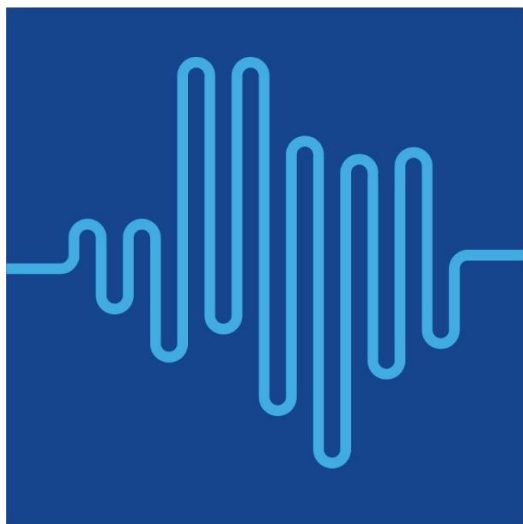


# Melinda Webb School Parent Handbook 2023 – 2024



TEXAS  
HEARING  
INSTITUTE

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## **THI VISION**

Every child with hearing loss reaches their full potential.

## **THI MISSION**

Our mission is to identify childhood hearing loss as early as possible and provide families access to integrated medical, educational and support services by understanding each child's uniqueness and empowering them to achieve their best outcome.

## **THI CORE VALUES**

- Teamwork
- Excellence
- Innovation

*Texas Hearing Institute does not discriminate in admissions or educational programs against any individual on the basis of sex, race, color, national or ethnic origin, or religion.*

## **THI HISTORY**

The Houston School for Deaf Children was founded in 1947 by four parents who were looking for a place where their children could be taught to speak. Together they found a teacher, Mrs. Lucille Turner, who had been trained to be an oral teacher of the deaf. The school was founded and was soon adopted by service clubs, foundations and other community groups. The school moved into its first permanent home in a reconditioned house in 1949. This facility was useful for only a limited number of children. In 1973 H.S.D.C. moved into the building that once housed The Center for Hearing and Speech. Today we are housed in a state-of-the-art new building in the Texas Medical Center. After thoughtful consideration for the future of our organization, we have changed our name to Texas Hearing Institute. Since the enrollment of the first four children in 1947, the goal has been the development of listening and spoken language skills.

## **THE MELINDA WEBB SCHOOL**

In 1997 the education program was named the Melinda Webb School in memory of the first mainstream student who died in childhood. Mr. Webb attributed Melinda's success to the then Houston School for Deaf Children and he pledged generous support to the school now named for his daughter.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES**

All students are recommended for the school by an interdepartmental team who reviews each child's speech, language, audiologic, and developmental skills. We are committed to determining the most appropriate educational placement for each child with hearing loss. Classroom placement is based on your child's age and ability level. If in the future the Melinda Webb School is no longer the most appropriate placement for your child, we will assist you in the transition process in order to find a more

appropriate educational setting. After transition, your child may still receive THI Speech, Audiology, and Educational Liaison services.

### **WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES**

If you choose to withdraw your child from the Melinda Webb School before it is recommended by the educational team, you must complete the Student Withdrawal Form. This form can be obtained from the MWS Coordinator or MWS Secretary. The Melinda Webb School requires 30 days' notice to process student withdrawals. Tuition during that 30-day period will continue to be charged and will not be prorated. If you have questions regarding this policy, and transition assistance available in situations like this, please contact the Director of Education.

### **TUITION POLICIES**

Tuition is collected on a monthly basis for ten months of the year, August through May. All monthly payments are due in advance on the first day of each month. Individualized payment plans can be arranged with the Director of Education upon request.

Students in the Early Learning Program and Summer Program will be billed tuition weekly on Mondays, if requested by parents.

If tuition for the year is paid in full, a 3% discount will be deducted from the total tuition amount. If a student withdraws from MWS with 30-days' notice, but have paid the year in advance, the remainder of the tuition will be refunded minus the 3% discount.

The discount for siblings is 5% off the lowest single tuition cost.

### **Late Tuition Fees**

#### **Early Learning Program (ELP):**

Tuition is billed weekly on Mondays, if requested by the parent. An initial late fee of \$25 will be added to tuition after Wednesday of each week. An additional \$5 per day late fee will be added each day tuition remains unpaid.

#### **Melinda Webb School:**

All monthly payments are due in advance on the first day of each month. If tuition is not paid in full by the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the month, an initial late fee of \$20 will be charged and an additional \$10 fee for each week tuition goes unpaid.

#### **Financial Probation:**

All late tuition and fees must be reconciled by the last day of the month, or the student will be put on probation for the following month. If tuition and fees go unpaid for two consecutive months, the student is at risk of being dismissed from the school.

Individualized payment plans can be arranged with the Director of Education upon request.

## **REASONS FOR DISMISSAL- SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION**

A child may be dismissed or suspended from the program when the student or family:

Does not maintain an acceptable attendance record

Is older than six years by September 1<sup>st</sup>

Has a primary disability other than hearing loss

Does not demonstrate acceptable progress in the areas of speech, language, and/or audition

Fails to conform to a behavior plan, especially when the student's behavior impacts other children

Does not fulfill the tuition contract

Failure to pay tuition and fees

Suspension and expulsion terms are determined by the Director of Education.

## **HOURS, DAYS AND MONTHS OF OPERATION**

The Melinda Webb School operates on a school year calendar. MWS is open August – June and closed the month of July. Full-day MWS students attend school Monday-Friday, unless otherwise noted on the annual THI calendar. LEAP students attend school two days a week Tuesday and Thursday from 8-12 unless otherwise noted on the annual THI calendar.

Morning Care Hours: 7:00-8:00 am

Toddler Hours: 8:00 am-2:45 pm

LEAP Hours: 8:00 am-12:00 pm

Preschool and Kindergarten Hours: 8:00 am-3:05 pm

Aftercare Hours: 3:00-6:00 pm

## **SCHOOL ARRIVAL**

School arrival for MWS students is between 8:00-8:20. Parents and caregivers drop off children between 8:00-8:20am on the west side of the building under the covered walkway. To get to the drop off line, parents will pull into the back gate of THI from Shenandoah St. and drive behind THI in the right-hand lane, then turn left on the west side of the building where you will see the covered walkway to the drop-off area. We ask that you do not block THI staff parking entrances located in the back of the building next to the playground. Car seats and booster seats must be installed on the right side of the vehicle. Teachers assist with student arrival by unbuckling students and removing them from vehicles.

Parents must stay in the driver's seat during drop off and have the child's backpack and required backup equipment in hand upon arrival. Parents will hand the student belongings directly to the designated MWS staff member. The designated MWS staff member will check your child in using the Brightwheel

app. Parents will receive an immediate Brightwheel notification after check-in.

Parents will be asked to loop around the school building and rejoin the drop off line during the following situations:

- Student is not wearing all of the required amplification
- Backpack is not ready upon arrival
- Backup equipment is not in the driver's hand upon arrival
- Car seat or booster seat is not installed on the right side of the car

Parents will be asked to drive around the school building and check in at the front office during the following situations:

- Missing or broken backup equipment
- Missing or broken amplification
- Arrival to the drop off zone after 8:20am

Your child needs to arrive wearing his/her amplification in working order. The Audiology Department will be checking devices and troubleshooting equipment concerns as they arise. We start our day with a comprehensive amplification check.

Children enrolled in the morning care program may park in the designated drop off spots and walk their child to the side door under the covered walkway and be "buzzed in" anytime between 7:00-8:00 am. Parents must accompany their child to room 620 where extended daycare is located. Parents are responsible for checking their child in using the Brightwheel app with the QR code at room 620.

**Full-day students are not permitted to arrive after 10:00am without a signed doctor's note or prior approval from the Director of Education or Assistant Director of Education. LEAP students are not permitted to arrive after 9:30am.**

### **SCHOOL DISMISSAL- PROCEDURES FOR THE RELEASE OF CHILDREN**

School dismissal varies for each grade level. LEAP dismissal is from 12:00 – 12:15, Toddler dismissal is from 2:45 – 3:00, and Preschool/Kindergarten Dismissal is from 3:05 – 3:20. Parents and caregivers will pick up students on the west side of the building, using the same route explained in drop off procedures. A teacher will direct you to park in zones 1, 2, or 3.

Parents and caregivers will place vehicles in park and exit the vehicle when directed by MWS staff. Classroom teachers will walk students outside to meet the authorized pickup person. The parent or caregiver picking up a student must be listed on the child's authorized pick up form and must have a Brightwheel code. The parent or caregiver will enter their code to check the student out of school. The parent or caregiver is responsible for buckling the child before departing.

Children not picked up by the end of their dismissal time will be taken to the extended day program and parents will be charged \$2.00 per minute, with a minimum late fee of \$10.00, payable within 48 hours. Charges begin at 12:16 for LEAP students, 3:01 PM for Toddler students, and 3:21 PM for Preschool and Kindergarten students. Parents will be asked to sign a late pick up notice.

Toddler parents who arrive between 3:00-3:20, can proceed through the pick-up line to pick up their child.

After 3:20, all parents can park in the front of the building and go to the school lobby for late pickup. The front desk staff will call the extended day teachers to let them know that a student needs to be picked up.

The Melinda Webb School does not offer drop-in extended daycare. If your child is picked up late on a regular basis, it will result in a meeting with the Director of Education.

If someone other than you will be picking up your child, you must provide prior notice to MWS. You must provide the MWS Secretary with a photo I.D. of the individual(s) who will be picking up your child and this individual must be listed on your child's pick-up authorization form. This includes parents of other Melinda Webb School students. Children cannot be released to unauthorized adults.

### **EARLY PICK-UP**

If it is necessary to pick up your child before the regular dismissal time, parents are required to send a message through Brightwheel in the morning so your teacher may prepare for this early dismissal. The authorized pick-up caregiver should park in the front of the building and enter in the MWS lobby. Caregivers should notify the MWS Secretary or MWS Coordinator and wait in the front lobby for a staff member to bring the child to the lobby area.

### **TARDIES**

If your child arrived after 8:20, your child is tardy. It is imperative that your child arrives on time in order to maximize the teaching and learning time. The MWS Secretary works tardy duty from 8:20-9:00 in the school lobby daily. If you arrive after 8:20, you will need to park in the front of the building and enter the main front lobby entrance. The MWS Secretary will check in your child and escort the student back to class.

Three tardies will be recorded as one absence on your child's attendance record. Excessive tardiness will result in a meeting with the Director of Education. Chronic tardiness will result in a conference with the Director of Education to determine whether the child may remain in the Melinda Webb School.

### **ABSENCES**

Regularly attending school is very important for your child to learn. Your child should stay home only when sick. Parents must call the school or email their child's teacher and the Director of Education if their child will be absent. Please send a doctor's note when your child returns to school. If we do not receive a note within 3 days, it will be considered an unexcused absence. Please schedule routine medical and dental appointments for your child in the afternoon hours if possible. Doing so will minimize the time lost from core instruction.

**Students must maintain an acceptable attendance record of 80% or greater. Excessive absences will result in a meeting with the Director of Education.** Chronic absences will result in a conference with the Executive Director and Director of Education to determine whether the child may remain in the Melinda Webb School.



### **EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM**

To the extent that MWS has adequate personnel, children enrolled in the full-day Melinda Webb School program may enroll in the extended day program. This service is provided only on days school is in session. Extended day hours are from 7:00-8:00 a.m. and from 3:00-6:00 p.m. A snack time is scheduled for 4:00 p.m. Please send a nutritious snack for your child. Your child will also participate in outdoor play, weather permitting.

It is important that parents respect extended day hours and pick up students by 6:00 p.m. There is a charge of \$2.00 per minute for children picked up after 6:00 p.m. with a minimum late fee of \$10.00. Payment is due within 48 hours. The time is determined by the school clock in the childcare area.

### **AMPLIFICATION POLICY**

In keeping with the mission of Texas Hearing Institute, it is required that all students with hearing loss use recommended amplification during all waking hours.

To ensure that all students have the best listening environment, they must arrive at MWS with properly functioning equipment and wearing ALL recommended amplification (cochlear implants, hearing aids, and/or FM).

This amplification policy will be strictly enforced. Failure to comply with the amplification policy will result in the following actions:

If a student arrives without wearing amplification, the parents will be asked to put all recommended devices on their child before the student is taken to class.

If a student arrives with dead batteries, the parent must replace the batteries with their own supply prior to going to class.

If the student arrives without amplification, the parents need to bring amplification to MWS before the child will be allowed to go to class. Exceptions will be determined by the MWS audiologist.

If the student arrives with their amplification and experiences a problem with his/her equipment that cannot be fixed, or in the situation where a loaner device is not available, the parent will be contacted and asked to return to MWS to pick up their child.

### **REQUIRED BACK- UP EQUIPMENT**

You will be provided a list of your child's required back-up equipment at the MWS Orientation.

You are responsible for bringing the required back-up amplification equipment every day to school. If back-up equipment is not provided, your child **will not** be able to attend school.

There is a “three strikes” policy with coming to school without backup equipment.

- **First time** – Parents may leave their child at school for that day without backups
- **Second time** – Parents may leave their child at school while they go retrieve their backups. Parents must be back before the tardy deadline of 10:00 am for full-day students and 9:30 for LEAP students.
- **Third time** – Parents must take their child back home with them to retrieve their backups. Parents must be back with their child before the tardy deadline of 10:00 am for full-day students and 9:30 for LEAP students.

Having this back-up equipment on hand will help ensure that your child is “back on the air” as soon as possible should there be any problems with his/her equipment.

The back-up equipment must go home with your child at the end of every school day. MWS is not responsible for back-up equipment left at school overnight. Furthermore, your child needs to be “back on the air” as soon as possible no matter where he/she is.

Below is a general list of required equipment for Melinda Webb School students. Your child will receive an individualized list at the MWS orientation.

All children enrolled in toddler classes are required to utilize an amplification retention device (e.g. otoclips, Hearing Henry Bands, etc.).

Children with hearing aids or bone conduction aids:

- Two packs of batteries per hearing aid

Children with cochlear implants:

- A back-up speech processor for each implanted ear, clearly labeled as right/left Back-up cable per ear
- Back-up coil per ear
- Back-up power supply
- Charged, rechargeable battery per ear OR two packs of cochlear implant batteries and back-up battery rack per ear

### **BROKEN EQUIPMENT POLICY**

When a piece of equipment breaks, a hot pink form will be sent home with the broken pieces attached.

As soon as the hot pink form is sent home, you will have one week to obtain a replacement piece. This means you must call the cochlear implant company immediately regarding broken equipment. (For example, if a cable breaks on Monday, you have until next Monday to get the replacement.)

If your child does not have repaired equipment by the following week, they will not be permitted to attend school until the equipment is obtained.

If the equipment is not under warranty or if there are other extenuating circumstances, please inform the Melinda Webb School Audiology Coordinator.

### **OTHER PERSONAL EQUIPMENT (including Roger system, Bluetooth streaming devices, etc.)**

If you would like your child to use a Roger system or streaming device, you must inform the Melinda Webb School Audiology Coordinator.

Before your child can use these devices at school, you will be asked to sign a contract confirming that you are choosing to have your child use this equipment at school and you understand that MWS is not responsible for loss or damage of this equipment.

This equipment will need to come to school each day and go home each day.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the equipment is dropped off and picked up on a daily basis. Lost or misplaced equipment must be reported immediately to the Melinda Webb School Audiology Coordinator.

In the event equipment was lost at school and documented missing at pick up, THI will perform a thorough search of the premises.

### **DAILY AMPLIFICATION CHECKS**

Each student will have his/her amplification checked by the teacher/therapist/audiologist. If a problem is found, the equipment will be sent to the Audiology Department for further inspection. If the amplification cannot be repaired, a loaner device (if available) will be issued as soon as possible for the remainder of the school day. Loaner parts may go home with the student on a case-by-case basis.

Please see the above "Broken Equipment Policy"

If a battery is dead and the student does not have any back-up batteries available, a new battery will be issued and the parent will be charged. Minor adjustments/repairs can often be taken care of on-site so that no student is without appropriate amplification. If the repair involves a charge, parents will receive a phone call stating the nature of the repair and the amount due.

*The audiology staff will contact parents before making any repairs that cost more than \$10.00.*

### **ANNUAL CHILDCARE LICENSING INSPECTION REPORT**

The childcare licensing inspection report is displayed in the front office. Parents may request to review this report at any time. A copy of the Texas Childcare Minimum Standards can be found at <https://hhs.texas.gov/>.

Parents can contact the local Child Care Licensing Office at 713-767-2465

## **PARENT PARTICIPATION, COMMUNICATION, AND NOTIFICATION**

Parent participation and communication are integral components of the education program. Each family enters into an agreement with service providers to meet and observe on a regular basis. Attending these meetings and observations is a requirement for continued school enrollment. Parents are kept informed of children's progress through daily or weekly classroom reports, progress reports and three parent conferences. Other opportunities for parent involvement include participation in THI's parent support groups and the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). It is the expectation that parents and caregivers will support THI's policies and mission. If there are concerns about this, they should be discussed with the Executive Director.

Parents are welcome to attend school-wide PTO-organized events throughout the year. Please refer to the special events calendar for these important dates. If a parent is interested in volunteering in the school, you may contact the Director of Education or Assistant Director of Education.

Parents will be kept informed through daily messages home from teachers, emails and/or calls from administrators, newsletters, and school-wide Brightwheel announcements.

Parents may visit MWS at any time during the hours of operation to observe their child, the school's program activities, the building, the premises, and the equipment with prior approval from the Director of Education or Assistant Director of Education. Due to HIPPA compliance, unannounced observations are prohibited.

## **DAILY NEEDS**

Please see that each child has the following:

- Lunch, snack, drinks, water
- Extra clothes, including shoes
- Backpack (we recommend backpacks with wheels that are large enough to fit a three-ring binder)
- Small blanket and pillow for child who have a daily rest time

## **CLOTHING AND PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Children should wear simple, washable, safe, sturdy, comfortable clothing which fits properly. We use paint smocks when working with paint, but occasionally a child will get paint on his/her clothes. Children should wear shoes other than cowboy boots. All shoes must be of a style that keeps the child's feet enclosed (no flip flops or slide on shoes). Rubber-soled shoes are deemed most appropriate and beneficial for young children. All personal belongings must be labeled with your child's name.

## **JOURNEY PROGRAM AND SCHOOL TRANSITION**

The Melinda Webb School offers a transition program called *Journey: A Bridge between School Environments* for all students planning to enter another private or public academic program within the next year. Journey prepares and supports the children, parents and new school. Please contact the Director of Education to initiate the transition process. Transition staffings are held in the Fall and transition recommendations for the following school year are shared in the Fall. The new school enrollment process can take over 6 months, so it is crucial to start the process early in order to ensure a smooth transition.

### **MEALS- LUNCH AND SNACK**

MWS does not prepare or serve food. The Melinda Webb School does not have cafeteria facilities or available microwave ovens to warm food sent from home.

Parents are required to provide daily meals and snacks for their child. Snacks and meals provided by parents include:

- Morning snack (if enrolled in Rise and Shine)
- Drink
- Healthy Snack
- Lunch (complete and prepared)
- Afternoon snack (if enrolled in Later Gators)

In order for children to be at their best, a nutritious diet is essential. Healthy lunch and snack ideas can be found at [www.superhealthykids.com](http://www.superhealthykids.com) and [www.myplate.gov](http://www.myplate.gov). Sodas, carbonated drinks, and large candy bars are not allowed and should not be sent for snacks or lunches.

### **OUTDOOR PLAY**

The children will play outside daily and should be dressed according to the weather. Teachers and/or teacher assistants supervise outdoor play. If there is any reason for your child to not participate in daily activity outside, please contact the Director of Education.

### **DAILY REST**

A rest time is provided for Toddler children and Preschool students under four each day. We know that a quiet time to rest or nap is essential to the well-being of many young children. We follow the guidelines of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and provide daily rest time for all required students.

### **TRANSPORTATION**

The Melinda Webb School is unable to provide transportation for students. Parents are encouraged to form carpools among themselves if desired.

Transportation may not be available for all school field trips. If a school bus is provided, all children under four must be restrained in a portable child restraint seat. These seats are provided by the school and installed by the bus company. This will be indicated on your child's permission form.

### **GANG FREE ZONE**

Gang Free Zone Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a childcare center is a gang free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty. Melinda Webb School is a GANG FREE ZONE.

### **PROCEDURES FOR DISPENSING MEDICATION**

All MWS staff members complete annual medication administration training.

Medication must be signed in at the front desk by a parent. Please do not send any medication in your child's backpack. If your child requires medication administration during the school day, you must provide information regarding the amount and the frequency of administration. Medication should be in the original container with the child's name clearly written on the container. We will not be able to dispense medication if it is not signed in properly. Medications include:

Prescription medications

Over-the-counter medications, vitamins, and supplements

Insect repellent and sunscreen

Diaper rash cream or powder

Medicated lotions and lip balms

### **SCHOOL PARTIES AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

We want to recognize each child's birthday. You may bring already prepared snacks and/or simple refreshments on your child's birthday (no gifts). Birthday celebrations include only your child and his/her classmates. The use of photography is not permitted at birthday parties. Items sent for celebrations should be provided in your plans (decorations, hats, etc.). Birthdays are celebrated at snack or lunch time.

We are fortunate to have many other special events and parties throughout the school year. Photography is permitted only at events when all parents can be present. This includes graduation, and PTO sponsored parties.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Field trips may be planned to reinforce the concepts being introduced in the classroom. All children must have a signed permission form to attend each trip. Parents may be asked to accompany classes on field trips. A field trip is an educational experience, and teachers have goals that they must accomplish with the students. Parents should support the teacher concerning behavior management of their child. Under no circumstances should a student and his/her parent change the activity during the field trip or leave the group to do additional activities.

### **THE LIBRARY**

Melinda Webb School students and their parents are encouraged to use the library. Children's books

comprise the largest section. A professional section consists primarily of technical books. The family section includes books and videos on parenting. All MWS students visit the library weekly for story time. Kindergarten students may choose from a selection of books to borrow for one week.

Fines are not charged for overdue books. However, parents will be charged a book replacement fee for lost or damaged books (based on individual cost of the book).

### **SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

In the event of weather-related or other emergency closings, parents should monitor television stations. Parents will be notified via Brightwheel notifications in the event of a school closing due to weather or other emergency closings.

### **VISITOR PROCEDURES**

In order to protect the privacy of each child's programs and records, including information provided by parents, and to conform to HIPAA regulations, access to therapy rooms, observation booths, classrooms and office areas is limited to staff members or persons accompanied by staff members. For this reason, all parents, volunteers and visitors must sign in with the receptionist at the Front Desk. The receptionist will notify the appropriate staff member who will meet the parent/volunteer/visitor in the lobby. Parents, volunteers and visitors should wait in the lobby until they have been met by the staff member. The use of cameras or any recording device is prohibited in observation booths.

Safety is also a concern. Families need to be aware that the office areas of the building are not child-proofed; there are many objects in these areas that could harm a child. Children are expected to remain in the lobby with their parents/guardians until a staff member has come to get them. Children must never be left unsupervised in any area of the building. Children should not go beyond the lobby unless they are accompanied by a staff member.

Parents/guardians are responsible for each of their children whenever they are on the premises of THI and the children are not in the direct charge of a staff member.

### **BITING, HITTING AND KICKING**

Sometimes young children may bite, hit or kick as a way of expressing frustration. This behavior usually diminishes or disappears as communication skills improve. THI follows a progressive behavioral improvement plan in cases of these behavioral issues.

### **BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

Children participate in a behavior management program. The goal is to establish appropriate school behavior and to limit time taken away from instruction. Teachers use positive language to reward good behavior and provide reminders of classroom expectations. Behavior management strategies include such as emphasizing, redirecting the child, using verbal and tangible positive reinforcement, planning for transitions, providing choices and consequences, and using "time out".

Subchapter L of the Texas Child Care Minimum Standards states:

*Discipline must be:*

- (1) Individualized and consistent for each child*
- (2) Appropriate to the child's level of understanding*
- (3) Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control*
- (4) A positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, including the following:*
  - (A) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior*
  - (B) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements*
  - (C) Redirecting behavior using positive statements*
  - (D) Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.*

If your child harms another student, your teacher will inform you of your child's behavior and an incident report will be sent home with any injured children. A student will automatically be sent home if he/she uses physical aggression with the intent to cause harm or injury to another person or damages property.

If a child struggles to adjust to the behavior expectations of the Melinda Webb School, an individual behavior intervention plan may be written. This plan is written by an interdepartmental team and shared with the family. Parents and caregivers are expected to adhere to the behavior intervention plan to ensure continued enrollment of their child in MWS. Failure to comply may be grounds for expulsion.

### **INJURIES**

Minor accidents/illnesses are those not requiring immediate medical care, although the student may need adult assistance. If a child should sustain a minor injury, it will be treated and an Incident Report Form will be sent home. Parents will be notified if the injury is such that it may leave a mark, with the exception of abrasions such as skinned knees with no active bleeding. Parents will be informed of human bites and any head injuries including cases of two children bumping heads.

### **PROCEDURES FOR MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

If a child is seriously injured or ill and requires immediate medical care, school staff will stay with the child and call 9-1-1. Parents will be contacted immediately and asked to go to the emergency room at Texas Children's Hospital in the Medical Center to meet the child and a school representative (caregiver).

### **REPELLENTS AND PESTICIDES**



Occasionally, pesticides and insect repellents will be used at Texas Hearing Institute. Please let the Director of Education or your child's teacher or therapist know if you wish to be notified prior to each use of repellents or pesticides. Personal insect repellents must be signed in by the parent as medication.

### **RETURN TO SCHOOL FOLLOWING COCHLEAR IMPLANT SURGERY**

A child who undergoes cochlear implant surgery may return to Melinda Webb School as soon as they are well enough to do so and/or once cleared by their physician.

### **GENERAL HEALTH- ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION CRITERIA**

It is our mission to maintain a healthy school environment. All Melinda Webb School staff members are encouraged to receive a flu vaccine each year. We highly encourage you to also vaccinate your child against the flu yearly.

Upon enrollment, you must file with us a health form signed by a physician, which states that your child is free from infectious disease and physically able to participate in a preschool program. This form must be signed and updated yearly. We also require that all children enrolled have the required standard immunizations and that these records be kept current after each new immunization.

Children should not be brought to school unless they have been free of fever, diarrhea, and vomiting for 24 hours and they are feeling well. Impetigo, pink eye, ringworm and lice are also highly contagious. The Melinda Webb School follows the recommendations of the Texas Department of Health concerning re-admission of a child after a communicable disease. Infectious diseases require a doctor's note stating that treatment has begun and the child may return to school.

If your child is under the care of a physician, please inform the teacher. Changes in a child's health can also affect emotional and behavioral well-being that may impact classroom performance.

The Melinda Webb School staff and many additional staff members have completed First Aid and CPR training. First aid kits for minor problems are located in each classroom as well as the front office.

If a child should become ill at school, the parents will be notified and asked to pick up the child as soon as possible, and within an hour. THI does not have facilities or personnel to care for sick children.

Symptoms that will prompt calls to parents include:

- Fever of 100 degrees or higher
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Lethargy
- Discolored nasal discharge
- Heavy coughing
- Requests from the child to go home because of not feeling well

Per State guidelines a child must be excluded from school with a fever of 100.4 degrees or higher. The

teacher and/or teaching assistant consults with an MWS supervisor before parents are called. If we are not able to reach a parent, we will call emergency contact numbers.

For these reasons and other emergency purposes, it is essential that the school have current information to contact parents. Please inform the front desk receptionist as soon as possible of any changes of phone numbers, addresses, or the names of people who are authorized to pick up the child.

If a child is found to have head lice, the parent/guardian will be notified to come and take the child home. Before returning to class the child's head must be free of lice and nits (eggs) and needs to be checked by the Director of Education, with the parent present.

### **ASSESSMENT**

Children receive annual audiologic, developmental, and speech-language evaluations. Teachers, speech pathologists, audiologists, and the educational liaison use both formal and informal assessment measures to assess the ongoing progress of each child. At any time during the school year, MWS staff may administer developmental screenings to track motor skills, cognition, social skills, and other relevant early childhood developmental areas. All screening results will be shared with parents.

Purposes of ongoing assessment are:

- To determine the child's present levels of educational performance
- To develop the child's individual plan
- To measure and document progress

Parents are important to and involved in the diagnostic process. You provide valuable information about your child's behaviors in the home and a wide variety of other settings.

### **PREVENTING SPREAD OF VACCINE-PREVENTABLE DISEASES**

All MWS employees with direct student contact are encouraged to receive an annual flu vaccine. THI provides the flu vaccine on-site yearly.

### **BREASTFEEDING MOTHERS**

MWS is committed to providing a breastfeeding friendly environment for our enrolled children and staff. MWS subscribes to the following policy:

*Breastfeeding mothers shall be provided a place to breastfeed or express their milk during school hours. Breastfeeding mothers, including employees, shall be provided a private and sanitary place (other than a bathroom) to breastfeed their babies or express milk. This area has an electric outlet, comfortable chair, and nearby access to running water. Mothers are also welcome to breastfeed in front of others if they wish.*

### **COVID-19**

### **COVID-19 Positive Individuals:**

- If a student or staff member tests positive, or is presumptive positive for COVID-19 they will be required to quarantine for 5 days, and return on day 6 with a well-fitted mask for days 6-10.
- Contact tracing will be done and students and staff that have been determined to be a close contact will be notified via email and Brightwheel.
- Based on current CDC guidance, quarantine is no longer recommended for individuals who were exposed to COVID-19, regardless of vaccination status.

### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN**

Fire drills are practiced monthly. Shelter in place and lock-down drills are practiced quarterly during the school year. During fire drills, children learn how to follow designated evacuation routes and to exit the building quickly and safely. During lock-down and shelter in place drills, children are taught how to stay with their class in a designated area. MWS administrators are assigned to search the building and assist with children who need help evacuating quickly.

In the event of an emergency requiring relocation, building evacuation becomes necessary. The designated relocation site for the 2023-2024 school year is The Rise School of Houston 5618 H Mark Crosswell Jr. St. Houston, TX 77021. Children will walk hand-in-hand with staff to the relocation site. When all children are safe and accounted for, parents will be notified on Brightwheel and via SMS messaging of their children's location for immediate pick up.

### **INSURANCE CO-PAYMENTS**

For all speech, audiology, and family services provided to Melinda Webb School students, THI files with insurance companies and/or Medicaid.

Parents are required to do what they can to help Texas Hearing Institute secure payment from programs like Medicaid, private insurance, or any third-party coverage for which the child may be eligible.

It is imperative that your current insurance and/or Medicaid information is on file at THI.

Please verify that a copy of your current Plan/Medicaid information is on file in the THI's Billing Office and provide your new card to the Front Desk each time your information changes. A copy will be made and information on file will be updated. For Medicaid participants, this is required at the beginning of each month.

### **PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO ABUSE OR NEGLECT**

All employees at the Melinda Webb School meet all DFPS requirements for annual training in the areas of abuse and neglect of children. At least one clock hour of the annual 24 hours of training focuses on recognition, prevention, and reporting of child abuse and neglect. This training includes: factors indicating a child is at risk for abuse or neglect; warning signs indicating a child may be a victim of abuse or neglect; procedures for reporting child abuse or neglect; and community organizations that have training programs available to child-care center staff members, children, and parents.

Melinda Webb School employees have a legal responsibility to report any suspicion they may have regarding the abuse or neglect of a child. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect to the proper

authorities is a misdemeanor; staff can be subject to criminal penalties or civil litigation for not reporting. Therefore, staff will report instances of suspected abuse or neglect to the childcare center director, the owner, and the Texas DFPS Child Protective Services Division. We are legally obligated to comply with these guidelines. Child Abuse can be reported to the Texas Child Abuse Hotline at (800) 252-5400.

### **SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY SERVICES**

Melinda Webb School students must be enrolled in speech therapy services as recommended in their annual and bi-annual speech evaluation. These services do not have to be at THI.

THI Speech Therapy Services:

The Speech Therapy Clinic provides comprehensive assessments and family-centered, auditory-based, speech therapy services for children with hearing loss. Each student will receive at least annual speech/language/audition evaluations to determine current levels of performance and direct their plan of care. Based on this evaluation, a recommendation regarding speech therapy, including frequency and duration, will be made. Building speech and language skills through listening is the primary service provided by the speech clinic at THI. Some students may have additional needs that need to be addressed by a speech therapist. The speech therapy clinic may provide these services if there is availability on a caseload. If the clinic is currently on a wait for services, these additional needs may need to be addressed by an outside speech therapist. Caregivers can discuss these recommendations with the treating clinician if questions/concerns arise.

Since we know that active parent participation can accelerate a child's learning, the primary purpose for our speech therapy sessions is to provide an opportunity for the parent to practice implementing strategies that help each student meet his/her established goals. The speech-language pathologists also provide collaborative services to Melinda Webb School teachers and caregivers through staffings, in-services, consultations, and phone conferences.

Parents are responsible for notifying their therapist of field trips, school observations, conferences and illnesses that might interfere with their therapy time. They should reach out to their speech therapist to reschedule the speech session or it will be counted as a missed appointment.

If your child is not enrolled in daycare, the speech clinic cannot see your child outside of MWS school hours unless a caregiver is present or on the premises during the speech session.

Please see your speech therapist for rules for speech therapy and attendance requirements.

### **AUDIOLOGY SERVICES**

Texas Hearing Institute provides comprehensive audiologic services, including diagnostic hearing evaluations and hearing aid and cochlear implant services for children of all ages.

Melinda Webb School students must have established care and routine monitoring with an audiologist

and an ENT physician. These services are not required to be at THI.

If your child does receive audiology services at THI, you have the option to attend appointments with your child or to sign a Consent to Treat form allowing their managing audiologist to pull them during school hours to provide services.

At MWS, your child’s hearing technology is checked every day to ensure it is working. The MWS Audiology Coordinator helps complete listening checks every morning at the start of the school day. Additionally, your child’s teachers will complete listening checks throughout the day, including after nap and before dismissal.

Parents are expected to provide the following each day:

- If your child wears **cochlear implant(s)**, backup equipment for each ear must be provided. This should include a full backup per ear (i.e. processor, coil, cable, charged batteries or disposable batteries and battery rack). A bag to store the backup equipment will be provided.
- If your child wears **hearing aid(s)**, two packs of batteries per ear must be provided. Your child’s teacher will contact you if their supply of batteries runs low.
- If your child is in a **toddler classroom**, they must wear a retention device daily (i.e. otoclip, headband, toupee tape).

If a piece of equipment is not working, the MWS Audiology Coordinator will use a replacement from your child’s backup bag and send the broken piece home on a pink slip. It is then your responsibility to call the cochlear implant manufacturer to request a repair or replacement. It is important to check your child’s backup bag each night to ensure things are fixed in a timely manner.

### **Audiology Contacts**

Sierra Schulte, Au.D., CCC-A  
MWS Audiology Coordinator  
Phone: 713-337-6714  
E-mail: [sschulte@texashearing.org](mailto:sschulte@texashearing.org)

Jennifer Wickesberg, Au.D., CCC-A, LSLC Cert AVT  
Director of Audiology  
Phone: 713-337-9073  
E-mail: [jwickesberg@texashearing.org](mailto:jwickesberg@texashearing.org)

### **Cochlear Implant Manufacturers**

Advanced Bionics  
1-877-829-0026  
[www.advancedbionics.com](http://www.advancedbionics.com)

Cochlear Americas  
1-800-523-5798  
[www.cochlear.com](http://www.cochlear.com)

Med-El  
1-888-633-3524  
[www.medel.com](http://www.medel.com)

## **TEXAS CHILDREN’S OTOLARYNGOLOGY SERVICE**

Texas Hearing Institute has a Texas Children’s Hospital suite on-site where students can receive ENT and Audiologic services.

Hours of operation are:

8 am – 5 pm Monday, Wednesday, and Friday

For more information, please contact Texas Children's Hospital directly at (281) 661-4858

### **DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

It is a primary concern of Texas Hearing Institute to appropriately address the needs of the students and their families. We welcome parent feedback, questions, and concerns regarding our policies and procedures.

In the event of parent concern, please follow the following procedures:

Parents must first contact the person(s) directly involved. This may be the classroom teacher, speech pathologist, audiologist, or other individual(s). Often open and honest communication can clear up potential difficulties before they develop into something larger. If the concern still exists, however, the assistance of a third party may be helpful. At that point, the issue should be shared with the Director of Education or other clinic directors.