



Student and Family Handbook

2013 – 2014

Twin Cities German Immersion School
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Willkommen!

The Twin Cities German Immersion School is a charter school authorized by the Germanic-American Institute. This handbook is intended to serve as an informative guide for students and families. It does not encompass every situation or circumstance, but rather serves as a reference for procedures and expectations.

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SECTION I: Mission and Philosophy

Mission, Vision and History

Mission

TCGIS is a K-8 charter school that values high academic achievement and engages each individual child through an enriched foreign language curriculum. With the strong support of parents and community members, our school creates an environment that nurtures a child's natural curiosity and fosters international awareness.

Vision

Educating children for informed and active world citizenship.
Andere hören, andere sehen, weltoffen denken und handeln.

History

A team of dedicated teachers, parents and community members committed countless hours of their time and talent to insure the gift of German language immersion would be available to children of the greater Twin Cities. TCGIS is a tuition-free, public school with an immersion program that utilizes German as the language of instruction. The school opened its doors in the fall of 2005 with Kindergarten and Grade 1. In June of 2013, the school graduated the first group of 8th grade students.

Philosophy

Multilingual

Multilingualism is a norm in most of the world, and we desire that easy capability with languages for our children. We believe that children who know more than one language will be better prepared for life in the twenty-first century. Daily English instruction begins in Grade 3 and in middle school our students are introduced to Spanish. Students will graduate from TCGIS as fluent German speakers, but more importantly, they will have developed the transferable skills of language learning and its cognitive benefits including non-verbal problem solving and increased flexibility.

International

We educate children for informed and active world citizenship. We give students the information, skills, tools and perspective necessary to prepare them to be aware of, connect with, listen to, understand and respect people with different experiences and worldviews. Our students learn and practice life-long skills of communication, negotiation and conflict resolution. They will be able to make friends and live peaceably wherever they find themselves in the world. Students will be prepared to accept the challenges and enjoy the benefits of the global marketplace. We believe that the communicative focus in our curriculum will teach our children to be more responsible citizens of their families, their classrooms, their school, their communities and the world.

Goals

Students who complete our program through 8th grade will be able to use their German language skills to do school work, speak with friends and teachers, and communicate with native speakers comfortably and effectively. In addition, they will be well equipped to enter and succeed in challenging secondary school opportunities, including International Baccalaureate programs, Advanced Placement classes, College in the Schools programs and the Post-Secondary Educational Option.

Supportive

We believe that children learn best, when they are known and understood as individuals. Each child at our school will be accepted and challenged in the manner that is most appropriate for them. In addition, knowing the families of the children we teach and working with them as partners is essential to the success of each child.

Challenging

We believe that children rise to academic challenges that are developmentally appropriate. We are committed to providing an academic environment that teaches and expects students to do their best work. We believe that our students' success on standardized tests is reflective of the holistic environment in which they are nurtured and where arts and physical movement are valued, taught and integrated with reading, writing, math and science skills.

Community Based

We believe the most measurable cognitive growth occurs through social interaction. We also believe that the social skills children need in order to be successful academically and socially, must be taught. To that end, the social curriculum provides the foundation for the academic curriculum. How children learn is as important as what they learn. TCGIS recognizes that students can only learn when they feel safe and accepted in a community. Our classrooms are united by an educational philosophy called Responsive Classroom. Source:

<http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/about/aboutrc.html>

Involved

We believe that at the heart of every vibrant school is an involved community. As a charter school, TCGIS board members, administrators, faculty and families share in the daily tasks and long term planning required to function successfully as a school. TCGIS asks all families to consider how they might offer their gifts and talents to our community. Parents have direct student contact on field trips, during special events, help in the library or the classroom. Many others work behind the scenes and play key roles in such things as planning for growth, managing finances, and implementing technology plans. TCGIS is widely known to be a place where whole family and person are welcomed and valued.

SECTION II: Commitments and Governance

TCGIS is an active partnership between school employees and the families; together, all of us work towards building a strong community.

Administrator's Commitment

- Create an organized, safe and supportive learning environment for teachers, parents and students.
- Manage school affairs in a responsible manner to ensure continued growth and progress.
- Communicate consistently and openly with teachers, parents, students and community members.
- Abide by all school policies.

Teacher's Commitment

- Partner with parents in discussions on the academic progress and conduct of children on a regular basis.
- Plan and conduct a program of instruction that captures the interest and meets the needs of each student.
- Demonstrate by attitude and actions genuine concern and respect for each student, family and other staff.
- Manage classroom routines that contribute to the immersion program and the Responsive Classroom environment.
- Teach and enforce the rules in a courteous, consistent, and fair manner, and deal with misconduct quickly, fairly and impartially.
- Abide by all school policies.

Parent's Commitment

- Make sure your child has a wholesome breakfast and a good night's sleep. (Approx. 10 hours is recommended.)
- Pack a nutritious snack and lunch or buy hot lunch.
- Assure your child's prompt and regular attendance.
- Encourage your child's daily effort and work.
- Communicate with the teacher and student about any concerns.
- If you have a concern with a member of our school community, please speak directly to that person. If you are unable to resolve that concern directly bring the concern to the director or the parent liaison on the Board.
- Read out loud to your child in English for at least 20 minutes a day, and/or provide an opportunity for your child to read on his/her own.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences.
- Become as active as possible in the life of the school by volunteering.
- Abide by all school policies.

Student's Commitment

- Come to school ready to learn.
- Pay attention with your eyes, ears, and body.
- Speak, read and write German at school with everybody.
- Do your homework every day.
- Do your best work.

Governance

Twin Cities German Immersion School, Independent School District 4152, is a charter school run by a Board of Directors. Board members can be teachers, parents of currently enrolled students, or community members who subscribe to the mission and vision of TCGIS. Board members meet at least monthly to discuss the agenda prepared by the Board Chair. The Board role is to set policy and initiate long term strategic planning.

All are welcome at meetings, though prior notification is necessary to put an item on the agenda. Board members agree to set aside personal agendas and act in good faith according to the mission of the school in making decisions. Board meeting dates, agendas and minutes are placed on the Twin Cities German Immersion School website and posted at the school according to statutory requirements. An annual meeting will be held by the end of each school year, and will include the election of new board members.

Committees

Important work could not take place without the many committees and the hard working parents and other volunteers who take leadership roles within these committees. Please inquire about current and newly forming committees.

SECTION III: General Information

Attendance, Arrival and Departure

Attendance

TCGIS values regular attendance and punctuality for many reasons:

1. Students who miss school learn less. When a student misses school, he or she misses out on instruction and support. Without regular support and instruction, a student's opportunity for success is limited. High academic performance goes hand-in-hand with high attendance rates. Furthermore, a student who is absent also diminishes the level of learning and success for the entire class. While a student may make up some of the missed school work, she or he will have missed daily learning experiences and German language practice that cannot be replicated at home. Educational time spent in class interacting with teachers, staff and other students in German is essential to maintaining progress in all subject areas.
2. Each classroom begins the day with a "Morning Meeting" at **8:15 AM** which sets the tone for the day and introduces the theme for the day, along with related vocabulary. Our day also ends with a class meeting. Students arriving late or leaving early are not only disruptive to others, but miss a great deal by not being a part of these discussions.
3. Consistent school attendance is important for the community life of the classroom since each member's contribution is significantly valued. **If a child has more than 7 unexcused absences or tardies we must report the situation to the truancy board. If your child is absent or tardy, please email or call the office to inform us if the absence/tardy is unexcused.** Reasons for excused tardy or absence are: Child's illness, health care appointments of child, family emergencies, death or serious illness or funeral of an immediate family member.

4. Some expectations of routine and structure are important in a child's life. If there is a problem or concern regarding school, the child's presence is crucial to pursuing a satisfactory resolution. Families can rely on their partnership with the teacher and the school to handle any difficult situation that may arise.

Arrival and Departure

1. School supervision is provided between the hours of 7:50 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. for K-8 Monday through Friday. Please drop children at school by 8:10. After that time the front door will be closed and you must sign them in as late at the front desk. Morning circle begins at 8:15. Children are to be settled into their classrooms at that time. On early release Wednesdays, supervision is provided between 7:50 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. Early release days will be the third Wednesday of every month. Half-day kindergarten pickup is at 11:30 a.m. daily. Children can be picked up anytime between 11:30 and 11:45. After that time they will be in the office. We do not have staff assigned for their supervision past 11:45. Please do not be late. Kindergarten teachers must have lunch and prepare for the afternoon at that time. **On the third late pick-up, TCGIS is entitled to charge the \$50 late pick up fee. Please call us and let us know if unforeseen circumstances require you to be late.**
2. Student drop off and pick up procedure:
 - a. Cars with students in grades k-1; please use Van Slyke Avenue
 - b. Cars with students in grades 4-8; please use Como Avenue
 - c. Cars with mixture of grades including k-1 students; please use Van Slyke Avenue
 - d. Parents who wish to walk students to building door may park in lots between Como Park Pool and McMurray Fields.
3. Please communicate (written) any changes to your "pick-up" permission form.
4. Please communicate schedule changes to the office as early as possible by phone **and**, when known in advance, to the office in writing. This includes picking up your child early, having someone else pick up your child, and absences due to vacations, etc. We must receive notification of changes; otherwise we will follow the child's regular schedule.
5. We discourage early dismissals as we try to maximize each minute for instructional purposes. In order to avoid disrupting end-of-the-day classroom instruction and afternoon meeting, please do not check students out early unless it is absolutely necessary.
6. Whenever someone else will be picking up your child from school during school hours, please send a note to the office giving the following information:
 - a. Name of person authorized to pick the student up.
 - b. Reason for missing school.
 - c. Time of pickup and whether student will return to school that day.

School Policy on Child Release:

The school, unless informed otherwise, presumes that a custodial and non-custodial parent are authorized to pick up a child from school. It is not the role of the school to enforce custody agreements. The enforcement of court orders is the responsibility of the parents. If restrictions are

made relative to the drop-off or pick-up of a student, the custodial parent will be requested to submit a certified copy of the court order, which curtails this right.

The school cannot legally limit access to a parent if there is no copy of a court order on file at the school. Any subsequent changes to a court order will need to be acknowledged by both parents. If there is a restraining order, a certified copy must be on file with the school office. The school cannot legally keep either parent from picking up his/her child from this school without having a certified copy of the restraining order from the courts. The school will not be held liable for enforcement of such orders, but will do its best in following a court order.

Only a parent or legal guardian may designate another adult (over the age of 18) to pick up a student from school. Such authorization must be presented in writing and entered into the school's emergency contact database. Persons authorized by the parent or legal guardian for pickup must be able to produce a valid, unexpired, photo identification card.

Absence Procedures

1. TCGIS strongly discourages school absence for reasons other than illness or family emergencies. While your child can make up some of the school work, he/she will have missed daily experiences and German language practice that often cannot be duplicated at home. Time spent in class interacting in German with the teachers, classroom assistants and other children is essential to maintaining progress in all subject areas.
2. If your child is ill, please call the school to report the absence (651-492-7106). You may call this number at any time to leave a message. During office hours, dial 0 to speak to someone immediately. If your child is going to be absent more than one day, you may make note of that on the first day's call. If you anticipate only one day's absence and it turns out to be longer, you should call the school's office each successive day. When an absence has been called in, it is not necessary to send a note upon the student's return to school. Do not have your child or a sibling call to report the absence. The parent or guardian should make the absence call. An absence is unexcused until a parent or guardian calls.
3. Please give the following information when you call:
 - a. Date of absence being reported.
 - b. Student's full name.
 - c. Name of student's teacher.
 - d. Reason for absence.
 - e. Person reporting the absence.
4. If a child is absent and the school does not hear from a parent or guardian by 9:00 a.m., the school will try to reach them at available home, work, and emergency numbers. Our goal is to make sure your child arrives safely and to identify missing children as soon as possible.
5. A letter will be sent to parents after 10 consecutive absences or tardies, excused or unexcused, notifying parents of the requirements of the state attendance law.
6. Please refer to the following website if you have any questions.
<http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/Attorney/FTIPOverview.htm>

Tardiness

Students arriving after 8:10 a.m. are considered tardy. Please make a point of having your child to school by 8:05 a.m. and ready for the beginning of class at 8:15 a.m. Learning starts right away in the classrooms; therefore repeated tardiness can have a negative impact on student academic performance.

Late Pick Ups

If a parent or other designated adult cannot pick a child up on time, there are two options:

1. Kinderclub is available on a fee basis for after school care. For a one time registration fee of **\$25** and a \$10 drop-in fee, they will take care of your children from 3:30 – 6:00 p.m. (1:00 p.m. on early release Wednesdays) Please contact Kinderclub directly to make arrangements at 612-227-4412. Please note there is a fifteen minute grace period between the end of school to when the fee goes into effect. The \$10 fee is payable regardless if you pick your child up at 3:31p.m. or 6:00 p.m.
2. If children are not registered with Kinderclub or if Kinderclub has reached their capacity, a TCGIS staff member will supervise your child. For this service, there will be a **\$50 fee** payable to the school at the time of pick up. Kinderclub has a onetime registration fee of \$25 for all the years your students attend the school. If you end up running late and Kinderclub is responsible for your child there will be a \$10 drop-in fee. **TCGIS strongly encourages parents who want some flexibility and peace of mind, to register with Kinderclub and to call them directly at 612-227-4412 when running late.**

Transportation. Bus transportation is not provided. Many families have expressed interest in carpooling. Once you identify families in your area, you may be able to make arrangements with those families. The school will not arrange the carpool for you.

Walking to School

Parents who wish their children to walk to and from school or take a bus must provide written permission to the office or we cannot release them. Younger children should be accompanied by a parent or an older child when crossing streets.

Inclement/Severe Weather

Please ensure that your child is always dressed according to the weather. Students will go outside everyday for short breaks, so send your child prepared for these conditions. Coats, hats, snow pants, and mittens/gloves are required when the weather is 40 degrees Fahrenheit or colder. Students remain outside unless the temperature becomes dangerously low. However, even on very cold days when students will not be outside for break, dressing for the weather is still important, as an emergency situation could arise which requires students to be outside.

TCGIS will close if weather-related conditions make driving precarious. Our school closings will be broadcast over the radio (WCCO 830) and the three major television stations, channels 4, 5 and 11. Additionally, a notice will be posted on the school's website and the electronic calendar and a

school wide email will be sent. **Parents can sign up for text or e-mail alerts whenever their school is closed or delayed, by going to KSTP's regular web site www.kstp.com . Click on the School Alert tab and follow the sign up instructions.**

Family Travel

TCGIS strongly discourages family travel outside of school vacation dates. If a family travel experience is planned, the classroom teacher should be notified in writing as early as possible. Alternative expectations will be assigned for the student's absence in consultation with the parents.

At School

Amity Program

Each classroom will have the benefit of a native German speaking assistant. The Amity Institute provides us with German-speaking interns who work together with the classroom teachers. Our Amity interns will generally be young adults who are studying pedagogy or have just completed their studies and are looking for practical classroom experience. They are hosted by school families or friends of TCGIS. All school families are welcome and encouraged to invite our Amity interns over for a family dinner or celebration, out for an excursion, or to introduce them to other young people in the area. Our interns are only here for six months to a year and we hope to give them a well-rounded introduction to Minnesota and our way of life. For more information about hosting, please contact a TCGIS Amity Coordinator.

Classroom Hours

The class day is from 8:15 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. There is a 55-minute period each day for recess followed by lunch. A daily morning and afternoon break will be scheduled at the teacher's discretion. Morning-only kindergarten ends at 11:30 a.m.

Office Hours

The school office will be open every school day from 7:50 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Lunch

1. TCGIS is committed to improving and maintaining the health of our school community by offering a nutritious hot lunch to all students and staff for \$3.60/day. Our caterer, Lancer Dining, provides healthy, wholesome, made from scratch menus with lean meats, fresh vegetables and fruits. Milk is offered to students a la carte at \$.30 per carton.
2. **Please know that your children may qualify for free or reduced price lunch. The reduced price for lunch is \$.40/day.** To apply for free or reduced-price meals, please complete the Application for Educational Benefits or ask for a new form in the office. Completing the form also helps our school qualify for additional education funds and discounts, even if your child does not qualify for free/reduced lunch. *In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 or (202) 720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

3. For those families who choose not to order the hot lunch, please pack a nutritious lunch for your child daily. Single servings of milk are available for \$0.30 a carton. **We encourage all parents to have their children store a non-perishable lunch item such as fruit cups, granola bar, cheese cracker packet, etc, in their locker for emergency use when a lunch is forgotten.**

Snacks

1. Snacks are a part of both the morning and afternoon schedules for the Kindergarten classes. Parents and students are expected to contribute to the rotation of snacks in the classroom. These snacks must be store-bought with limited amounts of sugar, and healthy foods are encouraged. Sign-up for a classroom snack rotation will take place during the first few weeks of school.
2. Students in grades 1 and up bring their own healthy snacks.

Specialists

Grades K-8 will have class time each week with the art, Physical Education and Performing Arts teachers.

Library

The TCGIS library was started by grants and is currently maintained by parent volunteers and community donations. All children visit the school library once a week and may check out books to take home. Books are available both in English and in German. Please work with your child(ren) to take good care of the books and remember to return them promptly. Your child will not be able to take out new books, until the checked out books are returned. There is a flat \$20 fee for lost or damaged books. If you have questions about the library, please contact the front office staff or the Library Committee.

Telephones

A telephone is available for students in the school office for important and emergency phone calls only. During the school day, permission to use the telephone must come from the student's classroom teacher or a supervising adult. Students may not use cell phones during the school day.

Extended Day Options

After-school care (Kinderclub) is available within our school building on a fee-basis through the Kinderstube German Immersion Preschool program offered by our authorizer, the Germanic-American Institute. Kinderclub information is available at the office or by calling 612-227-4412.

Lost and Found

Please mark all clothing and personal items and check Lost and Found located in the front office for lost or misplaced items. All unmarked or unclaimed items will be donated to a charitable organization at the end of each season.

Field Trips

Field trips are a vital part of the TCGIS experience. Exactly which field trips are offered at each grade level will continue to evolve as we develop and refine our curriculum. Most field trips should have a direct tie in with the academic curriculum. They also play an important role in our social curriculum by providing groups opportunities to spend time and have fun together, thus strengthening the sense of community within the group. Our goal, however, is to build toward a

consistent and fair structure in which each group of children is given parallel opportunities from year to year. The list below lists core field trips that are built into the curriculum of each given grade. They may well be supplemented by additional opportunities or interchanged for equivalent opportunities scheduled by teachers throughout the year.

When children go on field trips, parents will be requested to sign a permission slip and in most cases, make a donation to cover the cost of the trip. Donations are also regularly gathered to put in a fieldtrip scholarship funds. No student will be left out of a field trip due to inability to pay. Generosity from our parent community has kept this system in balance over the years and we project will continue to do so. Parent chaperones are welcomed.

Likely Fieldtrips in 2013 – 2014*

KG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple Orchard • Food Co-op
1	Bakken Museum
2	Fall and Spring field trips to the MN Wildlife Refuge Center
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to German Days at the MN Zoo as observers • Gibbs Farm Dakota • One night overnight • Practice using public transportation
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to German Days at the MN Zoo as presenters • Overnight field for two nights
5	Daylong field trips in coordination with humanities curriculum
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overnight field trip for two nights • Paddle boat on the Mississippi • Biohaus at Concordia Language Village to tie in with Solar Energy Unit
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trips with German Exchange students
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captstone Trip to Germany

*Subject to change

Holidays

As a public school we may teach about religious traditions including holidays, but we may not celebrate them. TCGIS aims to make acknowledgement of cultural and religious holidays a comprehensive plan that integrates the study of holidays and faith traditions into the curriculum.

Goals to Strive For:

- Create events that bring together the community. These events should grow out of celebration of our academic curriculum and bring focus to the learning accomplishments of our students. They can share food, performance and other academic and or artistic accomplishments.
- Expose students to a diversity of cultures.
- Ensure that there is a balanced study of cultures through the students' tenure at the school.
- Make sure that activities planned for children are age appropriate and tied to curriculum goals. Themes may be restudied from year to year, but get more sophisticated to match the developmental levels of students.

The following holidays may be acknowledged every year at age appropriate levels. Others might be tailored to specific aged classes in conjunction with their curriculum themes:

International Peace Day	Sept. 21
Unity Day	Oct. 3
Halloween	Oct. 31
St. Martinstag	Nov. 11
Nikolaustag	Dec. 6 (Specifically German tradition instead of Christmas/Hanukkah)
Valentine's Day	Feb. 14
Martin Luther King Day	Jan. 20 (celebrated on 3rd Monday of the month)
Earth Day	Apr. 22
May Day	May 1

Birthdays

Students are welcomed and encouraged to celebrate their birthdays at TCGIS. We ask that the following guidelines are followed to ensure fun and safety for students.

- Students may bring a small treat to share with their classmates. We ask that treats be purchased, not homemade, to accommodate the number of children with food allergies or other health issues.
- Students are invited to consider adding a book to their classroom library collection or the main library in honor of their special day. This is certainly not an expectation, but some families like this option over treats or in addition to a treat.
- Out of sensitivity to all students out at school we ask that birthday party invitations not be delivered at school. Please use the directory and send to home addresses. Teachers may not hand-out invitations.
- If a child's birthday falls on a weekend or a day that school is not in session, the student may choose a day in close proximity to their actual day to acknowledge the birthday. Children with summer birthdays may choose a day such as their half birthday when they can celebrate.

Thank you for supporting these guidelines which will help all of us enjoy celebrating your child's special day!

The Responsive Classroom Approach

The *Responsive Classroom* is an approach to elementary teaching that emphasizes social, emotional, and academic growth in a strong and safe school community. The goal is to enable optimal student learning. Created by classroom teachers and backed by evidence from independent research, the Responsive Classroom approach is based on the premise that children learn best when they have both academic and social-emotional skills. The approach therefore consists of classroom and school-wide practices for deliberately helping children build academic and social-emotional competencies.

Guiding Principles

Seven principles, informed by the work of educational theorists and the experiences of exemplary classroom teachers, guide the *Responsive Classroom* approach:

1. The social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum.
2. How children learn is as important as what they learn: Process and content go hand in hand.
3. The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interaction.
4. To be successful academically and socially, children need a set of social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, and self-control.
5. Knowing the children we teach-individually, culturally, and developmentally-is as important as knowing the content we teach.
6. Knowing the families of the children we teach and working with them as partners is essential to children's education.
7. How the adults at school work together is as important as their individual competence: Lasting change begins with the adult community.

Classroom Practices

At the heart of the *Responsive Classroom* approach are ten classroom practices:

1. *Morning Meeting* - gathering as a whole class each morning to greet one another, share news, and warm up for the day ahead
2. *Rule Creation* - helping students create classroom rules to ensure an environment that allows all class members to meet their learning goals
3. *Interactive Modeling* - teaching children to notice and internalize expected behaviors through a unique modeling technique
4. *Positive Teacher Language* - using words and tone as a tool to promote children's active learning, sense of community, and self-discipline
5. *Logical Consequences* - responding to misbehavior in a way that allows children to fix and learn from their mistakes while preserving their dignity
6. *Guided Discovery* - introducing classroom materials using a format that encourages independence, creativity, and responsibility
7. *Academic Choice*- increasing student learning by allowing students teacher-structured choices in their work
8. *Classroom Organization* - setting up the physical room in ways that encourage students' independence, cooperation, and productivity
9. *Working with Families* - creating avenues for hearing parents' insights and helping them understand the school's teaching approaches
10. *Collaborative Problem Solving* - using conferencing, role playing, and other strategies to resolve problems with students

School-wide Practices

Schools implementing the *Responsive Classroom* approach school-wide typically adopt the following practices:

- *Aligning policies and procedures with Responsive Classroom philosophy* - making sure everything from the lunch routine to the discipline policy enhances the self-management skills that children are learning through the *Responsive Classroom* approach.
- *Allocating resources to support Responsive Classroom implementation* - using time, money, space, and personnel to support staff in learning and using the *Responsive Classroom* approach.
- *Planning all-school activities to build a sense of community* - giving all of the school's children and staff opportunities to learn about and from each other through activities such as all-school meetings, cross-age recess or lunch, buddy classrooms, and cross-age book clubs.

- *Welcoming families and the community as partners* - involving family and community members in the children's education by maintaining two-way communication, inviting parents and others to visit and volunteer, and offering family activities.
- *Organizing the physical environment to set a tone of learning* - making sure, for example, that school wide rules are posted prominently, displays emphasize student work, and all school spaces are welcoming, clean, and orderly.

Source: <http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/about/aboutrc.html>

Communication

Communication with Parents

Communication with parents is important to us and will happen on a weekly basis through the school newsletter, the Elternbrief, which will be sent out electronically. We will provide hardcopy newsletters for families without regular internet access. Please make sure the office knows if you need a hard copy.

Other communications will be sent from time to time. These communications will occur via email unless a parent has notified the school office that they need to receive the communications in a paper format.

Should you wish to talk with one of your child's teachers or the administration, call the school and leave a phone number and the time when you can be reached; the teacher/administrator will return your call at his/her earliest availability.

Parent Liaisons

In order to facilitate communication and community building, the TCGIS school board has assigned a board position as TCGIS parent liaison. For the 2013-2014 school year this person is Marcus Sheire. Marcus is available to answer questions if possible and to direct questions to the appropriate staff member if he does not know the answer. If a parent is interested in bringing an issue up to the board, Marcus is a good first step.

To contact the parent liaison, you may call him directly at 651-235-4607 or email him at msheire@tcgis.org.

Parent/Teacher Communications

Parents will receive formal communications about how your student is progressing four times a year. A goal setting conference will be held early in the year. The first semester report card will be sent at the end of January. A second set of conferences will be held in March. A final written report card will be issued at the end of the school year.

Parents are strongly encouraged to attend the conferences. Conferences will be scheduled by appointment to ensure privacy and adequate time for all parties to prepare.

In addition to these regularly scheduled conferences, teachers are available after school by appointment. Please contact your child's teacher at least 24 hours in advance to schedule an appointment.

Website

The TCGIS website, www.tcgis.org, has been developed in order to provide the parents, teachers and the larger community with easy access to information and communication. We encourage you to use it as a means of staying connected and informed. We also welcome feedback on the site.

Fees

From time to time TCGIS may find it necessary to assess fees for lost materials, damaged equipment, additional educational services, or for extra-curricular opportunities. Parents will be notified of any fees as they occur.

Permanent Records

You may view your child's permanent record at any time. Please give the school a one-day notice so that the record may be pulled. The director may request to be present during your review of the file.

Special Education Services

TCGIS will identify special needs students and serve them as needed. Students shall be provided an opportunity to succeed at Twin Cities German Immersion School in the following ways: identification in a timely manner, remediation efforts in the classroom, formal assessment, and services by licensed professionals. We are committed to offering a complete immersion educational experience to all children enrolled in our program, including those children with special needs.

Standardized Testing

TCGIS students participate in a variety of program-based, school-wide evaluations. The student Oral Proficiency exam is given at the end of 2nd grade. The Stoelperwoerte German reading test is given at the end of 3rd and 4th grades. The A2 exam from the European Common Reference is given in the 5th grade. State-required Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA II) are given in reading and writing each year from 3rd grade on up. The Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment In Science is given in 5th and 8th grade.

Health and Safety

Accidents

All accidents that occur on the school grounds must be reported to the school office. Students will receive care consistent with the severity of the injury. Minor abrasions and bumps will be cleaned and bandaged. Parents will be notified immediately when major accidents occur. The emergency medical services will be summoned in more serious situations.

Emergency Information Forms

1. The school office maintains an information form for each student. A new form must be completed each year. Please keep the information up to date on these forms. We will use them to contact you in the case of an emergency. Your signature on the form is critical as it allows the school authorization to secure medical attention/aid for your student in an emergency. All information on the card will be held in confidence.
2. ***Please notify the school immediately, in writing, if you change your address, telephone number(s), or place of employment.***

3. *If you leave your student(s) with another person and you are out of the area, please send a note to the school office giving the name, address, and phone numbers for the temporary guardian. Also include permission for this person to check your student out of school. Please note the length of time you will be out of town. The school office will hold all information in confidence.*

Parent Communication in Emergency/Crisis Situations

1. Parents will be notified of the situation and pick up procedures through an email and a posting on the school website. When possible telephone contact will also be attempted.
2. It is important in an emergency situation for school telephone lines to remain open for communication with emergency service personnel. For the safety of students, we ask parents to check their email and the school's website during a crisis for information from us.

Crisis Plan

In the event of a school-wide crisis such as power outage, gas leak, etc., all students will be evacuated to the **Presbyterian Church on Como Avenue**. Children will be escorted by TCGIS staff.

Fire and Emergency

1. The school building has been inspected for fire and emergency hazards, and has been determined a safe school environment for children and adults. As a matter of policy, the doors will be locked after school starts in the morning until the end of the school day. Fire and emergency drills will be conducted throughout the year to prepare students in case of an emergency. If an evacuation is required, staff and students will be moved to the Presbyterian Church on Como Avenue.
2. In the event of an emergency involving physical safety concerns for the children at TCGIS, the Director will institute a school wide lock down. In the event of a lock down, children will be held within the school building until the perceived threat has passed. No one shall be allowed in or out of the building without permission from a school administrator. Cases which would cause a lock down include:
 - Area environmental concerns
 - Warnings from police about possible fugitive or violent activity in the immediate area
 - A direct act of violence against the school

First Aid and Illness

1. The school office staff will provide first aid attention and will screen students complaining of illness. Parents should bring special health problems to the attention of the teacher and office personnel.
2. When a child complains of being ill during school, that child will be brought to the office to be evaluated. If the child has vomited, has diarrhea, or has a fever of more than 100 degrees, we will call an emergency contact person directly and request that the child be picked up. If the office staff cannot confirm that a child is ill, that child will be sent back to class. It is imperative that someone be available and prepared to pick up your student in the event of illness or accident. A sick student must be picked up within 30 minutes of our contacting you or a designated adult. Children will rest in a quiet area under supervision until a parent arrives.

3. TCGIS makes every effort to promote the general health and well-being of all students and to minimize absences. To protect the school community from communicable diseases, parents are asked to report all illnesses, including head lice, strep throat, high temperatures and any diseases. We keep track of student illnesses, and inform all families if someone has a particular communicable ailment, respecting the confidentiality of the student.
4. Any child who shows signs of contagion should not attend school.
5. Guidelines for deciding if a child is too sick to attend school:
 - Your child has had a fever of 100 degrees (under the arm)/ 101 degrees orally or higher - child should stay home for 24 hours after the temp returns to normal
 - Your child has vomited or had diarrhea - child should stay home until 24 hours after the last episode
 - Your child has an uncontrollable cough
 - Your child has had any rash that may be disease related or you do not know the cause - check with your family physician before sending the child to school.
6. The school needs to be informed of any medical condition or allergies that your child may have.

Head Lice Policy

Any child found with nits or lice will be immediately sent home from school and must be treated by a method of your choice that ensures that all nits are both dead and removed. The child may return the next school day. The child's head must be checked by a staff member and be shown to be nit free before being allowed to return to the classroom. Nits presumed to be dead must also be removed. Please work towards prevention of the spread of lice by not allowing the sharing of hats and by keeping long hair tied back when lice has been shown to be present in the class.

Medication

1. Parents are advised that, if possible, medication should be given at home and on a schedule other than school hours.
2. When it becomes necessary for medication to be taken by students during the school day, these procedures must be followed:
 - The school must have written permission from a parent/guardian in the office for the administration of any medication (prescription or non-prescription, including Tylenol).
 - Parents must notify the school in writing or with a phone call if the student is bringing medications to the school.
 - All non-prescription medication must be sent to the school in the **original** container in which it was purchased, labeled with the student's name.
 - The school must have a written order (form available at the office) from a physician for all prescription medications.
 - All prescription medications must be sent to the school in the correct pharmacy-labeled container unless the physician's written order recommends another dispensing method.

- Parents must provide a copy of all warning information, etc. included with the medication.
3. TCGIS students cannot carry their own medications or store them in their lockers unless a doctor has specified that it is necessary for them to do so. If parents want their children to keep their medications on their persons, two requirements must be met:
 4. A letter from the doctor stating that it is necessary for the student to keep medication with him/her.
 5. A letter from the parents accepting all responsibility in the event the medications are lost or improperly used by anyone.

General School Policies

Homework

Homework is part of the TCGIS program. We assign homework to provide opportunities for:

Students to

- Develop independent work skills
- Master skills taught earlier at school
- Integrate school skills into home life

Parents to

- Learn what topics are being taught in school
- Witness skills student is learning

Responsibilities for Homework

Teacher	Student	Parent
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Review homework expectations with students2. Give work that should be manageable within recommended time frames for child's age3. Provide homework in a predictable pattern4. Assign work that reviews skills already taught5. Be in communication with student and parents regarding potential individual adaptations to assignments	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Give best effort for the pre-determined amount of time2. Try work yourself before asking for help3. Ask for help if you need it	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide student a work time and space2. Help student plan to structure time to include time for homework3. Be in communication with teacher about homework concerns.4. Read to your child daily in any language (yes even if they can read themselves)5. Write a note of explanation if child was unable to complete assignments on a given day.

Guidelines for Homework

Grade	Recommended Time Limit
K	5-15 minutes
1	10-20 minutes
2	20-30 minutes
3	25-35 minutes
4	30-40 minutes
5	50-60 minutes per day (not more than 20 minutes per subject)
6	60 – 70 minutes per day (not more than 20 minutes per subject)

Discipline

Everyday Discipline

We want our children to grow and mature in positive ways. We need to provide an atmosphere of firm, loving support. Our belief in the dignity of each human being should be the basis of maintaining mutual courtesy among faculty and students. Disciplinary action should not humiliate students.

The following procedure is recommended for primary students and for infractions of less serious rules for older students.

1. Staff gives the child a verbal warning.
2. If the behavior continues, teacher and the child and possibly the director will have a conference. The child may be asked to have recess separated from peers, stay after school or be to a quiet place.
3. If the behavior persists, a note is sent to the parents about the problem, either by the teacher or the student may write his/her own note. Parents must sign the note before the student returns to school. An immediate conference will be set at a time convenient for teacher, parents and child (and possibly director) to discuss the consequences of the behavior.
4. Child may be sent home from school, depending on the severity of the situation (such as physical violence) and the history of the child's behavior. Individual judgment as to what is an appropriate measure is used in each individual situation. Discuss with the director. Parents will be called to let them know their child is being sent home. If the parent is unavailable, the student may have an in-school suspension.

Staff/Teacher Guidelines for Confrontations

Here are some ideas for teachers dealing with students in confrontational situations.

- Be specific and clear. You are confronting the person's behaviors in a given situation, not the person or his/her behavior in general.
- Avoid accusations and judgments—deal with behaviors.
- Confront behaviors, not values. Pushing your values will probably not work. Specify which behavior is causing a problem, such as damage, rowdiness, messiness, etc. Identify what the root of that behavior may be, such as personal isolation, anger, etc.
- Care!!! At every available opportunity, communicate your interest in the person and ask him/her clarifying questions. How do you view your current behavior? Why are you acting this way?
- If you are angry, check to see that your anger is directed at the behavior, not the person. Communicate this. Identify feelings as feelings and facts as facts.
- Focus on the student's strengths rather than his/her weaknesses.
- Avoid arguing—maintain your cool.
- Avoid "I told you so" and other moralistic comments.
- Realize and convey that this confrontation need only be an initial contact and that time and understanding can and will follow.

Behavior Response Guidelines

	Behaviors	Steps of Response
Level 1	Cooperation, Consideration, Engagement	Positive Reinforcement
Level 2	Any one time violation of a specific rule or norm such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name-calling Exclusion Overlooking Rule Disagreement with other student Lack of appropriate sharing or negotiation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Respond according to Classroom Management Systems set up by individual teachers Teacher discusses incident with student. Teacher makes a plan for conflict resolution if more than one individual involved. This may need to happen at a later time or be mediated by another individual, so that teacher can focus on group.
Level 3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> A second violation of a specific rule or norm within the same class or recess period. Low level physical aggression (one time, remorse is shown; not fearful of repetition.) Verbal attacks Uncooperative behavior 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Respond according to Classroom Management Systems set up by individual teachers Student is given time out within classroom to reflect on action for between 2 – 5 minutes or until ready to return to group. Teacher makes a plan for conflict resolution if more than one individual involved. This may need to happen at a later time or be mediated by another individual, so that teacher can focus on group. Spend time in buddy-classroom until ready to return Student may be asked to spend between 10 minutes to the remainder of the day in the office. Contact parents. Response appropriate to transgression such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> apology commitment to improve gesture of kindness toward other repair or replacement of damaged items Community Service activity such as cleaning for school Loss of privileges such as unrestricted play at recess
Level 4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated violations of above rules Physical aggression with injury(part of pattern of behavior, no responsibility or remorse) Verbal attacks that humiliate 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher makes a plan for conflict resolution if more than one individual involved. This may need to happen at a later time or be mediated by another individual, so that teacher can focus on group. An incident form should be filled out Parents are contacted by the adult witnessing the behavior, the classroom teacher or director. Telephone contact should accompany the sending home of written notices. <p>Possible Responses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Response appropriate to transgression such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> apology commitment to improve gesture of kindness toward other repair or replacement of damaged items <p>and</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Community Service activity such as cleaning for school Loss of privileges such as unrestricted play at recess Suspension for remainder of day Suspension for up to two subsequent days
Level 5	A pattern over time of inappropriate behavior or commentary	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Call meeting of all teachers who work with students and director Meet with Parents Individual Behavior Plan Possible suspensions
Level 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possession, use or sale of tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs or weapon deemed threatening Disregard of Care of School Property 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with Director Possible suspensions

Toys and Games

Students must not use non-TCGIS-supplied toys or games during the school day without special permission from a teacher (such as, for instance, for show-and-tell). If a student brings a toy or game for use during Kinderclub, the toy or game must remain in the student's locker for the entire school day.

Hats

Students must not wear hats in the school building during the school day.

Electronic Devices

Students must not use electronic devices such as cell phones, smart phones, tablets, game devices, or MP3 players during the school day without special permission from a teacher. If a student brings such an electronic device to school, the device must remain in the student's locker for the entire day. Teachers have the authority to take a forbidden electronic device from a student if they see or hear it. At the end of the school day, the device will be returned to the student or his or her parent upon request.

Conflict Resolution

TCGIS's approach to conflict is based on the following principles:

- Conflicts are a normal, part of living in community. People disagree about things. Every day events and issues have conflict potential.
- People can learn to respond positively to conflict.
- Children gain experience with open, honest communication about conflicts with regular times, places and routines to address them.
- Children can develop the habit of communicating verbally to resolve conflicts.

Conflict Resolution Strategies

1. Mediation
2. Group Gatherings
3. Modeling

Mediation

Mediation is used to settle issues between two people or a small group of people. Adult facilitators guide the participants through the process. After agreeing on basic rules the participants each have the opportunity to talk about their perceptions and feelings, and then work together to come up with a plan to avoid the issue in the future. Mediation is not a substitute for consequences. If a behavior calls for consequences they should be administered according to the Behavior Response Guidelines

Each mediation should follow these basic guidelines:

1. Agree to rules:
 - Listen and take turns speaking
 - Speak respectfully; no name calling or swearing
 - Agree to work hard to come up with a plan for change

2. Clarify the issue Identify behaviors that contributed to conflict
 Use simple summary statement to describe conflict
 Identify feelings
3. Make a plan
4. Closure

Although mediation can be requested by anyone at any time and facilitated by any adult, it is helpful to have a structured time and place where children know they can go to ask for help with conflicts. In the 2013-2014 school year the school schedule contains four recess/lunch periods. In each case recess will precede lunch. Adult staff will be available during recess to talk with small groups of children that may experience conflict, or, the classroom teacher will be informed of the conflict to follow up with the students after lunch. Administration will assist in any conflict mediation needed for middle school students.

Students will have the opportunity to sign up for mediation. Some sessions may be able to happen immediately. Others may need to be scheduled in the future depending upon urgency of the issue and availability of staff. Participation in mediation is not optional. If someone requests to resolve a conflict with a student, the student may not say no. The student could request a friend to go with him or her if desired. School staff are responsible to monitor that students use the mediation process appropriately.

Participation in mediation is NOT a replacement for discipline. Mediation is a tool for making plans for avoiding the issue in the future. At school, when a behavior violates a rule, the consequence for breaking a rule happens. Requesting mediation is in addition to a consequence, not instead of a consequence. Often it is helpful to participate in mediation before giving out consequences. It is a process that helps the adult discern what really happens and what type of consequence may be appropriate.

Group Gatherings

Group gatherings are meetings of larger groups, usually a whole classroom, to address issues of concern to the entire group. A facilitator keeps the process on track while students share their insights into the problem and suggestions for solutions, all without using names. Group gatherings serve to resolve issues, to build a sense of community, and to develop a sense of personal and group responsibility.

Opportunities for group problem solving will be incorporated into morning meetings some time throughout the week at each grade level.

Modeling

When children see adults in their community using conflict resolution, they are learning not only how to use the program, but also that the whole community values the process and benefits from it. Adults set important examples for the students through modeling appropriate non-violent conflict resolution.

Alcohol and other Drugs

TCGIS prohibits the consumption of alcohol and the use of drugs on school property and during activities sponsored by the school. For prescription medication use, please refer to our medication policy.

Dress

1. At TCGIS we want to respect the child's individuality while at the same time having common standards for appropriate attire. We acknowledge that each family has their own ideas, opinions, and values regarding dress, and their input on this subject is welcome. Because TCGIS is implementing a respectful atmosphere that values tolerance and diversity, we ask that all attire be free from reference to violence (including weapons), harmful substances (including alcohol, drugs and tobacco), harassment, foul language and discrimination (gender, racial, religious etc.)
2. TCGIS will open with the expectation that children will come to school appropriately dressed for learning and play. Clean, neat and simple should be the guiding principles in selecting your child's clothing. We recommend clothing that is easy to wash, easy for children to put on themselves, comfortable both in the classroom and at recess, and appropriate to the season. We ask parents to pay particular attention to fads and fashions that may be popular, but are not appropriate for school.
3. Please help your child to be dressed according to the weather conditions. Outdoor time is part of the daily routine and will take place unless it is dangerously stormy or the temperature is well below zero. All outdoor wear needs to be labeled on the inside of the item.
4. It is advisable that children keep a change of clothes in their locker, just in case. Please label these clothing items with your child's name. These items should be rotated periodically to ensure that they are appropriate for current weather conditions.
5. Shoes in school are required by law and prevent injury. Parents may be called to bring shoes or slippers if their child comes to school without them. They will wear boots until the shoes arrive, if available.
6. Each child is required to keep a pair of indoor shoes at school for classroom use. Children also need a pair of shoes with good ankle support and laced or with Velcro closure for PE. If desired, the same pair of shoes can be used for both. All children should come to school wearing shoes that are safe for running and climbing and should not fall off during activity (laced or Velcro closure). Occasionally gym is held outside. The child cannot use shoes used as indoor shoes for gym outside. The street shoes worn to school in that case but be able to be used for rigorous physical activity.

Internet Policy

Students have access to the Internet. The Internet is a global information system with great educational potential. The use of the internet is a privilege. Students will be taught appropriate use of the Internet and/or email. Information on the Internet changes rapidly. It is the school's responsibility to teach students the skills to be responsible users of the Internet and adopt guidelines for student use of the Internet. The school will strive to control the Internet environment to provide access to the most appropriate educational sites and materials for students and staff. To protect the due process rights of students, the guidelines below define appropriate educational and ethical uses of the internet at School, identify individual student responsibilities, and outline the responsibilities of the school in carrying out these guidelines. **You will be sent an internet use permission form that needs to be filled out and returned to the school. Your child will not be able to use the internet until this form is returned.**

As a user of the Internet and the School Computer Network I will:

1. Be polite.

2. Use appropriate language. That means, do not swear, or use bad language.
3. Use Internet sites that are connected to what I am studying in class or that a teacher has ok'd for my use.
4. Respect school rules and behavior standards.
5. Use the computer network in a manner that does not violate any law, regulations or copyright.
6. Accurately represent myself. That means I will use only my own name, not someone else's and never use my whole name or give my address or telephone number.
7. Send e-mail only with my teacher's permission.
8. Remember that e-mail is not private. That means my teacher or other people who operate the network can read it.
9. Respect the privacy of others. That means I will not use someone else's password or open or change anyone else's files.
10. Respect computer equipment and the use of the network and share computer resources and time with other students.
11. We may not make purchases on the internet, unless authorized by a teacher.

Staff responsibilities:

1. Teach students the appropriate and ethical use of the Internet and email.
2. Help students understand the guidelines.
3. Help students locate appropriate sites for school use.
4. Monitor student use of the Internet and help them back out of inappropriate sites.
5. Not post any student work to the Internet without parent/guardian permission. If permission is granted, items will be considered fair use and available to the public.
6. Limit access to the Internet or the School Computer Network if the student does not follow these guidelines.

Grievance Procedure

1. The board of directors and administration of TCGIS has confidence in its professional staff. We also welcome constructive criticism whenever it is motivated by a sincere desire to improve the quality of the educational or management program of our school.
2. Any person having a disagreement with a teacher or another member of the school staff should make an appointment to speak with that person and attempt to settle the problem without involving others. Should it not be settled satisfactorily, the two parties should go to that person's direct supervisor to arbitrate the difficulty. If necessary, the matter may also be taken up with the Board. It is the goal of TCGIS to respond to complaints and problems as soon as possible.

Harassment

TCGIS is committed to peaceful and respectful interactions between all people. Harassment of any kind within the community will not be tolerated.

Anti-bullying Policy Twin Cities German Immersion School

Passed by Twin Cities German Immersion School Board November 23, 2010

1. Prohibition against Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment are prohibited at Twin Cities German Immersion School

2. Definition of Bullying

Bullying means written, verbal or physical conduct that adversely affects the ability of one or more students to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities by placing the student (or students) in reasonable fear of physical and/or emotional harm. This includes conduct that is based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion or any other distinguishing characteristics that may be defined by the state or local educational agency. This also includes association with a person or group with one or more of the abovementioned characteristics, whether actual or perceived.

3. Definition of Harassment

Harassment means written, verbal or physical conduct that adversely affects the ability of one or more students to participate in or benefit from the school's educational programs or activities because the conduct is so severe, persistent or pervasive. This includes conduct that is based on a student's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, or any other distinguishing characteristics that may be defined by the state or local educational agency. This also includes association with a person or group with one or more of the above mentioned characteristics, whether actual or perceived.

4. Scope

This policy covers conduct that takes place in the school, on school property, at school-sponsored functions and activities, or while in transit organized as part of a school sponsored activity. This policy also pertains to usage of electronic technology and electronic communication that occurs in the school, on school property, at school-sponsored functions and activities, and on school computers, networks, forums, and mailing lists or is targeted toward a Twin Cities German Immersion student by another member of the school community in ways that impact that student's sense of safety within the school environment.

5. Notice

This policy will be distributed annually to students, staff and parents and leaders of afterschool activities and will also be included in any student codes of conduct, disciplinary policies, student handbooks, and school websites.

6. Reporting Bullying and Harassment

All allegations of bullying or harassment shall be reported to the director or a designated staff member. The principal or designated staff member shall keep a written or electronic record of complaints and shall notify the parents of all students involved. Whoever is designated to accept complaints will also be responsible for investigating the allegation in a timely manner and taking an appropriate course of action. The principal or designated staff member will be held accountable for doing everything possible, within reason, to resolve the situation. Students, staff, parents, volunteers and all members of the community may file reports.

7. Anonymous Reports

Reports may be filed anonymously. However, disciplinary action cannot be taken solely based on an anonymous report. Anonymous reports will be investigated with the same procedure, timeliness and vigor as other reports and disciplinary action can occur based on the results of the investigation.

8. False Reports

Students who intentionally file false reports of bullying and/or harassment will be subject to discipline.

10. Responsibility of Students

Any student who observes an act of bullying or harassment should report the bullying or harassment to school authorities.

11. Responsibility of Staff

All staff members will take reasonable measures to prevent bullying and harassment and are obligated to report any such acts that come to their attention.

12. Retaliation

Retaliation or threats of retaliation meant to intimidate the victim of bullying or harassment or toward those investigating the incident will not be tolerated. If threats or actual retaliation occurs, consequences may include, but is not limited to: warnings; loss of classroom or school privileges such as full participation in recess; free choice or specific activities; community service; in-school suspension or short term suspension. Referral to the police will occur when appropriate.

13. Investigation of Bullying and Harassment

Once reported, any allegation of bullying or harassment will be promptly investigated by the director or a designated staff member. Proper disciplinary action will be taken immediately following the conclusion of the investigation.

14. Conflict Resolution

If possible, supervised conflict resolution between the students involved may be attempted. Conflict resolution is a mechanism for those targeted by harassment or bullying to be supported in communicating directly their request to stop to the perpetrator. Measures shall be taken to limit the exposure of the target to further bullying and harassment and conflict resolution will be closely monitored to avoid being used by the aggressor as another forum of intimidation. Conflict resolution supplements, but does not replace disciplinary action. Parents will be notified of conflict resolution.

15. Disciplinary Sanctions

Disciplinary actions for bullying or harassment may include, but is not limited to: warnings; loss of classroom or school privileges such as full participation in recess, free choice or specific activities; community service, in-school suspension or short term suspension. Referral to the police will occur when appropriate.

16. Training and Prevention

Students and staff will be given instruction on how to prevent bullying and harassment. This will also include instruction on the process for filing complaints and the process/consequences that will result.

School Support

Fundraising

All fundraising done by parents, students or staff at school should be done with prior approval by the director. Guidelines for what will be approved are: school related events, topics directly related to a class project or theme of study, or support of groups in which our community members are members. The community member(s) involved need to clearly label all fundraising materials with their name.

Grant Writing

Grant writing has been and will continue to be a significant source of additional funding for Twin Cities German Immersion School. We encourage parents to investigate foundations and granting institutions with which they may be affiliated through work or family. We welcome any opportunity to explore additional grants for which we might be eligible.

Parent Teacher Organization

The PTO streamlines some of the many volunteer activities at TCGIS, to better coordinate fundraising efforts, and to provide new ways for parents to engage as our school grows from year to year. The PTO meets monthly and is open to all teachers and parents/guardians of students at TCGIS. Just attend a meeting and sign the roster and you will be considered a member. The PTO formally organized as a Minnesota nonprofit corporation in March 2009. For more information, go to www.tcgispto.org.

Volunteer Work

1. Volunteers are an essential part of the life of TCGIS. Due to the independent structure of TCGIS, board members, faculty and families share the tasks and joys that comprise the ongoing functions of the school. TCGIS asks all families to consider how they might offer their gifts to our community.
2. Parent involvement is a personally rewarding experience, allows the opportunity to participate in the education of our children, and solidifies our connections as a community. It has been shown that parental involvement enhances student success. Whether you prefer working with children or adults, in large or small groups, or independently, there is a place for you.
3. If volunteers would like to work in the classroom, we will provide training and language support to make it a meaningful experience for you. Classroom volunteers must speak German; teachers may make exceptions on a case by case basis. There are also many opportunities for volunteer support of the school outside of the classroom. This experience will add to your children's educational experience and will reinforce to your children your personal commitment to their education.
4. There is currently no minimum number of volunteer hours a family is expected to contribute. Please contact the office for more information.

Volunteer Guidelines

When volunteering at the school we ask that you keep a few things in mind and follow these guidelines, especially when you are interacting directly with students. These guidelines are in place to protect our students, staff, and you as a volunteer.

Confidentiality

A volunteer should never discuss a student, his/her school work, test scores, report cards, behavior, or other private information with anyone other than the classroom teacher or school director.

A volunteer is a member of a professional team and is expected to maintain confidentiality while working in the school. Depending on your assignment as a volunteer you may come in contact with data or information on students that is classified as private under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The release of a student's private information can subject the school to liability, and if the release of information is intentional, constitutes a misdemeanor.

Discipline

Students and staff are expected to treat volunteers with courtesy and respect. Discipline of students is solely the responsibility of the teacher or staff member in charge. Volunteers should maintain order in their group or activity, but all discipline should be left to school employees. If you encounter disrespectful or disruptive behavior by a student, please inform the teacher who will then determine the necessary course of action. If you experience a conflict with a staff member we encourage you to try and resolve the conflict by speaking directly to the individual before contacting a supervising staff member.

Interaction with students

Familiarize yourself with the rules and procedures of the learning environment you are assigned to. Be positive and supportive of students and their activities. Feel free to help a student. However, we encourage students to develop independent working skills. Students learn by experimenting, and it is important to encourage them to try. Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism, competition, or comparison.

Respect for the learning environment

At TCGIS, we strive maintain an environment of trust, open communication and mutual respect. Please follow the instructions provided by the teacher or staff member and provide a status update of your completed activities.

Please do not publicly question or criticize the teacher or staff member on decisions made or methods used. If you have questions about policies, procedures or programs, privately ask the teacher, staff member or school director about them.

Make the best of your volunteer experience. It is not a good time for an informal parent/teacher conference. If you want to learn more about your child's progress please make arrangements for a separate meeting with the teacher.

In order to provide an optimum environment for learning, cell phones must be turned off or on silent mode, while in or near the classrooms or library. Please conduct all cell phone conversations away from areas of learning.

As TCGIS is a German language immersion school, please speak German if you are able while interacting directly with students.

Our school community supports diversity and multicultural backgrounds. Being part of a diverse community means to respect each other's differences, values, interests and opinions and to strive to learn from each other.

Abuse

By law, you are required to report any suspected abuse. As you build trust with students, you may become aware of situations that may include abuse of a child. This abuse might be physical, verbal or emotional. You can report such suspicions to the teacher or the school director. Child Protection allows you to call anonymously and helps you discern whether an incident is reportable.

Administrative procedures

Volunteers, as well as all visitors, are required to enter from the school lobby and sign into the volunteer/visitor log and to wear a volunteer badge. Don't forget to sign out again when you leave. It is beneficial for the school to track volunteer hours. Please make sure you sign a copy of the Volunteer Code of Conduct and return it to the office staff before your first assignment. This also applies to volunteers working off the premises, for example at home.

Safety Procedures

All volunteers are required to be familiar with school safety procedures and follow school emergency guidelines during emergency drills. Volunteers should report emergencies or dangerous situations immediately to a staff member. In the case of a medical emergency, a volunteer should call 911. As a volunteer you may witness emergency situations that occur on school grounds in which you are not immediately involved in. To protect the privacy of the student and to give paramedics room to do their job, please leave that area unless you are being asked to help.

If you are sick or if your child has been recently sick, please take the time to stay home and get well. As much as the school appreciates your volunteerism, the health and safety of our students and school community are a priority.

Visiting the School

1. Parents and visitors are always welcome at the school. (To enable our teaching staff to establish appropriate classroom management procedures, we discourage visitors in the classroom during the month of September.) If a parent would like to observe in the classroom, please check with the teacher in order to find the time of day that would be most appropriate. Since students and teachers will be busy during school time, please make an appointment if you need to have a private conversation with a teacher.
2. In order to limit disruption to the learning environment, we ask that other visitors call and schedule classroom visits. Prospective parents, community members and neighbors are welcome, and Twin Cities German Immersion School will make every effort to accommodate interest in our program.
3. ***Twin Cities German Immersion School is a welcoming community that values the safety of the children and adults in the building. All visitors, including parents and regular volunteers, must check in at the office upon arrival and, sign in the visitor's log.***

Your adherence to these policies and procedures help to make TCGIS a safe and healthy learning environment for our students. Thank you.