misbehavior may include the following:

**First Occurrence**

**Minimum**

- Administrative Intervention
- Out-of-school/program Suspension (3-5 School Days)

**Maximum**

- Agency Referral
- Police Contact
- Out-of-school/program Suspension (10 or More School Days)

**Repeated/Flagrant Occurrences**

**Minimum**

- Out-of-school/program Suspension (6-10 School Days)

**Maximum**

- Out-of-school/program Suspension (10 or More School Days)
- Disciplinary Reassignment
- Expulsion
- Police Contact

**Level V Misbehavior:** These acts of misbehavior include those student behaviors which very seriously disrupt the orderly educational process in the classroom or on school grounds. In many cases, these behaviors are also illegal. This level includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Any continued behavior which is disruptive to the process of education
- Arson
- Bomb threat or similar threat directed against a school building, school property or school-related event
- Bullying (see definition)
- Burglary, extortion, or robbery
- Criminal Sexual Conduct (CSC)
- False activation of a fire alarm
- Force, intimidation, coercion, or participation in gang-like activity
- Gang-related activity and/or gang-related characteristics including, but not limited to gang apparel, colors, jewelry, notebooks, gang symbols, hand signs that denote gang affiliation, displaying gang signs, weapons, depicting gang affiliation on any or all social internet sites
- Gross Indecency/Indecent Exposure
- Illegal behavior or criminal conduct
- Inappropriate internet or computer use, including, but not limited to generating an expense of one-hundred dollars (\$100) or more, causing a computer or network crash, creating a computer virus or other form of computer disruption, theft of software, vandalizing software, or hardware, intimidating others or using internet to post threats or to harass students or staff
- Physical assault of staff
- Physical assault of students
- Possession, concealment, or use of an explosive device, any gas-ejecting device, fireworks, or any substance or device which can be used as an explosive device and so on
- Possession, concealment, threat, attempted use, or use of a dangerous weapon
- Possession, concealment, threat, attempted use, or use of a weapon or look-alike weapon including, but not limited to knife with a blade less than three (3) inches in length, box cutter, straight-edge razor, pepper spray, chemical mace, OC spray, airsoft gun, bb gun
- Possession, delivery, sale or use of alcohol or illegal dangerous drugs, drug paraphernalia or other substances masquerading as illegal controlled drugs (including synthetic drugs) \*(See Note below)
- Possession, delivery, sale or use of unauthorized prescribed drug or other intoxicant (including but not limited to electronic cigarettes) lawful, or unlawful
- Possession, use or distribution of sexual pictures or other sexual devices
- Sexual misconduct or inappropriate sexual activity (including the taking of, possession of, and distribution of any inappropriate pictures, E.g., sexting)
- Theft over one-hundred dollars (\$100)
- Vandalism generating an expense over one-hundred dollars (\$100) or criminal damage to property
- Verbal assault/verbal threat of serious bodily injury of staff
- Written, verbal, or posted threatening language with an intent to harm

*\*Note: On the First (1st) offense a student is found to be in possession of alcohol, illegal or dangerous drugs (without the intent to sell or deliver) or other substances masquerading as illegal controlled drugs (including synthetic drugs) will be referred by the school administrator to participate in a substance abuse/prevention program in addition to school discipline appropriate for a Level 5 misbehavior.*

**Level V Response:** Disciplinary action for Level V acts of misbehavior may include the following:

**Minimum**

- Administrative Intervention
- Out-of-school/program Suspension (6-10 School Days)

**Maximum**

- Suspended indefinitely pending an administrative investigation
- Recommendation: Long-Term Suspension (more than 10 School Days)
- Expulsion
- Police Contact

## **BULLYING PROTOCOL**

The Potter's House prohibits bullying of any kind, including false accusations of bullying or retaliation against a person with reliable information concerning bullying. If there is a reasonable suspicion of bullying, the behaviors should be reported to the administration (Dean of Students or Principal) in any of the following ways: through Ok2Say, verbally, or by filling out the Bullying Report. Verbal notification of potential bullying cases from students, parents, counselors, or teachers will result in a meeting with the student and administration to fill out the Bullying Report within 24 hours. The administration promptly and impartially investigates all complaints regarding suspected bullying. If necessary, a plan for the victim's safety will be implemented. When the investigation begins, the parents of both the alleged victim and offender will be informed of the investigation process within 24 hours.

Administrators will document and maintain witness statements from relevant teachers, student observers, the alleged victim, and the alleged offender. The Dean of Students and Principal will evaluate these statements and other relevant information, and a determination will be made promptly. An administration team member will document and file a Bullying Determination Form. All documentation, names of those involved, and disciplinary actions are confidential and cannot be shared with parents. However, parents of both parties will be notified when the investigation is complete and provided any information pertinent to their child.

If the investigation results determine bullying, prompt disciplinary action will be taken, following the leveled system in TPH handbook. Whether bullying is determined or not, administrators will still take steps to ensure the offending party is held accountable through discipline and remediation. Once action is taken, administrators will check in with the alleged victim to ensure feelings of safety and support.

Restorative measures for the offender may include but are not limited to, a behavior contract, meeting with a counselor, social training, written apology, reflection questions, or a research paper. Restorative circles, for the purpose of conflict resolution, will happen only when both parties are ready, want to resolve the problem, and feel safe and supported so as not to victimize the target. Restorative circles will only occur with the permission of both parents.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **Tornado Watch**

The school will operate as normal, keeping track of all weather changes, watch announcements, and potential warnings that may follow.

### **Tornado Warning**

If issued for Kent County, all children along with their emergency information will be taken to the hallway outside the classroom and sit facing the wall until the warning has been lifted. Students with special needs will receive one-to-one assistance dependent on the specific need requirement. During an emergency of that magnitude, we will be unable to release any children until the threat of danger has subsided. Parents/guardians will receive a call or text if it is necessary to reunite families.

### **Other Man-made or Natural Emergencies**

In the event of additional emergencies issued by The Potter's House Administration and local emergency personnel, it may be necessary to relocate to the Roosevelt Park Lodge until otherwise notified by either administration or local emergency personnel. Students with special needs will receive one-to-one assistance dependent on the specific need requirement. A sign will be posted on the outside main entrance door of the school to inform all parents of our location. During a lockdown (due to an emergency that may be occurring in our surrounding county and/or neighborhood) it may be necessary to remain at the

school with the doors locked, not allowing anyone in or out. During any emergencies of this magnitude, we will be unable to release any children until the threat of danger has subsided. Parents/guardians will receive a call or text when it is necessary to reunite families.

### **Fire Drills**

Fire drills will be conducted five times per year.

### **SCHOOL CLOSING PROCEDURES**

School closing decisions are made by administrative staff with the safety of students in mind. Adverse weather conditions and other emergency situations may make it necessary to cancel school. In the event of a school closing, an announcement will be made by text message and email through the school communication system and local radio and television stations.

If school is already in session when a severe weather watch or warning is issued, the school will stay open, and staff will take safety precautions. Students are released to parents/guardians or designated adults listed on the family emergency form upon request.

### **GENERAL PROCEDURES**

#### **Attendance Policies**

It is very important that your student attends school every day that school is in session. Sickness, funerals, and medical appointments are considered excused absences. Students are expected to make up all work missed during an absence. Poor attendance hinders academic progress and will result in a parent/administrator conference. Students that accumulate 20 or more days of unexcused absence during the year may be retained in their current grade level.

#### **Attendance Reporting Procedures**

All absences are to be reported by a call from the parent/guardian to the school grade level office no later than the start of the school day. Voicemail is available before and after school hours. Please email [K8Office@tphgr.org](mailto:K8Office@tphgr.org) or call (616) 241-5202 to report a Preschool-3rd grade absence, or (616) 241-5913 for 4th-8th grade absences. If the parent/guardian fails to report a student's absence by 9:00 a.m., the school secretary will call the student's home and inquire why the student is not in school. Absences that are not reported will be considered unexcused.

It is important that you share the reason for your student's absence. All schools must submit a weekly report to the health department documenting all reported flu and other communicable diseases.

#### **Snow Day Policy**

During a typical winter in Michigan, heavy snowfall can make traveling on the roads and sidewalks difficult. Parents always reserve the right to make the decision on whether it is safe for their family to travel to school; however, when these severe weather conditions take place, The Potter's House may make the decision to close school.

When school is closed due to severe weather conditions, all grades (Preschool-Grade 12) will be closed. Families will receive notifications of school closures via email messages and texts. Also, families can receive notifications from local news organizations by going to their websites and selecting to receive school closing text alerts for The Potter's House.

At The Potter's House, snow days are great opportunities to read, rest, play, and spend time with family. However, if we experience severe weather that causes many snow days, we know that it can impact student learning progress. If we experience an excessive accumulation of snow days within a school year, we will work with our local Intermediate School District and State Education Department to determine the need to extend the school year.

### **Storytelling Consent**

The Potter's House believes that a Christ-centered education should be available to all families, regardless of income level. We rely on a community of generous supporters to make this possible. One of the main ways that we encourage and grow this community is by telling stories of how God has impacted students and families through The Potter's House. Student stories are published on our website, social media platforms, print publications, and promotional materials.

We understand that it can be uncomfortable for students and families to share personal stories with a wide audience. We never want to publish any information that could make a student, or their family feel uncomfortable or upset. And we especially want to make sure that parents and guardians are fully informed about the storytelling process for their students.

If we would like to publicize a student's story, we will contact the student's parents or guardians in writing, with a description of what questions we are planning to ask, and the different ways in which this story could be shared. Before we publish the story, we will share it with parents and guardians to ensure that all information is accurate and appropriate.

If you have any questions or concerns about the storytelling process, please contact the Director of Communications.

### **Family Worship**

Family Worship is on Mondays from 8:35 a.m.-9:05 a.m. in the chapel. We will sing, study a Scripture, and journal in response to the Scripture. Middle School students also meet for chapel on Friday mornings.

### **Electronics and Valuables**

Students should not bring valuables to school. Items that are not necessary for learning should stay at home (electronic games, skateboards, etc.). We prefer that students do not have cell phones at school. If parents determine that their student needs a cell phone at school, it must stay in their locker or backpack at all times while on school property. Teachers will confiscate electronics that are visible at any point during the school day or in a student's pocket while in the school building. Teachers or staff will lock them safely in the office for a parent to pick up after school.

### **Telephone Policy**

The school phone is a business phone, so it should be used only in emergencies. Students will not be permitted to use school phones to decide to go to a friend's house after school or other calls of this nature. These arrangements should be made prior to coming to school. If a student must use the phone, he/she may receive a phone pass from his/her teacher and then ask the office personnel to make the call using a school line.

### **CURRENT FAMILY RE-ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

Enrollment for the following academic year will be held in April. All current families who plan to return in the fall must re-enroll using the online TADS re-enrollment system. Parents/Guardians will receive a registration link via email for each student. Re-enrollment must be completed by May 15 each year to avoid a fine.

All new student preschool, prekindergarten, and kindergarten applications should be submitted through the admissions webpage by January 31 each year to receive current family priority status.

### **How to Enroll New Students**

Applications should be submitted online using the Admissions link on the school website <https://tphgr.org/inquire> or call 616-818-3700 for more information. Complete the application and submit the required documents to add a new student to the waiting list. The admissions coordinator will notify families of approval and provide registration information.

**Classroom Placement**

The administrator, after reviewing recommendations from teachers, will assign students to a specific grade or teacher. Many factors are considered in placing a child with a teacher. We consider the child's academic, social, and emotional needs as well as the strengths of the teachers. We also consider groupings that will foster a peaceful and productive classroom. We attempt to have equal numbers at each level in looped classrooms. We also like to have an equal number of boys and girls and a diverse cultural mix. We spend a considerable amount of time weighing the factors and forming our classes. Considering all the factors we cannot honor parent requests based simply on personalities. We value parent input and will give your thoughts every consideration. Parents are asked to complete the Request for Student Placement form that is available in the admissions office to voice classroom preferences.

**Student Enrollment Probationary Period**

The Potter's House considers the six weeks of enrollment a probationary time for new students. During this time, administration will monitor the student's progress (academic effort and social behavior) to confirm proper placement. If it is determined that a different placement is more suitable, the administration will advise parents and make the necessary adjustments. The Potter's House administration will determine the final placement.

**Child Restraint Law**

The State of Michigan has passed legislation that requires the use of approved booster seats for children who are both under eight years old and less than four feet nine inches tall. The law took effect on July 1, 2008. As a result, we require that any child who meets these criteria and is going on a field trip must have a booster seat. Parents will need to send a booster seat with their child on the day of the field trip. This law does not apply if students are riding a school bus.

**Illness or Injury at School**

If a child gets sick at school, the office staff will determine if the child should go home or just be given a chance to rest. If it is decided that the child should go home, a parent will be called to pick up the child. Any child with a temperature of 100° or greater must be sent home and be fever-free for 24 hours before returning to school. In case of an injury on the playground, simple first aid will be given to the child. In the event of a serious injury, a parent will be contacted immediately. Please note: all medications, whether prescribed or over the counter, require written permission from the parent. A completed Medication Permission form must be on file in the office.

**Head Lice**

When a student has lice they must stay home until they have been treated with either a chemical-based or a chemical-free lice treatment and all lice and eggs/nits have been removed. An information sheet will be provided with information on the different forms of treatment available. All family members of the student should be examined and treated if nits/lice are found.

The student may return to school the morning after they have been treated with a head lice shampoo if all nits have been removed. However, the parent and student must first report to the office to be re-examined by the school secretary before returning to class.

**Health Records**

The school must keep on file a physician-signed health report listing immunizations. This report must be given to the school upon enrollment and will stay in the child's cumulative record. Schools in Michigan are required to report the immunization status of students in preschool, prekindergarten, kindergarten, and 7th grade, and all new students.

**Homework**

A large majority of the work that is expected of you will be able to be completed at school. However, there will be times when you will need to bring work home to complete and study for upcoming assessments.

We want to give you every opportunity to develop good study habits, personal responsibility for learning, and time for extended learning necessary for you to be successful. We also want your parents to be involved as much as possible in your learning.

Accumulating incomplete or late homework will result in 8th hours. 8th hours are an hour after school, offered twice a week, for students to complete homework.

**Library**

The library is available for use by all Kindergarten through 8th grade students of The Potter's House. It is expected that books, magazines, and movies/media be respected both in the library and at home. Any material leaving the library must be checked out. Parents must sign a permission slip before students are allowed to check material out of the library. All material is available for a two-week period with two more weeks of renewal available. Reference books are not allowed to leave the library and must be used during research time in the library. The library is an investment in your child's future. Any questions regarding content of library materials should be addressed with the school administrator.

Parents and students are responsible for any lost or damaged library materials. Lost or damaged charges will be due 30 days after notification. If no payment is received, the charges will be added to your tuition account. If a lost item is found and returned in good condition within one year after it was paid for, your money will be refunded.

**Parent Commitment to School Values for Student Behavior**

TPH families who host an event or gathering (regardless of size) that involves TPH students are expected to uphold the values and standards of The Potter's House. These values or standards include, but are not limited to, abstaining from tobacco, alcohol, and drug use, as well as promiscuity and inappropriate sexual behaviors. The Potter's House community is committed to working together and encouraging our students to rise to the highest potential in Christ.

We are a community that strives to work in a team effort and not in isolation against other community members. At no time should one family provide living arrangements for another TPH student without written or verbal agreement from that student's parent or guardian. Failure to comply with any one of these commitments may be grounds for dismissal from The Potter's House.

**Complaint/Grievance Procedure**

It is the desire of the Board that in the spirit of unity all staff, parents, and board members of The Potter's House will support and encourage each other in word and action. However, as this is an imperfect world, there will be times of disagreement at The Potter's House. Therefore, all school personnel and parents are encouraged to keep the biblical principles found in Matthew 18:15 to 17 when there is a specific grievance. Any misunderstandings between the public and the school should be rectified through direct discussions of an informal type among the interested parties. It is only when such informal meetings fail to resolve the differences, that more formal procedures should be engaged. A grievance is defined as a claim or complaint by an individual concerning school personnel, the program, or any decision made by one in authority, where the concern is serious enough to appeal beyond the interested parties to the next level.

**First**

The matter must be addressed, initially, to the concerned staff member who shall discuss it promptly with the complainant and make every effort to provide a reasoned explanation or take appropriate action with his/her principal. The staff member shall report the matter and whatever action may have been taken to the principal/administrator.

**Second Level**

If the matter cannot be resolved to the complainant's satisfaction at the First Level, the complainant with the staff member's principal will discuss it. In serious situations, every effort should be made by the principal to bring the complainant and staff member together to resolve the problem.

**Third Level**

If a satisfactory solution is not achieved by discussion with the principal, either party may submit a written request for an appointment with the superintendent. This request should include:

- The specific nature of the complaint and a brief statement of the facts giving rise to it, including a detailed account of what occurred at levels one and two.
- The respect in which it is alleged that the complainant (or child of the complainant) has been affected adversely.
- The action that the complainant wishes taken and the reasons why it is felt that such action is taken.
- The superintendent, after reviewing all material relating to the case, may provide the complainant with a written decision or grant a hearing before a committee of the Board.

**Fourth Level**

The complainant shall be advised, in writing, of the Board's decision no more than 10 business days following the next regular meeting. The Board/s decision will be final on the matter, and it will not provide a meeting to other complainants on the same issue.

**Tuition Payments**

Tuition payments are due on the first of every month unless an alternative plan has been set up with the accountant. A \$45 late fee charge will be added to any payment not received by the 15th of the month. Tuition statements will be sent via email through TADS Admissions each month. Please review this statement carefully, and if there is a discrepancy, please contact the business office at 616-818-3710. If paying in cash, make sure that you receive a receipt and keep it until you are sure that it has been posted to your account. Credit cards are also accepted for payment however a 3% processing fee will be added to your payment.

**TRIP Program**

Tuition Reduction Incentive Program (TRIP) is a program that enables families to reduce tuition by purchasing gift cards, at no additional cost, for goods and services they use every day. A percentage of each gift card purchased will be credited to the family's TRIP account. TRIP orders should be placed in the TRIP mailbox, located in the Main Office by 8:15 a.m. every Tuesday morning. Orders will be available for pickup after 3:00 p.m. the following Tuesday.

**Audiovisual Media Use in the Classroom**

In developing curriculum resources, careful attention should be given to the use of audiovisual media as an educational supplement to the learning experience of students.

As educators, we are committed to providing the best possible learning for a wide range of students. We also recognize the responsibility entrusted to us by parents for the quality of education provided. The advances in technology have afforded the educator many audiovisual means of enhancing the curriculum. Educational resources are now available that greatly develop concepts, principles, and information for the student. Careful screening of the media item in its entirety is necessary to adequately assure that learning

experiences uphold the Christian standards and values The Potter's House desires to instill in our students.

#### Generally Acceptable

- Audiovisual specifically designed to clearly present information within the guidelines and standards of quality learning.
- Age-appropriate materials as established within the curriculum developed and approved by staff.
- Media produced and rated G, provided they have been previewed in entirety and approved in advance by staff. If staff feels a PG or PG-13-rated media would benefit student learning, a prior communication with parents is suggested.

#### Generally Unacceptable

- Media resources that do not promote or uphold and reinforce Christian values taught at The Potter's House.
- R, X, or NC-17 rated media. The showing of these videos is prohibited in The Potter's House.

#### **Asbestos Policy**

The Potter's House is required by the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act to make annual notification of the availability of the Asbestos Management Plan for viewing. Records are filed in the AHERA book in the Superintendent's office. All books have been reviewed by Asbestos Consultants of Michigan. Documents are available for review during normal business hours. A personal copy will be furnished within seven working days after receipt of a written request at a nominal charge of \$1.00 per page.

#### **The Freedom of Information Act**

The Freedom of Information Act of the state of Michigan requests that student "directory information" be listed for school district patrons. The following information on students may be released during the school year so that regular functioning of school activities may take place: Student name; student address; telephone number; date and place of birth; major field of study; participation in officially recognized activities and sports; height and weight, if a member of an athletic team; dates of attendance; date of graduation; awards received; honor rolls; scholarships; telephone numbers only for inclusion in school or directories; school photographs or videos of students participating in school activities, events or programs. Any parent/guardian or student reaching the age of majority may notify the principal's office by submitting a signed, written request that any or all the categories of personally identifiable information may not be released. It is the purpose of The Potter's House to only release information about our students that will meet needs for maintaining school programs.

#### **Immunization Requirements**

All students enrolled in The Potter's House must meet all immunization requirements for school registration as set forth in the Public Health Code of the state of Michigan. Call 616-632-7100 for more information or visit their website at [www.accesskent.com/Health](http://www.accesskent.com/Health).

#### **Pesticide Advisory**

The Potter's House has adopted an Integrated Pest Management program. While it may occasionally be necessary to apply a pesticide, this program does not rely on routine pesticide applications to resolve problems. We use various techniques such as habitat alteration, sanitation, mechanical means, exclusion, etc. to prevent pests from becoming a problem.

As required by Michigan law, you will receive advance notice of non-emergency application of a pesticide (insecticide, fungicide, or herbicide), other than bait or gel formulation, which is made to the school, school grounds, or buildings. This advance notice of a pesticide application will be given 48 hours before the application by the following method: posting at the primary entrance to your child's school.

Please note that notification is not given for use of sanitizers, germicides, disinfectants, or anti-microbial cleaners. In certain emergencies, such as an infestation of stinging insects, pesticides may be applied without prior notice to prevent injury to students, but you will be promptly notified following any such application via the posting method identified above.

**Right to Access and Privacy of Records**

All parents and guardians of students under 18 years of age and all students 18 years of age or over have the right, pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, to examine the official records, files, and data of the school district directly relating to their students. Parents should submit a written request to the school principal clearly identifying the record(s) they wish to inspect. A school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parents of the time and place the records may be inspected. The right to seek an amendment of the student's education records that the parent believes are inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student's rights of privacy. Parents should submit a written request to the school principal, clearly identifying the part of the record they want amended and specifying its inaccuracy. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested, it will notify the parents of the decision and advise them of their right to a meeting to challenge the content of the student's education records.