

Tri-County Education Center Handbook 2009/2010

Tri-County Special Education Center
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INTRODUCTION

The mission of this educational program is to provide a positive and safe learning environment for our students. Our goal is to help the students become as independent as possible both at home and in their communities.

We are excited about the educational program we have to offer your child. Our staff has worked very hard to develop a program aimed at developing life skills, communication skills, pre-academic skills, as well as encouraging independence across all areas of life. Our teaching staff works very closely with our related service personnel to bring your child a comprehensive program which is carried out throughout his school day.

The purpose of this handbook is to serve as a guideline for the orderly operation of our school. It is intended to describe our current program and practices. This handbook will be updated periodically as deemed necessary. Any changes will be mailed home to parents/guardians.

REGISTRATION AND TRANSPORTATION

Now you are a part of Tri-County Special Education, but you still remain a part of your local district. Please register annually with your local district. You may register during registration times for siblings or you may call the superintendent's office of your local district.

It is very important that you register each year in your local district. Unless you enroll, your child may not be counted as part of that school district. The local district is also responsible for the transportation of your child to Tri-County Center. You will be informed of transportation arrangements and your bus driver's name by your local district. Be sure to ask for the phone number where you can reach the bus driver. You will be responsible for notifying your bus driver when your child will be absent from school.

UNIT DISTRICT OFFICE PHONE NUMBERS

JACKSON COUNTY

DISTRICT	SCHOOL	PHONE
#86	DeSoto Grade	867-2317
#95	Carbondale Elem	457-2040
#130	Giant City	457-5391
#140	Unity Point	529-4151
#165	Carbondale High	457-4722
#176	Trico Unit	426-3391
#186	Murphysboro Unit	684-3781
#196	Elverado Unit	568-1321

PERRY COUNTY

#5	Tamaroa Grade	496-5513
#50	Pinckneyville Grade	357-5161
#101	Pinckneyville High	357-5395
#204	Pinckneyville Comm.	357-2419
#300	DuQuoin Unit	542-3856

UNION COUNTY

#37	Anna Community Cons.	833-6812
#81	A-J High School	833-8421
#17	Cobden Unit	893-2313
#66	Dongola Unit	827-3841
#43	Jonesboro Comm. Cons.	833-6651
#16	Lick Creek	833-2545

SCHOOL ABSENCE

If your child will be absent from school due to any reason, including illness, please report this information via phone call to the school secretary at 684-2109 or by a written note to your child’s teacher. Please notify the teacher in advance of planned absences. It is helpful to also notify your district bus service if your child will not be riding the bus due to absence.

Regular attendance in school is vital to your child’s success and will help your child to feel comfortable and secure in their environment. Establishing a routine will help your child to develop a positive attitude and good behavior patterns. If your child is frequently absent, he/she will miss valuable contact with classmates, class instruction, and group activities.

LATE ARRIVALS

For the protection of our students, the front door will lock at 9:00. After 9:00, you will need to ring the bell and the secretary will let you in. You must sign your child in at the main office and the classroom teacher will be notified that your child has arrived.

STUDENT PICK UP

If you pick your child up after school or during the day you must sign your child out. The sign out sheet is in the main office.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS

In the event of bad weather or other conditions which might cause the temporary closing of the Tri-County Center, parents should tune in to the local television or radio stations.

If you hear that Murphysboro School District #186 is closed, then Tri-County Education Center will be closed.

SCHOOL MEALS

Breakfast and lunch are served each school day. An application for free or reduced meals is included in the student enrollment packet sent home the first day of school.

Prices for meals during the 2009-2010 School Year will be:

Breakfast	Full Price:	\$.60
	Reduced Price:	\$.30
Lunch	Full Price:	\$1.25
	Reduced Price:	\$.40

A bill for meals will be sent home at the end of each month. Payment is expected within one week.

Please notify your child's teacher of his/her food allergies. Students who require dietary substitutions and receive free or reduced meals must submit a form signed by their physician. Please request this form from the Tri-County nurse.

SCHOOL VISITS AND TELEPHONE CALLS

Parent visits to school are welcome. Please make arrangements with your child's teacher and sign in at the school office upon arrival.

Except in the case of emergency, the best times for telephone calls to your child's teacher are between 8:15 – 8:30 AM, and 2:45 – 3:30 PM.

HEALTH INFORMATION

REASONS FOR KEEPING YOUR CHILD HOME FROM SCHOOL

1. Significant illness (as described below)
2. Family emergency
3. Observation of a religious holiday
4. Death in the immediate family
5. Circumstances, which cause you concern for the safety or health of your child

WHAT IS A SIGNIFICANT ILLNESS?

1. An unidentified rash not evaluated by a doctor.
2. A temperature over 100 degrees. Child must be free of a fever for at least 24 hours before returning to school.
3. Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea. Child should be free of vomiting or diarrhea for 24 hours before returning to school.
4. Severe or persistent pain. (Should be referred to a doctor)
5. An upper respiratory infection (cold symptom) that is serious enough to interfere with the ability to learn. (Large amounts of nasal drainage, watery eyes or hacking cough)
6. Signs of conjunctivitis or "pink eye" (redness of the white part of the eye and matter coming from the eye) should be evaluated by a doctor.
7. Draining ear, earaches, or toothaches should be referred to a doctor or dentist.
8. Open sores that have been evaluated by a doctor.
9. Signs of head lice (nits in hair, itchy scalp). Child should be evaluated for treatment.

Head Lice Policy:

Students in Tri-County Special Education Programs who are suspected of having head lice **MUST** be examined by the Tri-County School Nurse, Assistant Nurse, or their trained designee. Parents will be notified if any signs of head lice are noted, and free non-toxic head lice products and education will be made available. Every effort will be made to work with families to keep the child free of head lice and in school attendance.

Immunization Policy:

According to the requirements of the State of Illinois, immunizations, physical and dental examinations as prescribed by the Department of Human Services shall be required of all students at the grade level or ages listed below on the first day of that school year.

Returning students who do not have the appropriate requirements will not be able to enter school until they are in compliance.

If your student is in need of any of the requirements listed below, you should have already been notified. Call Martha Peebles R.N., School Nurse or Tri-County Special Education at 618-684-2109 ECT 4120 (please leave a message); if you did not receive notification and you think your child may be due any of the requirements. **Students who are new to our program will have 45 days to complete the requirements.**

Physical and Dental Examinations:

Students entering Kindergarten, 6th, and 9th grades (or ages 5, 11, or 14, if in a non-graded program) will be required to have a physical examination. If a student had a physical exam for 5th grade the previous year, they do **NOT** need a repeat physical for 6th grade.

Information concerning physicals will be included in your child's enrollment packet that they will receive the first day of school. Dental examinations are required for students entering Kindergarten, 2nd, and 6th grades, or a dental waiver form must be completed. **Physical examinations must be completed prior to the first day of school.**

Insurance:

Insurance is not offered by the day schools or the Tri-County Cooperative. During registration at the local district, students and parents may be offered a low cost accident

insurance from an independent insurance company. An informational packet is available at the local home school office.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

We always want to be prepared in case of accidents or life-threatening illness. Every precaution will be taken to ensure your child's safety at school. In case of a serious accident or illness, parent and/or emergency contacts will be notified by phone. If staff deems it necessary, an ambulance will be called. Please realize that a Murphysboro ambulance will transport your child to St. Joseph's Memorial Hospital. In case of minor accidents or injuries, the staff will administer first aid and contact the parent by phone and/or written report.

RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER A MAJOR ILLNESS, SURGERY, OR HOSPITALIZATION

Students who undergo surgery, major illness or hospitalization are required to have medical clearance in the form of a note or letter from your child's doctor stating that your child is able to return to school safely. Activity or diet restrictions (if any) should be noted by your child's doctor.

INJURIES AND INCIDENT REPORTING

If your child sustains an injury at school, an injury/incident report form will be filled out and a copy sent home with your child. For serious injuries, you will be notified by phone by your child's teacher or the school nurse.

If your child sustains an injury at home please make sure that your child's teacher is aware of the type and location of injury as this may affect your child's therapy, activity participation, and general well-being.

MEDICATIONS

If your child will need medication during school hours, please contact the school nurse or your child's teacher for a copy of our [**Medication Policy and Consent for Administering Medications at School**](#) for your child's doctor to complete and for you to sign. In the event of a major disaster or severe storm, it may be necessary for your child to remain at school for a time until transportation can be resumed. If your child takes daily medication, we encourage you to send to school a 3-day supply of all medications that your

child takes. We are especially concerned about children with heart ailments, seizure disorders, diabetes, and asthma. These medications should be sent in appropriately labeled prescription bottles with a written list of all medications enclosed in a plastic bag. If your child's medication and/or dosage changes during the school year, PLEASE remember to inform the teacher by giving a revised written list. Medications will be returned to you on the last day of school, and should be replaced the following year. If your child receives formula or G-tube feedings we encourage you to send a few extra cans of formula for emergencies. Please refer to [**The Disaster Emergency Plan**](#) at the end of the handbook for more information.

SAFETY/BEHAVIOR

There are times when your child may need a safety belt to promote stability and prevent an unexpected fall. Gait belts may be used when walking students as a safety measure.

Although positive reinforcement is used on a regular basis to teach and encourage appropriate behavior, occasionally a student may demonstrate a behavior which needs to be addressed. If a student demonstrates an acting out behavior (disturbing other students or not complying with staff request), the student may receive a time out to address the behavior. All time outs are supervised by staff. Should any significant behaviors need to be addressed, a behavior plan will be written and discussed with the parent.

MANDATED REPORTING TO DCFS

Any school employee who suspects child abuse or neglect must notify the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS). Failure to do so is in direct violation of the Mandated Reporters Act and may result in serious consequences for the school employee.

PEST CONTROL AND EXTERMINATOR INFORMATION

A pest control exterminator visits Tri-County Center periodically throughout the school year to spray for control of pests. This treatment always occurs after school hours. However, if you would like to know when the treatment is scheduled, please inform the school office at the beginning of the year so you can be notified prior to the exterminator's visit.

STUDENTS WHO ARE CONSIDERED “HOMELESS”:

Students at any Tri-County Special Education Cooperative Agreement school will be monitored to determine if they are considered homeless either through federal or state guidelines. The legislation is Federal (the McKinney-Vento Act, 42 U.S.C. 11431) and the Illinois (the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act, 105 ILCS 45/1-1, or “IEHCA”) laws. Under both Illinois and federal law, school districts have an affirmative duty to identify homeless families within the district.

The McKinney-Vento Act (Section 725) defines “homeless children and youth” (school age and younger) as:

- Children and youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence, including children and youth who are:
- Sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (commonly referred to as being “doubled up”)
- Living in emergency or transitional shelters
- Abandoned in hospitals
- Awaiting foster care placement
- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above

The term *unaccompanied youth* includes a youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. This would include runaways living in runaway shelters, abandoned buildings, cars, on the streets, or in other inadequate housing; children and youth denied housing by their families (sometimes referred to “throwaway children and youth”); and school-age unwed mothers living in homes for unwed mothers because they have no other housing available.

A student who is considered homeless must be immediately enrolled in any of the following:

- (a) The school in which he or she was enrolled when permanently housed (also known as the “school of origin”)
- (b) The school in which he or she was last enrolled; or

- (c) Any public school that non-homeless students who live in the attendance area in which the homeless pupil is living are eligible to attend.

FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) afford students certain rights with respect to their education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's educational records within 45 days of the day the District receives a request for access.
A parent/guardian or eligible student should submit to the Records Custodian, Principal, or other appropriate official, written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The District official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the District official to whom the request was submitted, that official shall advise the parent/guardian or eligible student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent/guardian or eligible student believes is inaccurate or misleading. A parent/guardian or eligible student may ask the District to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate or misleading. They should write the District official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading.
If the District decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent/guardian or eligible student, the District will notify the parent/guardian or eligible student of the decision and advise the parent/guardian or eligible student of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent/guardian or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the parent/guardian or eligible student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.
One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate education interests. A school official is a person employed by

the District in an administrative supervisory, academic, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom the District has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, or collection agent); or a person serving on the Board of Education. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibilities. Upon request, the District discloses education records without consent to officials of another school in which a student seeks or intends to enroll.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202-4605

Directory information may be disclosed without prior notice unless the parent/guardian notifies the Records Custodian or other official in writing, before October of the current school year, that he/she does not want any or all of the directory information is disclosed.

TRI-COUNTY EDUCATION CENTER

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Safety for our children is a primary concern. As part of our efforts to be prepared in the event of a disaster such as tornado or earthquake, we practice recommended emergency procedures on a regular basis. In addition, each classroom has a portable “Disaster Kit”. To assist us in completing our **Disaster Plan**, please read and save this letter for later reference.

TELEPHONE/COMMUNICATIONS

It is likely that a major disaster will seriously curtail telephone service. If telephones should be operational following a disaster, their use should be restricted to reporting emergencies. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE SCHOOL** during the first hour after a disaster. We will provide information for parents on radio stations concerning school conditions and dismissal procedures.

DISMISSAL

1. No child will be released to anyone other than his/her parents/guardians or other persons listed by the parent on the student **Emergency Information Form** in your child’s enrollment packet.
REMINDER: The emergency sheet should be kept up-to-date at all times, with three emergency guardians listed. Please complete a **NEW** sheet when a change in local emergency guardian’s needs to be made. **THIS IS THE PARENT’S RESPONSIBILITY TO SUPPLY THE SCHOOL WITH THIS INFORMATION AND TO KEEP IT CURRENT.**
2. If the parent/emergency guardian is able to reach the school, they should proceed to the school office or to the **EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER on the PLAYGROUND BLACKTOP**. Parents will be directed to where the teachers are stationed with their classes.
3. Emergency guardians (and perhaps parents if they are not known by the teacher) will be asked to identify themselves prior to releasing any children.
4. Before any students will be released, the signature, relationship, date, and time will be required from the parent/emergency guardian at the office or emergency operation center.
5. If any of the above are judged to be in doubt, the student will remain in the care of the school.
6. When circumstances warrant that, in our best judgment, it would be in the best interest of the student to move him/her to an alternate place of safety, notification of

the destination will be posted at the **EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER** (on the school grounds).

7. PLEASE minimize the possibility of a traffic jam and additional roadway hazards and facilitate the efficient release of students by parking away from the school. It is vital that access of emergency vehicles not be impeded.

PRIVATE AUTOMOBILES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED IN THE PARKING LOT OF THE SCHOOL IN THE EVENT OF A MAJOR EARTHQUAKE.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

1. **Medicine:** We encourage you to send a three day supply of all life sustaining medications, (i.e.: seizure meds, insulin, etc) which your child takes on a regular basis. This medication(s) should be in a pharmacy labeled bottle with physician's name, and dosage clearly visible. IT IS THE PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO MAINTAIN CURRENT MEDICATIONS AND INFORMATION. If there are any questions about storage of these medications, please contact the school nurse.
2. If your child is tube fed, or has special dietary needs, (i.e.: gluten free, casein free diet) we encourage you to send an extra syringe and several extra cans of formula, and/or a supply of food if on a specific diet to be kept in our emergency kit.
3. **Clothing:** If a disaster occurs, we may only need to evacuate the building for a brief time. However, there is the possibility that we will need to remain outside the building for a longer period of time or move to a different building. Please be sure that your child has appropriate clothing for daily weather conditions. In cold weather, particularly make sure that mittens, head gear, and warm coats are worn.

EMERGENCY RELEASE FORM:

In order to assist us in caring for your child/children, please fill out, sign, and return the **Emergency Information** Form in your child's enrollment packet immediately. Please record any special medical information that a new medical caregiver should know about. Please record it clearly, and remember to keep all information current. **IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THREE (3) LOCAL EMERGENCY GUARDIANS BE LISTED IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.**

STAFF AND PARENT VOLUNTEER ASSISTANCE

We invite your participation in our school's emergency planning efforts. If you would like to become involved, please contact the school office.