



2026-2027

Preschool Parent Handbook

CONTACT CROSS OF HOPE SCHOOL:

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505-899-0928



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www.crossofhopeschool.org



facebook.com/COHSchool

*"Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray."
Proverbs 22:6 (NRSV)*



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Welcome

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

Dear Cross of Hope School Families,

It is a joy and blessing to welcome you in the name of Christ!

Please know that we are grateful for you - whether new or returning children and parents, teachers, and staff – we have the honor of joining together to learn and grow in life and faith this year. It is a tremendous blessing to abound in hope together. On behalf of the community of faith of Cross of Hope Lutheran Church, we are honored and blessed to share this journey with you. As we begin this new academic year, we are excited to share in the nurture, love, and education of your child, and getting to know you, their supportive family. Our School Ministry is grounded in God's Word of love made known in Jesus and dedicated to the mission of educating our children from this place of love and care through the Holy Spirit. I invite and encourage you to participate in the life of the community throughout the year! If you do not have a church home, you are welcome to worship on Sunday. Find more information on worship, faith formation, and to keep up to date with what's going on at www.crossofhope.org.

Along with Ms. Rivera, Ms. McClain and our faithful staff, I am eager to get to know you and your child, to provide pastoral care and support along the journey, and to show God's unfailing love as best as I am able as we grow in life and faith together. During times of illness, joy, death, and celebration, please be encouraged and invited to contact me so we may join in prayer for you and caring response as a community of faith. It is a blessing to be in ministry together. God bless your school year!

Peace,

R. Adam Berndt, Pastor



Welcome

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” Galatians 5:22–23 (NIV)

Dear Preschool Families,

Welcome to a new year at Cross of Hope Preschool! We are honored that you have chosen to partner with us during this important season of your child's life. Preschool is a time filled with wonder, growth, discovery, and countless milestones. It is our joy and privilege to walk alongside your family as your child learns, develops, and experiences God's love each day.

As you begin this journey, I encourage you to cherish every moment. The preschool years pass quickly, and each day brings new opportunities to celebrate your child's unique personality, accomplishments, and growing independence. From first friendships and newfound skills to moments of curiosity and creativity, these experiences help shape a strong foundation for future learning.

At Cross of Hope Preschool, we believe that the most successful educational experience is built on a strong partnership between home and school. Open communication, mutual trust, and shared goals allow us to work together in supporting your child's development. We encourage you to stay connected, ask questions, share insights, and communicate with your child's teachers throughout the year. Together, we can create a positive and nurturing environment where every child feels valued, supported, and encouraged to thrive.

Our mission extends beyond academic readiness. We are committed to nurturing the whole child—spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. Through daily prayer, Bible stories, worship experiences, and faith-filled conversations, children will learn about God's incredible love for them and the world He created. As they explore nature, discover new concepts, and interact with others, they will be reminded that they are uniquely made by God and deeply loved by Him.

We look forward to a year filled with meaningful learning experiences, joyful discoveries, lasting friendships, and spiritual growth. Thank you for entrusting us with the care and education of your child. May God bless your family as we partner together in helping your child grow in knowledge, confidence, faith, and wonder.

In Christ,

Trisha McClain
Cross of Hope Preschool

Compass Statement



Compass Statement

We are set free into HOPE-filled ministry to
Love God, Transform Relationships and Serve Others.

Cross of Hope Lutheran Church and School is a
multi-generational Christian community
that joyfully follows Jesus.

We Value:

A Warm Welcome

We embrace you wherever you are on your journey of faith.

A Diverse and Inviting Community

We want everyone to feel love and acceptance.

Dynamic Worship

We experience God's presence through prayer and worship.

Learning about God

We embrace opportunities to learn and grow in faith.

Community Outreach

We share God's love with others.

Mission Statements

Church Mission Statement

Cross of Hope is a Spirit-centered community that shares Christ's love through worship, education, and outreach to develop and strengthen relationships with God.

School Mission Statement

Cross of Hope School is a welcoming, Christ-centered community providing high quality education in a nurturing environment that respects each child's development.

Community Covenant

As members of the Christian community of Cross of Hope Lutheran Church and Schools, we commit, with the help of God, to relate to each other through Christ, and thus hold ourselves and each other to:

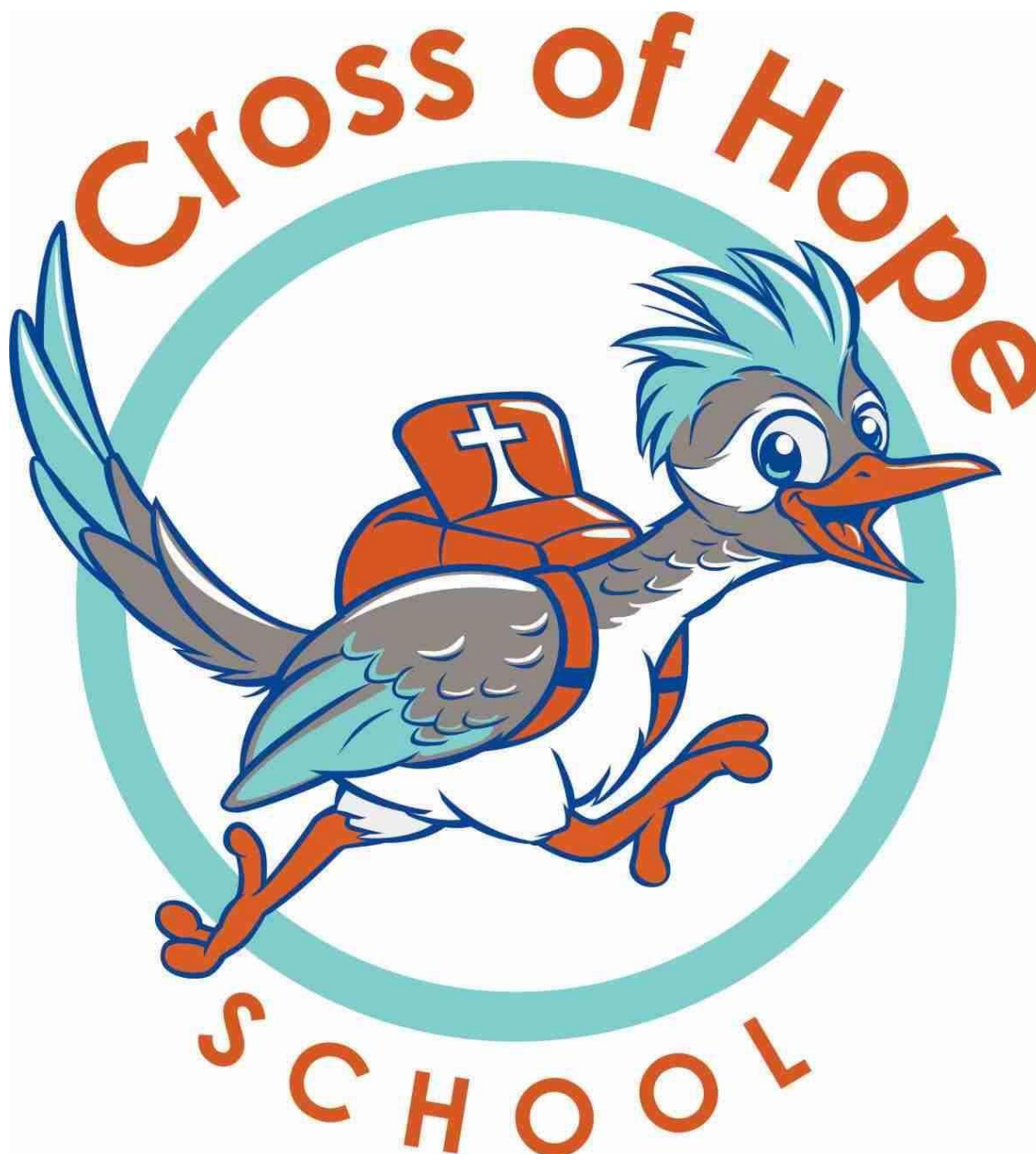
- 1. Listen to each other** *“Let everyone be quick to listen slow to speak.” James 1:19*
- 2. Respect the privacy of those who confide** *“A gossip goes about telling secrets, but one who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a confidence.” Proverbs 11:13*
- 3. Challenge each other with the truth** *“Rather speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.” Ephesians 4:15-16*
- 4. Deal with people directly. Don’t complain to others.** *“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone”. Matthew 18:5*
- 5. Strengthen each other** *“Speak only what is useful for building up...so that your words may give grace to those who hear” Ephesians 4:29*
- 6. Be gentle with one another** *“My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness.” Galatians 6:1*
- 7. Do not speak ill of others in the fellowship** *“Beloved, do not grumble against one another so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors!” James 5:9*
- 8. Do not judge each other** *“Therefore you have no excuse, whoever you are, when you judge others; for in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same things.” Romans 2:1*
- 9. Pray for and with one another** *James 5:16*
- 10. Confess your sins to one another** *James 5:16*
- 11. Forgive one another** *“Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give and it will be given to you.” Luke 6:37b-38a*
- 12. Freely participate in the Body of Christ according to your gifts and talents** *“As you go, proclaim the good news, “The kingdom of heaven has come near!” Matthew 10:7*

Staff Roster

NAME	POSITION	EMAIL
ADAM BERNDT	CHURCH PASTOR	COHPASTOR@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
SUSAN RIVERA	DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL MINISTRY	ESDIRECTOR@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
TRISHA MCCLAIN	DIRECTOR OF PRESCHOOL MINISTRY	PSDIRECTOR@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
NANCY LACHER	INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	NLACHER@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
DEA EVANS	KINDERGARTEN	DEVANS@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
LINDA ARAGON	1 ST GRADE	LARAGON@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
JENNIFER VOLA	2 ND / 3 RD GRADE	JVOLA@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
JOY THORNHILL	4 TH /5 TH GRADE	JTHORNHILL@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
AMY ELLIS	SPANISH/ART/MUSIC	AELLIS@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
PAULA WILLIS	MATH INTERVENTIONIST	PWILLIS@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
REBECCA LOVATO	TECHNOLOGY	RLOVATO@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
ELLIE HAND	ELEMENTARY EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT	EHAND@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
MCMARSHAL HARTZENBERG	PHYSICAL EDUCATION	MHARTZENBERG@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
JULIE MARTIN	LUNCH MANAGER/FRI ENRICHMENT	JMARTIN@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
LORI BRAUNHARDT	PRESCHOOL TEACHER	LBRAUNHARDT@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
AMBER GRIFFITH	PRESCHOOL TEACHER	AGRIFITH@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
KRISSY CASTILLO	PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT	KCASTILLO@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
ROSA MARQUEZ	PRESCHOOL EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT	RMARQUEZ@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG
BRIANNE MARES	FINANCE OFFICER	FINANCE@CROSSOFHOPE.ORG

School Mascot

Roadrunner



Our Foundation

Statement of Faith

Cross of Hope Church and School is part of the Church established through the Holy Spirit for Christ's disciples throughout the ages. We are orthodox and apostolic in this sense. We were once part of the Roman Catholic Church but were separated from that church in the 16th century. At that time, Martin Luther and other reformers agreed to the faith of the Roman Catholic Church, as supported in Scripture, but rejected certain abuses of the faith. Our faith was summarized in documents called confessions. Chief among these writings is the Augsburg Confession, A.D. 1530.

As Christians, our faith can be summarized below:

1. We believe in God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19-20).
2. We believe that Jesus Christ is God's Word to us through whom everything was made and through whose life, death, and resurrection we have life. Jesus is Lord (John 1:1-2, 14).
3. We believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the written Word of God. They are inspired and announce the good news in Christ Jesus. Scripture is the guiding source and norm for our faith and life (2 Timothy 3:16).
4. We accept the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds as true reflections of the faith of the Church (Ephesians 4:4-7).

Purpose Statement

The mission of Cross of Hope Preschool is to provide a Christ-centered early childhood education that nurtures each child's spiritual, social-emotional, physical, and academic development. In partnership with families, we strive to create a safe, loving, and engaging environment where children experience God's love, develop a strong foundation for learning, and grow in faith and character.

The purpose of Cross of Hope Preschool is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ, support families in the Christian nurture of their children, and provide



developmentally appropriate learning experiences that prepare children for future success in school and in life. Through faith-based teaching, meaningful relationships, and hands-on learning, we seek to help each child reach their God-given potential. (*Proverbs 22:6; Matthew 19:14*)

Christian School Philosophy

"Jesus said, Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 19:14

At Cross of Hope Preschool, we believe each child is a unique creation of God. We provide a safe, engaging, and developmentally appropriate environment where children learn through exploration, play, and teacher-guided experiences. Through intentional faith-based learning and strong partnerships with families, we support each child's spiritual, social-emotional, physical, and academic growth. (*Psalms 139:14; Proverbs 22:6*)

Accreditation and Licensing

Our preschool program is accredited through the Association of Christian Schools International. We are a 5-star rated school; the highest rating awarded by the Early Childhood Education & Care Department (ECECD) of the State of New Mexico. Our current accreditation term is from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2031.

Our program is licensed by the Early Childhood Education & Care Department of the State of New Mexico. A copy of our license and the State Regulations have been given to all employees for their review and are posted in each classroom. Our licensing review process occurs every May.

Academic Policies

Education Policy

Developmentally appropriate education recognizes that children learn and grow in stages, building new skills upon those they have already mastered. Our

classrooms are designed to meet the developmental needs of preschool-aged children through hands-on learning, play, exploration, and meaningful interactions. Children develop independence, responsibility, creativity, and social skills as they engage in daily activities and guided learning experiences. Teachers serve as facilitators, encouraging curiosity, confidence, and a love of learning.

Our teachers are qualified early childhood educators who participate in ongoing professional development, coaching, and training to provide the highest quality learning experience for every child.

Recreational Policy

At Cross of Hope Preschool, we believe play is a vital part of a child's growth and development. Through active play, outdoor experiences, creative movement, and cooperative games, children develop physical skills, social relationships, problem-solving abilities, and self-confidence. Recreation provides opportunities for children to explore God's world, practice healthy habits, and experience the joy of learning through movement and discovery.

Our recreational activities are developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and designed to encourage cooperation, creativity, independence, and respect for others. Teachers provide safe, well-supervised environments where children can engage in both structured and unstructured play, fostering a lifelong appreciation for physical activity and positive social interaction. (*Ecclesiastes 3:1; Psalm 127:3*)

Curriculum and Expected Student Outcomes

The Cross of Hope preschool staff has developed a comprehensive research-based curriculum guide and assessment plan. These developmental objectives, along with the New Mexico's Early Learning Standards, are the basis for curriculum implementation and assessment. Classroom activities follow an outlined yearly concept calendar that encompasses the following areas:

- Spiritual
- Physical Development, Health, and Well-Being

- Literacy
- Numeracy
- Aesthetic Creativity
- Scientific Conceptual Understandings
- Self, Family, and Community
- Approaches to Learning

Assessments can be given formally or informally, consisting of teacher observations, skill-based assessments, and performance-based assessments. Children are assessed in each area of development based upon the Cross of Hope Preschool Developmental Objectives and New Mexico's Early Learning Standards. Assessments take place throughout the year and are shared with the parents at the Parent/Teacher Conferences held in the fall and the spring.

Developmental Concerns Policy

If a teacher or the director has concerns about a child's development, they will observe and document specific behaviors, communicate with families, and collaborate on appropriate supports. The teacher will implement strategies and monitor progress over a designated period, documenting changes and providing follow-up. If concerns continue, families will be provided with resources and referrals for additional support, such as Child Find or pediatric services.

Child Referral Process:

If a teacher has concerns of a child's ongoing development, they will:

1. Observe child and document specific behaviors
2. Meet with parents to present findings
3. Determine steps to accommodate needs
4. Teacher will use these steps and further document behaviors over the period of 6 weeks to see if the behaviors change
5. In the event the behaviors do not change, the teacher will give resources to families where they can seek services. (Child Find, pediatrician)



6. Follow-up with families will occur after a predetermined period

*At the request of the teacher, the Director will be involved during this process.

Attendance Information

Program Offerings

Cross of Hope Preschool offers several program options to meet the needs of families and children ages 3–5. We offer 3- and 4-year-old classes on a half-day or full-day schedule. Parents can choose from a 2-day, 3-day, or 5-day-a-week, half- or full-day schedule. We do not offer “drop-in” services. The schedule selected at enrollment is considered a commitment for the school year. To maintain consistent classroom staffing and enrollment, families may not switch to a different attendance schedule after enrollment, except with administrative approval and space availability.

Two Days a Week: Tuesdays/Thursdays

Three Days a Week: Monday/Wednesday/Friday*

Five Days a Week: Monday-Friday*

Half-Day Schedule: 8:00am-12:00pm

Full-Day Schedule: 8:00am-3:00pm

*Friday Schedule

*Please note that **all Friday preschool classes are dismissed at 12:00 p.m.**, regardless of the program in which a child is enrolled. There is no afternoon preschool on Fridays.*

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

Children should arrive no earlier than their scheduled start time and be picked up promptly at dismissal. Parents or authorized family members **must sign their child in**



and out each day. Children should be accompanied to their classroom each morning and picked up directly from the classroom at dismissal.

The preschool gate will be unlocked for arrival and locked promptly at **8:10 a.m.** (*Exceptions may be made only for preschool siblings of elementary students.*) It will remain locked until dismissal at **12:00 p.m. or 3:00 p.m.** The gates are kept locked to ensure the safety of our children and staff.

Children must be picked up on time by a parent or another authorized person listed on the child's registration form. If a child has not been picked up, the teacher or director will attempt to contact the parents using their home and work phone numbers. If neither parent can be reached, the teacher or director will contact the emergency contact listed on the registration form.

Children who have not been picked up will remain in the care of the teacher or director until a parent or authorized person arrives. A **late fee of \$10 for every 10 minutes** after the scheduled dismissal time will be charged.

IMPORTANT: No child will be released to a person who is not authorized by a parent to pick up the child. The school must have written or verbal authorization from the parent and identification will be required of this designated person.

After School Care

We are delighted to offer after school care through Rio Grande Educational Collaborative. Preschool students are invited to join this program after school Monday-Thursday, 3:15-6:00pm and Fridays 12:15-6:00pm. Space is limited, and please contact RGEC (www.rgec.org) for enrollment details.

Custody/Visitation/Legal Status

It is the policy of our school that the parent/guardian who enrolls a child in our program must provide documentation concerning any legal status issues:

guardianship, visitation, restraining order, powers of attorney, court orders, CPS orders etc. The school will enforce any legal document but will not prohibit a parent access to a child without proper authority. The enrollment form must accurately represent the correct names and status of the parent/guardian. During enrollment at our school, it is the obligation of the parent to notify the school of any change in legal status of the child/parent relationship and provide legal documentation which verifies the change in status.

Admission Policy and Enrollment Procedures

Children are eligible for admission if they meet the following requirements:

1. Three-Year-Old Class: Must be three years old by September 1 of the school year attending.
Four-Year-Old Classes: Must be four years old by September 1 of the school year attending.
2. Completely toilet trained. (See Toilet Trained Policy).

Once a class is full a waiting list will be created, and families will be notified of vacancies based on their position on the list.

The enrollment process consists of an admission application, enrollment in our tuition management company (FACTS), and written acceptance to our school. Enrollment Applications are submitted through our school website:

www.crossofhopeschool.org

Tuition and Fees

Tuition and fee rates are subject to annual review and change at the discretion of the Cross of Hope Church Council. Tuition for the school year is set in the fall of the preceding year and will be communicated via enrollment literature.

2-Day (Tues/Thurs) Half-Day: \$2,600.00

2-Day (Tues/Thurs) Full Day: \$2,800.00

3-Day (Mon/Wed/Fri) Half-Day: \$3,800.00

3-Day (Mon/Wed/Fri*) Full-Day: \$4,100.00



5-Day (Mon-Fri) Half-Day: \$6,300.00

5-Day (Mon-Fri*) Full-Day: \$6,900.00

Please note that **all Friday preschool classes are dismissed at 12:00 p.m.**, regardless of the program in which a child is enrolled. There is no afternoon preschool on Fridays.

Important: If your child is absent due to illness or vacation, the total monthly tuition is still required, as stated on the enrollment contract. If your child will be absent from preschool for any reason, please notify the preschool office by 8:30am of the day your child will be absent.

Universal Child Care

Cross of Hope Preschool accepts New Mexico Universal Child Care Contracts, at the discretion of the director and governing body. The admission application and enrollment in FACTS are required **prior** to acceptance of a Universal Child Care Contract (unless your child already has a contract issued to another provider). Registration and instructional materials fees are collected during the enrollment process and will be refunded via check, once Cross of Hope Preschool receives payments on your child's behalf.

Families must either sign up for **FACTS** payments (July through April) or declare intent to '**Pay in Full**' when submitting a student application or re-enrollment packet. **FACTS** agreements for 10 monthly payments must be completed by **May 31st**. Late signup will roll-over the missed starting payment(s) to the remaining payment schedule. (*Example: late agreement received in June will forward the July payment to be spread out over the remaining 9 months of the payment schedule.*) **Payment in Full**- must be received by the **first day of school in August**. Students will be **Financially Dis-Enrolled** if payment is not received.

Fees



Registration Fee- \$200 (Holds a student's place; does NOT guarantee acceptance to Cross of Hope School)

Instructional Materials Fee- \$150 (Covers expenses of curriculum-related and classroom materials)

Important: Both the Registration Fee and the Instructional Materials Fee are **NON-REFUNDABLE** (except as noted with UCC)

Late Payments

Preschool families who choose the payment plan through FACTS Tuition Management and miss a payment due to insufficient funds, will be assessed a missed payment fee by FACTS and may incur a fee from their own financial institution. The missed payment will be reattempted by FACTS within 20 days.

In addition, families who have missed two monthly payments and have not made suitable arrangements within fourteen (14) calendar days of the second missed payment will be informed that their child(ren) will not be readmitted to school according to the specifications of this policy.

Late Registrations

Families registering after July 1st shall be expected to fulfill their tuition obligation according to the tuition policy.

Important: If your eligibility for receiving Universal Child Care changes 30 days or more after the school year begins, only tuition charged from the date of issue will be refunded. (This policy is subject to change dependent on policies or changes set forth by ECECD). It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to ensure that their Universal Child Care contract remains active and covers the entire school year. Families are responsible for monitoring contract expiration dates and contacting the New Mexico Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD) to renew or extend their contract before it expires. If a Universal Child Care contract expires, the family will be responsible for paying tuition at the school's regular rates

beginning on the date the contract ends. Tuition charges will be automatically prorated and billed until a new contract is approved and becomes effective.

Retroactive reimbursements, credits, or tuition refunds will not be provided for any period during which a family's contract was expired, even if ECECD later approves a new contract.

Health Policies

Toilet Trained Policy

All children who attend Cross of Hope School must be fully toilet trained. Our policy is as follows:

- Children wear regular children's underwear (no pull-ups allowed).
- Children can control their bodily functions for extended periods of time.
- Children can verbally tell the teacher when they need to go to the bathroom.
- Children will take initiative to go to the bathroom on their own during free play.
- Children can care for their clothing as much as possible. (Pulling down and up pants/panties, etc.). Please avoid belts/jumpers.
- Children can wipe themselves and flush the toilet under normal circumstances.

Cross of Hope School will make reasonable accommodations for children with special needs, however, under normal circumstances there are **no exceptions** to this policy. If it becomes evident that a child is not fully potty trained, decisions regarding dis-enrollment will be made at the discretion of the director.

Sanitation

Children wash their hand multiple times a day as per their daily schedule. The classrooms are cleaned nightly by a janitorial company who cleans the floors, carpets, bathrooms, and trash cans. Once per week, the classroom toys are



cleaned and sanitized as well as being cleaned as needed daily. Tables and chairs are cleaned after every use and before and after mealtimes. Mats used for nap time are sanitized daily after use. The windows and doors are cleaned twice a year or as needed.

Immunization Policy

All children attending Cross of Hope School must be current in all immunizations required by the Department of Health. Required shots should be scheduled by the date the shots are due. A copy of your child's current immunization record with the physician's signature **must** be on file at the school **NO LATER** than the first day of school. Children will not be admitted to the preschool without proof of current immunizations. Immunization records must be always kept current with the school office. A copy of the New Mexico Childcare/Pre-School/School Entry Immunization Requirements can be obtained from the NM Department of Health.

Parents of children who are on a delayed immunization schedule must provide the preschool with a current copy of their child's immunizations along with a letter from the child's pediatrician stating the reason for the delay and the dates the required missing immunizations will be administered. Parents of children who choose not to have their child immunized **must** obtain a state approved Certificate of Exemption. The Certificate of Exemption **must** be on file at the preschool **NO LATER** than the first day of school. There are no exceptions. The Certificate of Exemption can be obtained from the NM Department of Health.

It is the responsibility of the parents to keep the preschool informed of immunizations. If parents do not comply with the required immunization documentation, the child will no longer be able to attend preschool.

Sick Child Policy

We cannot accept a sick child. Please keep your child home if they are currently sick or have experienced any of the following symptoms within the previous **48 hours**:

- a fever (100.4° or above) or the need to control fever with medication.
- a bad cold
- a heavy nasal discharge
- a constant cough
- diarrhea and/or vomiting
- pink eye - child must be on antibiotics a full 24 hours before returning to school
- an undiagnosed rash
- the symptoms of a communicable disease.

Please note that the school does not have a nurse. If your child becomes ill at any time during school hours, you will be contacted. In the event a child becomes ill during classroom hours, they will be separated from the other children until a parent/guardian or approved person on the child's authorized pickup list picks them up. All children are expected to go outside at playtime if weather permits. If your child is too ill to go outside, she/he should not be at school.

Medications Policy

Do not send medications to school with your child. We do not have a nurse on site, and the only allowed medications are life-sustaining medications (Epi Pens and Inhalers). These medications must be brought to the school office by the parent and accompanied by a Medical Plan of Action signed by the appropriate medical professional. All prescribed medications are kept in a locked cabinet as required by state law. All medication must be in original containers with child's name, medical professional's name, along with clearly visible written instructions, including the name of the medication, the dosage, and the hours and dates the child should receive the medicine. A Request to Give Medication form must be filled out and signed by the parent. These forms are available from the Director.

Allergies or Medical Conditions

Cross of Hope School will not discriminate against children with allergies, health, special needs, or medical conditions. If your child experiences any of these conditions, you will need to inform us. To assess whether we can adequately care for your child in our environment, we may request a meeting with both parents prior to enrollment. If your child is admitted to Cross of Hope School, the Director will ensure that all state mandated forms and protocols are on file in the preschool office. So that the special needs of your child are fully understood the Director, classroom teacher and educational assistant may request a meeting with both parents (or guardians) prior to or soon after admittance to determine the safest and most appropriate course of action while your child is under our supervision. Parents (or guardians) may be asked to provide documentation from the appropriate medical professionals.

Lunch and Nutrition Policy

All preschool students should bring a nutritious, ready-to-eat lunch each day. We encourage families to pack a variety of healthy foods that support children's growth and learning, including lean proteins, fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and dairy products when appropriate. Whenever possible, please limit foods high in added sugars, honey, and artificial preservatives.

To help provide a safe environment for students with severe food allergies, *Cross of Hope School strives to maintain a **nut-free environment***. Families are asked not to send food containing peanuts, tree nuts, peanut butter, Nutella, or other nut-based products. Sunflower seed butter and other nut-free alternatives are encouraged.

While Cross of Hope School cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment, we take reasonable precautions to reduce the risk of exposure and support students with documented food allergies. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain a safe and healthy learning environment for all children.

Emergencies and Safety Policies and Procedures

Involving a Child

In the event of an accident, medical emergency, or other unforeseen situations involving a child while on school property, the safety and supervision of the child and other children will remain the program's highest priority. School personnel will immediately assess the situation, provide appropriate assistance, and contact emergency services (911) when necessary. All Cross of Hope School staff are trained and certified in CPR and First Aid. In case of accidental injury, we will try to contact a parent immediately. If we cannot reach you, we will call the child's physician. If necessary, we will also call an ambulance or paramedics. Decisions about the care and treatment of your child in these circumstances will be at the discretion of the director or other supervising staff until a parent is present. It is the parent's responsibility and to the child's benefit that you keep emergency contact information up to date. Please update any changes in FACTS and notify your child's teacher.

Cross of Hope Preschool does not provide accident or medical insurance coverage for enrolled children. Parents or guardians are responsible for maintaining their own health insurance coverage and for all costs associated with medical treatment resulting from illness or injury that occurs while a child is enrolled in or attending the program. In the event of an accident, injury, or medical emergency, the preschool will provide appropriate first aid, notify the parent or guardian, and seek emergency medical assistance when necessary. Any expenses related to emergency transportation, medical evaluation, treatment, hospitalization, or follow-up care are the responsibility of the child's parent or guardian.

Involving a Parent or Staff Member

In the event of an accident, medical emergency, or other unforeseen situation involving a staff member or parent while on school property, the safety and supervision of children will remain the program's highest priority.

School personnel will immediately assess the situation, provide appropriate assistance, and contact emergency services (911) when necessary. If a staff member is unable to continue supervising children, qualified staff will be reassigned as needed to maintain required supervision and staffing ratios.

If an emergency involving a parent or visitor occurs during drop-off, pick-up, or a school event, staff will secure the area, ensure children remain safely supervised, and provide assistance until emergency responders arrive. Parents will be notified if an incident impacts normal school operations or student supervision. The school reserves the right to modify activities, classroom assignments, or schedules as needed to ensure the continued safety and well-being of all children and staff.

Missing or Unattended Child Policy

Our priority is the safety of every child. We maintain rigorous supervision, regular headcounts, and updated attendance logs to ensure all children are always accounted for. If a child is believed to be missing or is found unattended, staff will conduct a quiet, comprehensive and thorough sweep of the facility and outdoor areas, including classrooms, bathrooms, closets, and playground equipment on the preschool and elementary school grounds.

If a child is not located within a specific timeframe (5-10 minutes), an administrative staff will notify authorities and parents. Any incidents of this nature will be recorded and submitted to the Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD), as required by state regulations. A complete review of facilities and procedures will be conducted to identify breaches of security and to prevent future occurrences.

Emergency Evacuation and Disaster Preparedness Plan



Cross of Hope Preschool maintains a written Emergency Evacuation and Disaster Preparedness Plan in accordance with New Mexico childcare licensing regulations. The safety and well-being of every child and staff member is our highest priority. Staff receive emergency preparedness training and participate in required emergency drills throughout the year.

Evacuation

If it is necessary to evacuate the building, staff will:

- Escort children safely to the designated evacuation location.
- Take attendance and account for every child and staff member.
- Bring emergency contact information, first aid supplies, medications, and emergency kits when possible.
- Remain with children until emergency officials determine it is safe to return or relocate.

Relocation

If the school cannot be reoccupied, children and staff will relocate to a designated indicated below. Parents or guardians will be notified as soon as it is safe to do so with information about the relocation site and reunification procedures.

Relocation Sites and Reunification with Families

1st Relocation Site – Taylor Ranch Community Center

4900 Kachina NW 505-768-6006

2nd Relocation Site – Mesa View United Methodist Church

4701 Montano NW 505-898-3506

Children will be released only to a parent, legal guardian, or authorized emergency contact listed on the child's emergency form. Photo identification may be required before a child is released.

Shelter-in-Place

For emergencies such as severe weather, hazardous materials, or other environmental hazards, children and staff will remain inside the building in designated safe areas until emergency officials indicate it is safe to resume normal activities.

Lockdown

If there is a threat to the safety of the school, the building will be secured immediately. Staff will follow established lockdown procedures, keep children calm and supervised, and remain in secure locations until law enforcement or emergency officials provide an all-clear.

Communication

Cross of Hope School uses the REMIND system to notify parents of emergency situations, either evacuations or lockdowns and where and when to pick up your child. All parents must sign up in the preschool office for the REMIND system prior to the first day of school. Parents are responsible for maintaining current emergency contact information.

Individual Emergency Plans

Children with disabilities, special needs, allergies, or chronic medical conditions will have individualized emergency plans that identify necessary accommodations, medications, equipment, mobility assistance, communication supports, and other needs during an emergency. These plans are developed in partnership with families and updated as needed.

Continuity of Operations

School leadership will work to maintain essential operations during and after an emergency by coordinating with emergency responders and licensing authorities, communicating regularly with families, protecting children's records, and providing



updates regarding closures, reopening, or alternative program operations as conditions allow.

The school's complete Emergency Evacuation and Disaster Preparedness Plan is maintained on site, reviewed annually, and available for review upon request.

Emergency Facility Closures

While uncommon, circumstances such as power outages, loss of water service, plumbing issues, backed-up toilets, or other facility emergencies that prevent us from providing school in a manner compliant with state health and safety regulations could occur. These circumstances may require us to close early, delay opening, or cancel preschool for the day. We will make every reasonable effort to continue operating safely and maintain normal routines whenever possible. If an emergency closure becomes necessary, families will be notified as quickly as possible. We understand that unexpected closures can create challenges for families, and we will work with each family on an individual basis to explore available childcare options whenever feasible. We appreciate your understanding, flexibility, and cooperation as we navigate these situations and prioritize the safety of everyone in our care.

Abuse/Neglect Policy

Cross of Hope Preschool is required by New Mexico law to report any suspected child abuse or neglect. All staff members are mandated reporters and must immediately report reasonable suspicions of abuse or neglect to the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD), law enforcement, or the appropriate tribal authority, as required by law. Reports are made in good faith to ensure the safety and well-being of children. Information related to reports is handled confidentially in accordance with state law.

Snow Day Policy

The preschool will follow the A.P.S. snow day schedule. Snow days will be reported on the television.

The schedule will be as follows:

A.P.S. Cancelled:	Preschool cancelled
A.P.S. Delayed:	Classes begin at 10:00 and will end at the regular dismissal time.

Notes:

- *There will be no make-up classes offered on days the preschool must be cancelled due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances.*
- *If it is your child's Special Person Day on a day that school is cancelled, your child will be scheduled to be Special Person the following month, if possible.*

Classroom Policies and Procedures

Birthdays and Holidays

At Cross of Hope Preschool, we love celebrating special moments with our students while maintaining a healthy and inclusive environment. Birthday celebrations may include a simple classroom recognition (typically near the student's Special Person Day), and families are welcome to provide a non-food item or pre-approved treat in accordance with school guidelines that will be distributed at dismissal by the teachers. If you are planning a party after school at your home or elsewhere, you are asked to mail the invitations rather than handing them out at school so that no child feels left out. *Teachers are not permitted to provide other parents' addresses or contact information.* At the end of the year, we celebrate the four-year-olds who are moving up to kindergarten. All the children will participate in classroom end-of-year celebrations. The Ladybug class will have an end-of-the year picnic.

Daily Schedule

The following is a general, flexible outline of the daily program:

- Group time, to say, "Hello," and discuss the day's activities
- Outdoor Time
- Self-selection/small group activities
- Clean-up
- Storytime
- Lunch
- Music/motor
- Outdoor play
- Chapel/Devotion

For Full Day Students

- Nap/Rest Time
- Enrichment Activity
- Snack (Provided by the School)

Dress Code

Please . . .

- have your child wear clothes that will be appropriate for active work and play.
- provide simple clothing free of complicated fastening.
- provide clothing that is washable.
- have your child wear shorts under their dresses.
- have your child wear shoes that are sturdy and appropriate for running and climbing.
- wear sneakers or other comfortable closed-toed shoes to school.
- avoid open-toed sandals, flip flops and dress shoes make it difficult for your child to play safely on the playground.

Note: *We ask that all students have a weather-appropriate extra change of clothes which can be kept in his/her cubby. This is particularly important if your child has just attained toilet training. Most children feel better if they have their own dry clothing to change into when accidents occur. Remember to change out the clothes to align with seasonal and size changes.*

Rest Time/Nap Time

As a requirement from ECECD Licensing, children in school for more than four hours are required to have a rest time/nap time. We provide a relaxing environment for the children to recharge. We are unable to provide blankets and pillows. **You are responsible for bringing a blanket and pillow.** Children who no longer take naps will have “rest time”, where they lay quietly, or do quiet activities on their mat.

Special Person Day and Classroom Volunteers

We value the involvement of parents and family members in our preschool community and welcome volunteers in our classrooms, typically during special events or your child's designated Special Person Day.

To ensure the safety and well-being of all children, **all classroom volunteers must complete and pass a background check before volunteering.** Volunteers who are 18 years of age or older, including siblings and other family members, are also required to complete and pass a background check prior to participating in classroom activities. Volunteers are expected to abide by the media and confidentiality policies.

When volunteering in the classroom, please:

- Arrive on time and check in at the preschool office.
- Sign in and wear a visitor badge at all times.
- Ask the teacher where personal belongings may be stored.
- Keep cell phones on silent and refrain from using them during your volunteer time, except for emergencies.
- Follow the teacher's direction and assist with classroom activities as requested.
- Support classroom routines by helping with tasks such as preparing snacks, labeling artwork, organizing materials, and encouraging positive interactions among children.

- Engage with children through developmentally appropriate activities such as reading, puzzles, games, block play, and other learning experiences.

For the safety of all students and to maintain appropriate classroom ratios and supervision, **siblings who are not enrolled in the class may not attend volunteer visits or remain in the classroom during the school day.** This policy refers to events or activities taking place during the school day on school grounds.

Guidance/Discipline Policies

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (this is the first commandment with a promise) that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth." Ephesians 6:1-3 (NRSV)

Guidance is an essential teaching part of the classroom and is not viewed as punishment. Guidance is used to help children learn self-control, to help develop their self-esteem and a regard for and acceptance of others in the classroom. The following techniques, as outlined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children will be used:

1. Guide children by setting clear, consistent, fair limits for classroom behavior.
2. Value mistakes as learning opportunities.
3. Redirect children to more acceptable behavior or activity, reminding them of the rules and their rationale.
4. Listen when children talk about their feelings and frustrations.
5. Guide children to resolve conflicts and model skills that help children to solve their own problems.

Technology in the Classroom

It is the philosophy of Cross of Hope Preschool, that hands on learning and learning through play is vital to young children's development. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children ages 2-5 years of age should have no longer than one hour of screen time a day. Because of the amount of technology

children receive out of the classroom, we do not want to add more screen time to their day. It is our policy that technology such as TVs or iPads only be used as a tool to enhance content being taught. For example, showing a clip of what dinosaurs may have sounded like or a time lapse video of a butterfly lifecycle. We may also use technology for music and movement or large motor games.

General Center Policies

At Cross of Hope Preschool, we value the partnership between families, teachers, and administration as we work together to nurture each child's growth in faith, learning, and character. We welcome open communication, questions, and feedback from families and believe that strong relationships are an important part of our ministry. To provide a safe, consistent, and Christ-centered learning environment for all children, teachers and administration are responsible for establishing and implementing classroom procedures, educational practices, and program policies. These decisions are made prayerfully and thoughtfully, with the well-being of all children and the mission of the school in mind and are considered final.

Expulsion Policy

Our school will work to provide a safe environment for all children present. It is our policy to work with each child, through problematic behaviors, within the structure of our guidance policy. If a child's behavior is disrupting the safety and/or educational environment, the parents/guardians will be contacted to assist in resolving the issue. In some cases, we may ask that the child be taken home for the remainder of the day. If a child exhibits behaviors which cannot be corrected, a referral to outside organizations will be made. With your consent as the parent, these agencies will help give techniques/strategies to work through the behaviors successfully.

If the child does not show progress toward the elimination of disruptive behaviors, he/she will be subject to disenrollment to find a more suitable environment for the child. One week's written notice will be given to the child's parent(s)/guardian(s) if disenrollment actions are recommended. If a child is harming teachers or other children, we reserve the right to shorten notice as needed for safety.

Student Records and Confidentiality

Cross of Hope Preschool maintains a confidential file for each child as required by state licensing regulations. Records may include enrollment forms, emergency contacts, health and immunization information, attendance records, incident reports, assessments, and other documents related to a child's participation in the program.

Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping all information current and notifying the school of any changes to contact information, medical needs, emergency contacts, or custody arrangements.

Student records are securely maintained and accessible only to authorized personnel with a legitimate educational or safety-related need. Records will not be released without written parent/guardian consent unless required by law. Parents/guardians may request to review their child's records by contacting the Preschool Director. Records are retained according to applicable licensing requirements and school policies.

Media Policy

Cross of Hope Preschool will only allow the student's name, photograph, voice, image and information to be used by the school for use in the school's publications, promotion materials, social networks, and website, without compensation and without prior notice **only** with the consent of the Parent/Custodian. Parent/Custodian releases and holds the school harmless from any liability stemming from the use of the student's name, photograph, voice, image, or information.

Conflict, Complaint and Grievance Policy

In seeking solutions to conflicts at COHS, we follow Matthew 18:15-17. Our intent is to find a peaceful, God-pleasing solution to our differences. This is how we will proceed:

1. If you have a conflict with someone at COHS, arrange a meeting between that person and yourself. Explain your grievance and seek mutual agreement. If an agreement is reached, the conflict is resolved.
2. If upon meeting, an agreement is not reached, request another meeting together with the school Director so that everything can be brought out in the open. Remember that the goal is to seek agreement and resolution to the conflict. If an agreement is reached at this meeting, then the conflict has been resolved.
3. If, after these two meetings, a resolution or an agreement still cannot be reached, request a meeting with the Church Pastor and the other party. At this meeting, the Pastor will advise and guide both parties to seek agreement and resolve the issue amicably. If agreement is reached, all parties benefit. If, however, agreement still cannot be reached, the Pastor will render a decision. The decision of the Pastor is binding on all parties.

Notice of Non-Discrimination

It is the policy of Cross of Hope Lutheran Preschool that we will promote the equal access of services for all children and families and prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation, or gender identity), national origin, disability, or age (40 or older).



Cross of Hope School

ACCEPTANCE OF ALL SCHOOL POLICIES

I have read and understood the policies outlined by Cross of Hope School.
My signature below constitutes my understanding and my agreement to adhere to
the school policies as explained in the 2025-2026 Cross of Hope School Handbook.

Child/Student Name

Date

Parent / Guardian Signature #1

Date

Parent / Guardian Signature #2

Date