



COOKSONHILLS
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



FAMILY
HANDBOOK

FAMILY

H A N D B O O K

**YOUR GUIDE TO
SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP
WITH COOKSON HILLS**

THE SETTING OF A
Better Story

Cookson Hills Christian School, Inc.

Admissions Non-Discrimination Policy | Cookson Hills Christian School, Inc. admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

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INTRODUCTION

This handbook was designed to provide an introduction and a reference guide to students and parent/guardian(s) about Cookson Hills Christian School's (CHCS) programs, policies, and expectations. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the material in this handbook as it will help you to support the success of your student(s). Please keep in mind this handbook contains selected summaries of policies and procedures related to CHCS, and is not, nor is it intended to, portray every detail of the complete texts of school policy and procedure documents.

This handbook is not a contract, nor is it meant to affect or change the terms of the Service Agreement. Cookson Hills Christian School's policies and programs may change, at the school's discretion, from time to time and without immediate notice to parent/guardian(s) or students. This handbook will be updated annually to reflect these changes and other edits as necessary. For general questions about the school, contact our Enrollment Coordinator at enrollment@cooksonhills.org. After enrollment, should you have any questions that are specific to your student, always begin with asking your student's social worker.

WHAT IS COOKSON HILLS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL?

Set on more than 1,000 acres in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains in rural northeastern Oklahoma, Cookson Hills Christian School offers a haven for children requiring out-of-home care. Our mission is to provide a home, school, and therapy for children who are at-risk. Since 1957, Cookson Hills has been partnering with families to give children love, education, and the opportunity to grow and mature.

CHCS is licensed by the Oklahoma State Department of Human Services as a Residential Child Care Facility.

WHO TYPICALLY PARTNERS WITH COOKSON HILLS?

The following characteristics describe families looking to partner with CHCS:

Families Who:

- Are having difficulty meeting the needs of their student.
- Are willing to partner with CHCS in the best interest of their student.
- Are committed to following a Plan of Care that addresses the needs of the student and family.
- Maintain involvement with the student through visitation and phone calls.

Students Who:

- Are ages 5 to 17.
- Lack a safe and stable home environment
- Are living in single parent, adoption, grandparent, or other family member household
- Have experienced abuse, neglect, or other traumatic experiences
- Have low income or impoverished circumstances
- Are beginning to make unhealthy behavior choices or poor peer group
- Struggle with school due to home, school, or community issues
- Do not have severe physical or emotional handicaps, are not diagnosed with or have symptoms of significant behavior or emotional issues, uncontrolled severe mental illness nor exhibit uncontrolled aggressive behavior towards others and have not perpetrated sexual abuse on other children.

COOKSON HILLS & FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

At CHCS, our desire is to maintain meaningful partnerships with a student's parent/guardian(s) as much as possible. We believe the family's support of Cookson Hills is crucial to a student's enrollment. Staff social workers support parent/guardian(s) by providing up to date information on their student, such as grades, doctor visits, successes, challenges, and even campus events. During phone calls, Houseparents are available to share activities going on within the housefamily. We believe parent/guardian(s) can also help their child in understanding the bigger story of a family and the need for enrollment at Cookson Hills. Sometimes this may include asking families to participate in a family counseling session. Common characteristics of successful partnership include a willingness to:

- Participate in visits, monthly.
- Make consistent phone calls to your student.
- Attend Family Service Programming, if requested, including Family Counseling and Parent U classes.
- Attend (by phone or in person) Plan of Care meetings.
- Provide consistent and timely communication with your Social Worker and Houseparents of your student.
- Adhere to the guidelines in this handbook, instruction given by CHCS staff, and goals related to your student and family relationships on the Plan of Care document.
- Participate, when able, by attending sporting events and community activities that involve your student.
- Remain committed to long term placement and allow the student to complete each school year.

PHILOSOPHY OF CARE

Our program at Cookson Hills Christian School consists of three core elements:

SCHOOL – Every student needs an education that can prepare them for future success.

HOME – Every student needs a home that provides love, structure, and spiritual guidance.

THERAPY – Every student needs the opportunity to heal and feel supported.

We believe that:

- Every child has inherent worth and value and deserves to have meaningful relationships with adults and others who perceive them as capable, powerful and important and who love them unconditionally.
- Every child needs viable role models who exemplify Christ-like character, behavior and love.
- The family unit is a God-designed system for teaching children who He is and the best system for preparing them for adulthood.
- Every child deserves an environment of safety, stability, and meaningful relationships in order to thrive.
- Children who have experienced trauma need an opportunity to address the residue of trauma, make peace with it and experience growth and forgiveness.

PRINCIPLED FAMILY LIVING

At CHCS, we believe all children and families are moving towards the same end goal that we call Principled Family Living. Principled Family Living is having the mindset, values, and knowledge/skills needed to make decisions that benefit family members and deepen family relationships for multi-generational impact. All children and families who partner with CHCS will receive services that provide education and practice towards Principled Family Living.

MINDSET – Principled families have a belief that each family member is significant and contributes to the benefit of the family, and a belief that each person is capable growth and change.

VALUES – Principled families value themselves and the family’s needs, showing respect and love for one another through words and actions.

KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS – Principled families use their knowledge and skills in managing a family and meeting the individual needs of family members.

SCHOOL

Each student enrolled in Cookson Hills Christian School will be connected with dedicated teachers and staff who excel in providing opportunities to gain the mindset, values, and knowledge/skills to thrive academically. Here are some important things to know about our school:

Faculty & Staff

- 20,000 square foot educational facility offering grades 1-12
- State-of-the-art classrooms with smartboards and science lab
- Students are part of small classes and learn from dedicated teachers who are certified by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI).
- Our school is accredited by Advanced Ed and ACSI
- Credits a student earns at CHCS will transfer to any high school.

Year-Round Schedule

- The school year begins mid July and ends early June.
- Our students go to school for 6 weeks and then have a 2 week break.
- The shorter yet more intense 6-week sessions give students the opportunity to easily jump into a class without feeling too far behind.
- This schedule also allows opportunities for students to receive tutoring or credit recovery during the 2 week breaks.

Incentives

- Our school provides incentives to students who perform well at school, including:
 - Performance Pay for students achieving a 2.0 or above
 - Student Lounge Privileges during the school day for students who have successfully completed their work and are in good standing
 - Honors assemblies to recognize student's hard work

High School Equivalency Track

- For students unable to graduate high school before age 18, our school can offer preparatory classes for the high school equivalency exam (Hi-SET) and job skills training.
- Students are enrolled in this track based on identified needs and custodial family consent. Final decision about enrollment will be made by the school administrator and the student's social worker.
- For more information on the Hi-Set test visit: <http://hiset.ets.org>.

HOME

The family is the God-designed system for children to learn and implement positive mindsets, values, knowledge, and skills. Each student enrolled at CHCS will experience life in this family-style setting by joining a family with up to 9 other children and a married couple who are surrogate parents to the student while enrolled at CHCS. A typical day includes several activities completed as a family: meals (at home or in the dining hall), homework, household chores, recreational fun, prayer, and devotions.

Spiritual Formation

While we will neither force a student to believe in God nor abandon their beliefs, we do want to give the opportunity to learn about God's love, Biblical wisdom, and God's desire to have a relationship with them. Students have the opportunity to develop their faith through:

- Weekly Sunday worship attendance at a nearby congregation
- Family devotionals with houseparents
- Bible class instruction within school curriculum
- Relationships and Experiences that model Christlike living
- Additional spiritual events like overnight retreats, chapel services, bible studies, etc.

Community Participation & Recreation

Recreation is an opportunity to help students develop a mindset that they are capable of growing, value fairness, and learn skills in cooperation and communication. Recreation opportunities occur within family, school, and CHCS community events. Examples might include:

- Participating in sports
- Going to the movies, concerts, or sporting event
- Playing games
- Family vacations
- 4-Him after-school activities
- Volunteering
- Campus cookouts

THERAPY

Individual Therapy

Each student enrolled in CHCS participates in regular, individual counseling sessions as needed. Counselors assist students in adjusting to their new home at CHCS, separation from family and friends, and navigating a new way of life. Students will be given the opportunity to understand the story of their own life, address the trauma in their history, make peace with their past, develop goals for their future and the character to make them a reality.

Family Service Programming

CHCS also provides services to the families partnering with us. Services include:

- **Parent U** – Parent education classes, called “Parent U” offers families opportunity to learn more about Cookson Hill’s philosophy of childcare.
- **Family Counseling** – These therapy sessions provide an opportunity for families to address past challenges together, with the goal of moving toward Principled Family Living.

Equine Program

CHCS is home to 14 horses. Students have the opportunity to learn how to care for a horse, groom, communicate, and even ride! Recreation activities are frequently planned down at the barns, typically on non-school weeks and summer break. Horses may also be used in activities that promote social and emotional learning, teaching students about relationships, caring, and problem-solving.

STUDENT CARE TEAM

The following people are a part of the student care team that will be caring for the student while they are enrolled at Cookson Hills Christian School (CHCS).

- **Student** – most important member of the team, provides knowledge regarding needs, and contributes to their own wellbeing
- **Parent/Guardian(s)** – provides support and encouragement to the student, maintains relational connection with the student
- **Houseparents** – surrogate parents who provide a warm, loving environment for the student while in enrolled at CHCS
- **Social Worker** – oversees houseparents and students and is the main point of contact for parent/guardian(s)
- **Counselor** – provides therapeutic services for the student and family, if requested
- **Director of Educational Services** – oversees the educational needs of students
- **Director of Children and Family Services & the Children and Family Services Manager** – oversees the home and therapy aspects of care, provides training to Social Workers and Houseparents along with educational opportunities for partnering families.

PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP DURING ENROLLMENT

While CHCS provides a safe, structured, surrogate family environment for students, we know that the relationship between a child and their family is one that can never be replaced. Even though your child lives at CHCS, they still need your support!

Make a commitment. We know that choosing to enroll your child in CHCS is not an easy decision. We also know that you must continue to choose to keep your child at CHCS after they are enrolled. CHCS is committed to helping your student become an independent, successful, and productive adult. We ask that our students, and you, their families, remain committed to the same. The first step in that commitment is the belief that your child will graduate from CHCS. We ask that you don't say "just try it out." That approach lacks commitment! When times are difficult and your child is questioning their enrollment, remember why

you first considered CHCS. Discuss with your child why CHCS is the right place for them and what it is doing to help them achieve their goals and dreams. Don't forget to remind them how proud you are of them and their accomplishments.

Be real. Before the final decision is made to enroll at CHCS, it is a good idea to just put some difficult topics out on the table to discuss. Discuss with your student:

- That life at CHCS is going to be different, for both student and family. It is not going to be easy! More is expected from CHCS students than many other children. With schoolwork, chores, sports, and activities, CHCS students are busy and are constantly being pushed to better themselves.
- Being at CHCS means being away from home. Although there are many opportunities for visiting and going home for breaks throughout the year, homesickness is a natural reaction for many students. Empathize with your child's feelings. Encourage your child to get involved in the many activities provided at CHCS. Being busy and engaged helps students adjust more quickly and helps them to develop relationships here on campus.
- Living in a big family is challenging. Living with up to 9 other children can be both a blessing (always someone to play or hang out with!) and a burden (always someone who gets on your nerves!). Living in a large family requires rules and boundaries, some of which might not make sense to your child. Take the time to discuss these challenges and help your child identify ways to meet the challenges when they come up.

Build relationships. There is nothing more powerful and influential on a student's success at CHCS than the relationship between parents/guardian(s) and the student's houseparents and social worker. It is crucial for both to be on the same page and focused on the success of that student. Develop and maintain an open and positive relationship with the student's houseparents and social worker. Remember we're on the same team.

What Helps

1. Keeping a positive and continuous line of communication open with your child's houseparents and social worker
2. Regular contact with your child including letters, phone calls, and visits
3. Actively and cooperatively participate with CHCS programming
4. Attending your child's activities and games are great times to witness and encourage your child's gifts and abilities
5. Supporting CHCS Staff's decisions regarding your child
6. Perhaps the greatest and most enduring way to show your love to your child during their time at CHCS is to remain committed to their enrollment, knowing that it will provide huge rewards for them in their future!

What Hurts

1. Not calling/visiting your child according to the Visit Calendar
2. Having a weak commitment to your child's enrollment and/or negotiating a dismissal date with your child
3. Talking negatively about CHCS staff decisions with your child present
4. Secret agreements with your child ("if you do _____, we will do _____")
5. Using ineffective or harmful discipline strategies:
 - Making visits conditional: Avoid threats to not call or visit if behavior or school grades do not meet your expectations.
 - Attempting to discipline or lecture your child about their behaviors at CHCS
 - Being historical – Reminding the child of past negative behaviors

What your child needs during their time at CHCS

1. To know that you are committed to their enrollment and supportive of Cookson Hills' decisions.
2. To experience meaningful family interactions during phone calls and visits.
3. To have a parent/guardian recognize and celebrate signs of maturity and growth.
4. To have a parent/guardian communicate their love and care for them even though you live apart.

PLAN OF CARE

A Plan of Care (POC) is developed and maintained for each student enrolled at CHCS. All members of the Student Care Team will be included in the Plan of Care.

A Plan of Care Addresses

- The child's individual goals to improve mindset, instill values, and increase knowledge and skills toward Principled Family Living.
- The student's goals in the areas of academics, therapy, recreation, and spirituality.
- The student's medical needs.
- The length of partnership and graduation date.

Plan of Care Review

- The Plan of Care is reviewed within 90 days of its development and at least every six months thereafter. A Plan of Care Review includes:
- An evaluation of the family and student's progress toward meeting identified goals and steps toward Principled Family Living.
- Any goals identified since the plan was developed or last reviewed.
- Address important issues regarding the student's enrollment and/or families involvement.

VISITS

The purpose of visits is to:

1. Build and maintain relationship with your child
2. Encourage your child during their enrollment in CHCS

General Guidelines for Visits

- All visits will be scheduled in accordance with the student's Plan of Care.
- All visits must be prearranged with the appropriate Social Worker.
- Regular visitation will occur according to the Visit Calendar published at the beginning of each school year.
- Visits may include Family Services Programming such as Parent U classes and family counseling, as needed.
- A student's belongings may be searched by their houseparents upon their return to ensure safety.
- Visits may be restricted or altered in accordance with court ordered visitation restrictions or requirements.
- Visits may be altered if visitation outcomes negatively impact a student's enrollment or compromise the safety of a student.

Parent Expectations for Visits

The following expectations, when followed, allow for growth in the relationship and making decisions that benefit family members.

- Visits include time with your child plus any attendance at CHCS programming, such as sporting events, Family Events, and Family Services Programming.
- Visits are opportunities to encourage and maintain relationship with your child.
- Maximize time with your child. Avoid large amounts of time away from your child, babysitters, or letting your child stay at a friend's house.
- Supervise your child's activity at home, in public, on the internet and phone.
- An adult should handle the student's medicine. Do not let your child manage their own medication.

Visits Best Practices

- Keep the mindset that visits are a time to connect.
- Make a plan for the visit ahead of time (discuss with the child on phone call).
- Create a meaningful tradition you can do each time on visit.
Set boundaries for acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Identify consequences for out of bounds behavior. Follow through with the consequence.
- Balance Needs and Wants.
- Your child may ask you to buy them lots of things during a visit.
- Set good boundaries with your child and stick with them.
- Speak with houseparents about child's needs before going shopping.
- Encourage and expect your child to save money to buy some of their wants.
- Avoid purchasing any items for your child that are not in compliance with CHCS policy.
- Keep your word. Do what you say you will do.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT & INSURANCE

Parent/guardian(s) who partner with CHCS are expected to support their student financially in the following ways:

- Health insurance coverage that works in Oklahoma.
- Payment for prescription medications.
- Payment for weekly counseling services at a rate of \$32 per session, if not covered by insurance. Families are required to provide credit card or electronic check information upon enrollment for counseling services.
- Fund a Special Account to assist in meeting the student's specific needs (shoes, clothing, personal items, haircuts, etc.).
- If applicable, faithfully give your pledged monthly contribution to Cookson Hills to assist in meeting the student's needs during their enrollment in CHCS.

Allowance/Monetary Gifts

Each student will be given the opportunity to have and handle money for personal use in accordance with the student's Plan of Care.

- Each student at CHCS receives a weekly allowance to facilitate opportunities for them to learn how to manage money.
- It is not necessary for you to provide the student with spending money.

However:

- A student may receive no more than \$15 per month total in undesignated money from their parent/guardian(s).
- Parent/guardian will inform the student's houseparents of any monies given to the student.
- Any money received in excess of \$15 per month will be placed in the general fund for the ongoing care of the student.
- Monetary gifts received by the student for birthday and Christmas gifts may exceed the \$15 limit up to \$50 and will be deposited in the student's special account.
- Students may use allowance/gift funds as desired with houseparent approval.

How to Send Money for Your Child

Special Account

- Money for your student's special account can only be submitted by check/money order and should not be combined with other funds.
- Please make check/money order payable to Cookson Hills and write your student's name and "special account" on the memo line.
- The check/money order may be mailed into the office or dropped off during a visit.

Monthly Contribution to Your Child's Needs

- Money for your monthly contribution can be submitted by check/money order and should not be combined with other funds.
- Please make check/money order payable to Cookson Hills and write your student's name and "monthly contribution" on the memo line.
- The check/money order may be mailed into the office or dropped off during a visit.

Mailing Address:

Cookson Hills Christin School
60416 Highway 10
Kansas, OK 74347

PRE-ENROLLMENT PLANNING

The following is a to-do list of items once the student has been accepted for enrollment at CHCS.

For Parent/Guardians

- Read this handbook to familiarize yourself with CHCS policies/procedures
- Complete the online Enrollment Paperwork form
- Submit copies of the child's birth certificate, social security card, insurance card, and immunization records to the Enrollment Coordinator
- Submit legal verification of custody, guardianship or legal status of the child, if needed.
 - This legal verification must be written and may include a birth certificate, naturalization document, court order, divorce decree, etc. (see appendix on Parental Custody)
- Submit any court documents- divorce, adoption, guardianship, etc. to the Enrollment Coordinator
- Submit a copy of the child's medical examination (physical) conducted by a licensed physician.
 - Must be completed within 60 days prior to admission. Be sure the document contains the doctor's signature!
- Make hotel and work arrangements, if necessary for Enrollment Day. Please plan on the enrollment process lasting about half a day.
- Assist your child with packing to ensure that clothing items adhere to the dress code policy (see appendix) and that prohibited items (see below) are not packed.

On Day of Enrollment

- Bring a 30-day supply of all medications with written instructions on proper dosage and administration.
- Bring a list of the names and addresses of family members that the child is permitted to write.
- Be ready to have your picture taken (one family photo and one child photo)
- Bring the child's social security card and birth certificate so copies can be made.

Packing List For the Student

- Shoes and Clothing that adheres to the Cookson Hills dress code (See appendix: Dress Code Policy)
- Bedding twin size
- Toiletries
- Laundry Bag/Basket/Hamper
- Sleeping bag
- Swimming suit (one piece)
- Family Pictures
- Paper, pens, envelopes, stamps
- Alarm Clock
- Decorations for the room (all pictures/posters will need to fit on a 2'x3' tackboard)
- A bike if desired (if so, a bike helmet is required)
- Sports equipment if desired
- iPod or MP3 player if desired (must not have wi-fi capability; houseparents will approve music choices for the device)

NOTE: If the parent/guardian is unable to supply essential items, they will be provided by CHCS. It is not necessary or recommended that a student brings everything that belongs to them. Please bring only what is needed.

Items to Leave at Home

- Alcohol, tobacco, or any other drugs or drug paraphernalia
- iPod touch, Nintendo DSI, or any other devices that can access the internet
- Cell phone
- Inappropriate pictures, posters, or other items that would detract from Christian principles
- Valuable jewelry or possessions

NOTE: If any of the above items are brought by your child to CHCS, the houseparents will collect the items and return them to the parent/guardian(s) on the next visit.

FIRST 30 DAYS OF ENROLLMENT

We realize that the transition from living with your family to living at Cookson Hills Christian School is a difficult one. CHCS wants to help this transition go as smoothly as possible. The following is a brief outline of what you can typically expect during the first 30 days of enrollment at CHCS.

Day 1 – Enrollment Day

- Family arrives at the scheduled time
 - Meet the Social Worker and intake paperwork is signed
 - Meet the student’s houseparents for the first Plan of Care meeting
- Following the Plan of Care meeting, the family goes to the houseparent’s home to drop off the student’s belongings and say goodbye to the student
- After the parent/guardian(s) leaves, there will be no contact with the student for 30 days.
 - Phone contact and mail for the child will be held until day 31
 - The parent/guardian(s) may contact the houseparents and social worker to ask about how the student is adjusting.
- The houseparents help the student unpack and document their belongings
- The student is introduced to the rest of the children in the home

Days 2-4

- The student will not go to school during these days
- These days are devoted to the student spending time and building relationship with the houseparents
- Houseparents and student will go over expectations in the home and at CHCS
- Houseparents and student will attend an orientation meeting at the school

Days 5-30

- Student begins attending school
- Student begins therapy sessions once a week
- Student learns the routine of life at CHCS and in their new home environment
- Student Care Team begins implementing the action items from the Plan of Care

Day 31 & Beyond

- The student will be given any mail received during the 30 day period
- The student will begin having phone calls and visits with the parent/guardian(s) as scheduled in the Plan of Care and the Visit Calendar

Tips for parent/guardian(s) to prepare for your first visit

The purpose of the living room visit is to:

1. Connect with your child by listening to their experiences
2. Talk with houseparents about child's progress
3. Update child on family events
4. Encourage enrollment and relationship with houseparents

During Your Visit

1. Give full attention to your child. Ignore the cell phone.
2. Ask lots of questions to child regarding life at CHCS, routine, school, family activities, house siblings, POC goals. Avoid lectures, being historical, or giving unwanted advice on what to do. Let your child know you care about them and believe they are capable of succeeding.
3. Ask questions to houseparents about routine, expectations in the home, family activities.
4. Share how you are doing. It's okay to be honest and say "I miss you" as long as you do not give the impression that the child may be dismissed from CHCS because of it.
5. Tell your child that you are in favor of enrollment and support CHCS and houseparent decisions.

APPENDIX

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PARENTAL CUSTODY

Parental custody of a child must be determined so that the appropriate parent(s)/ guardian(s) sign the Service Agreement. Cookson Hills will make efforts to secure the cooperation of all parents involved with the child. For example:

- **Intact family with both parents living.** Both parents who live with the child must sign the Service Agreement.
- **Divorced family with joint custody.** Both parents must sign the Service Agreement and agree to (voluntarily) modify their visitation rights to conform to the Visitation Policy of Cookson Hills.
- **Divorced family with one parent having custody and another having visitation rights.** Both parents must agree to enrollment, and the non-custodial parent must (voluntarily) modify his/her visitation rights to conform to the Visitation Policy of Cookson Hills.
- **Divorced family and non-custodial parent with unknown whereabouts.** Cookson Hills must make an attempt to locate the absent parent—documenting all attempts at notification—and the custodial parent must sign the Service Agreement.

DRESS CODE POLICY

Policy

Clothing and general appearance should reflect respect for the following:

1. Allows for the expression of individuality within the limits of what is generally considered appropriate for public presentation in any given situation
2. Does not detract from Christian principles.

While our dress is not an indication of a person's worth or ability, it may affect the perceptions of others and thereby limit or expand opportunities. The following guidelines are provided as some clear standards that are appropriate while living at Cookson Hills. Clothing not suitable under these guidelines may be returned to the family of origin during the child's placement.

Guidelines

- Cross-dressing is prohibited.
- Clothing shall reveal no belly, no back, no cleavage, no crack.
- Undergarments are required but may not be seen around or through clothing.
- Hair should be out of the eyes, clean, neatly groomed and may be of any naturally occurring hair color. Hair length standards may be imposed with individuals who fail to adhere to the above.
- Pierced or gauged jewelry may not be worn except in ears prior to the age of 18 years. Piercings or gauges in other than in the ear may be acquired and worn only after age 18 years and may not be permanently deforming to the body. Ear piercings or gauging prior to the age of 18 years shall require permission of the parent/guardian.
- Jewelry is limited to that which is appropriate and safe for the activity or event in which the student is participating.
- Shoes are required and must be safe and appropriate for the activity.
- Clothing should be appropriately fitted for the person and to the occasion.
- Pant length must extend at least beyond the fingertips when standing.
- Tattoos may not be acquired in placement prior to the age of 18 years. Tattoos acquired prior to placement may be required to be covered.
- Swimming suits are limited to one piece and must be modest in style or covered with a t-shirt.

- Dress length shall be to the top of the knee or longer when standing if a child is school age.
- Clothing may not display offensive signs, symbols, words, or graphics that detract from Christian principles.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS POLICY

While you are a resident of Cookson Hills we will make every effort to preserve your rights and treat you with dignity and respect. Outlined below is a list of things you have a right to. Any violation of these rights should be immediately reported to your Social Worker, Children & Family Services Manager, or to the Director of Children and Family Services.

1. **Activities:** Children are provided regular opportunities to engage in age appropriate and developmentally appropriate activities.
2. **Clothing:** Each child is supplied with his or her own clothing and shoes appropriate to the season, age, activities and individual needs which are comparable to that of other children in the community. He/ she also has a safe place to keep these items.
3. **Community Activities:** Each child, according to his or her ability, will have the right to normal community contacts and opportunities for participation in the local community. At Cookson Hills, the facility is the primary community and opportunities will be made for children to travel to surrounding communities from time to time.
4. **Education:** Educational opportunities are provided for each child in placement in accordance with his or her Plan of Care.
5. **Food:** Children are not denied meals as punishment.
6. **Grievance:** Each child and his/her parent/guardian will be provided with a written copy of the child grievance policy and sign a verification form signifying their receipt of the policy. They will (parent/guardian) have the right to file a grievance. Children will have the opportunity for private conversation with the agency's staff members who are responsible for their supervision, either at their or the agency's request.
7. **High Risk Activities:** If the facility allows residents to engage in activities such as horseback riding, archery, gymnastics, karate, or use of firearms, a written plan which ensures the health and safety of each child is maintained on file at Cookson Hills.

8. **Mail:** Children will be allowed contact with family and relatives after the first thirty days of placement, i.e., phone calls, correspondence, gifts, etc. Incoming/outgoing correspondence after the first 30 days will not be restricted or opened unless there is suspicion of contraband. If correspondence is opened, the resident and the resident's legal guardians are informed in advance and the resident is present when the letter is opened. The action is documented.
9. **Personal Care and Hygiene:** Supplies for personal care, hygiene, and grooming will be made available to the child at the clothing store room. A child will be afforded ample opportunity to use these supplies and will be guided by their houseparents in their appropriate use.
10. **Personal Finances:** Each child will be given the opportunity to have and handle money for personal use in accordance with the child's Plan of Care—though he/she may be given guidance in managing his money. Money earned by a child or received as a gift or allowance is his or her personal property. A child is not required to earn money to pay for room and board unless it is a part of the Plan of Care and is approved by the parent or custodian and the agency.
11. **Personal Possessions:** Each child is allowed to bring personal possessions to the facility and to acquire personal belongings as subject to reasonable household rules and the child's Plan of Care. Individual space in the residential home is provided for the child's personal possessions and for a reasonable degree of privacy. Personal possessions may be searched in the event of reasonable suspicion of contraband and with prior permission of a Social Worker. Any conducted searches will be documented. Personal belongings are sent with the child when he or she leaves the home.
12. **Plan of Care:** Each child has a right to an individualized Plan of Care that focuses on the services Cookson Hills provides in meeting the needs of the child. Each child has the right to participate in the development of the Plan of Care.
13. **Privacy:** Children have the right to privacy in writing, sending or receiving correspondence unless restricted by the Plan of Care. Children will be allowed privacy and quiet areas to withdraw.
14. **Publicity:** Consent is obtained by the facility from the resident and the resident's parent/guardian prior for the use of any publicity or promotional materials. The child is not caused embarrassment by any publicity or promotional materials, forced to participate in any promotional activity, nor forced to acknowledge their dependency or gratitude on/for the facility.

15. **Recreation:** Cookson Hills will provide a balanced recreational program. Children will have time to pursue their talents, hobbies, and chosen interests. Recreational supplies and equipment will be evaluated at least annually for safety.
16. **Religious Training:** All children will be provided an opportunity to participate in religious services. The defined policy of religious training and practices of Cookson Hills will be made known to the child and the family prior to admission.
17. **Respect:** There will be no racial discrimination by the staff of Cookson Hills. Children are not subjected to remarks which belittle or ridicule them or their families.
18. **Communication Restrictions:** Any restrictions placed on communications are explained to the child and clearly documented.
19. **Safety:** Adequate measures will be taken to prevent accidents and to avoid health or safety hazards. All children shall be periodically instructed in fire prevention and participate in periodic fire drills.
20. **Sleep:** Cookson Hills will provide adequate time and facilities for proper rest and sleep commensurate with each child's age and activities.
21. **Telephone:** Each child has access to a telephone to receive uncensored personal calls according to the Plan of Care. These calls may be restricted to a minimum of two per month. If referred by an agency that offers legal services to the child, the child will have access to an attorney and authorized representative of the referring agency.
22. **Visits:** Children have the right to visits with their families in accordance with their Plan of Care and the Cookson Hills visitation policy.
23. **Water Activities:** If children are engaged in water activities, reasonable measures will be taken to ensure that safety precautions are followed.
24. **Work:** Each child is taught good work habits and is provided with a variety of tasks. Children are only expected to perform household tasks which are within their abilities, reasonable for their ages and similar to those expected of other household members of comparable age and ability. Whenever possible, a child will be able to earn money through work.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT POLICY

It is the policy of Cookson Hills that children be taught appropriate means of expressing their needs and managing their thoughts and feelings with a goal of becoming increasingly more Christ-like in such expressions and management.

Goal/Objective(s) of Discipline

The ultimate goal of discipline is to provide a learning experience for the child, for it is through discipline that the capacity for self-esteem, self-control and self-direction in each child—under the influence of Christ—can be developed. More specifically, goals of discipline are as follows:

- To enable a child to explore the positive outcomes associated with behavior that is characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, and self-control in each child.
- To enable the child to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy patterns of behavior and to choose healthy patterns of intra-personal and interpersonal perceptions and behavior .
- To enable the child to practice responding to limits and consequences.
- To enable the child to practice healthy interpersonal skills.
- To enable the child to practice doing what needs to be done rather than what they want to do.
- To enable the child to practice the connection of Biblical truth to their decisions and the outcome of those decisions.
- To develop a healthy perception of self as important, loved, and capable of making decisions that affect outcomes.

Discipline Plan

1. Specific communication that identifies inappropriate or wrong behavior, why that behavior is inappropriate or wrong, what alternative behaviors may be chosen, and why the alternative behavior is desired.
2. Discipline methods should include relationship-building techniques:
 - a. Active listening
 - b. Clear, nonjudgmental feedback
 - c. Satisfaction of basic needs
 - d. Adult involvement with the child in child -selected activities and disciplines
 - e. Positive feedback and praise when positive child behavior changes are evident.

- f. Creating an environment of sensitivity, warmth, and kindness
 - g. Teaching by example
 - h. Application of fair and consistent rules with logical consequences
3. Specific discipline strategies may include but are not limited to:
 - a. Logical and natural consequences that are utilized to provide learning experiences for children.
 - b. Identification of privileges and removal of such as a result of structured consequences.
 - c. Assignments of extra work which comes as a result of structured consequences. Such consequences should be negotiated with the child in advance and come as a result of the child's choice to exhibit inappropriate or wrong behavior rather than appropriate or right behavior.
 - d. Non-humiliating specific actions and/or consequences, such as returning stolen property, giving private apologies, etc.
 - e. Reimbursement for damages. Such reimbursements shall not exceed the cost of repair or replacement and shall come out of the child's allowance.
 - f. Separation. A resident may be removed from the group or group activity as a method of behavior management. The resident remains within hearing of an adult in an unlocked, safe, clean, well-lighted, well-ventilated area. The separation does not exceed one hour in duration.
 4. The staff person responsible for the care of the child is permitted to administer appropriate discipline. An administrator, houseparents, substitute houseparents, educator, or a designated staff member who is in a special program (i.e.: camp, VBS, etc.) is permitted to discipline children.
 5. Discipline is monitored by the Social Worker who meets regularly with houseparent staff. Discipline at school is monitored by the Principal.
 6. Discipline will be handled privately whenever possible. Serious offenses (runaway, drug use, sexual acting out, violent aggression) will be brought to the attention of the Children and Family Services Manager and the Director of Children and Family Services and resolved with his/her oversight.

Disciplinary Prohibitions

Cookson Hills policy strictly prohibits the following:

- Shaking, striking, spanking, or other cruel treatment
- Harsh, humiliating, cruel, abusive or degrading language
- Denial of food or sleep
- Work tasks that are degrading, unnecessary, or inappropriate to the resident's age, ability or misdeed
- Denial of private familial and significant other contact, including visits, phone calls, and mail, as a means of punishment
- Use of chemical agents, including tear gas, mace, or similar agents
- Seclusion
- Extreme physical exercise
- One child punishing another child
- Chemical restraint
- Mechanical restraint
- Punishment by a group or as a group
- Violating a child's rights

GRIEVANCE POLICY

When you believe your rights have been violated in some way, you have the right to have your concerns heard and addressed. It is important that grievances be initiated as soon as possible so that a resolution is accomplished in a timely fashion.

Grievance Procedure

1. Attempt to resolve the grievance by talking to the person who is responsible for the matter about which you are concerned.
2. If a resolution is not reached, go to your Social Worker and make your grievance known to him by obtaining a Grievance Form. Your Social Worker will attempt to resolve the grievance with your participation.
3. You have a right to file grievances, to receive a written response to your complaint, and to appeal to the Director of Children and Family Services if you are not satisfied with the response.
4. If any person attempts to deny you these rights or penalizes you for filing a grievance, immediately contact the Executive Director.

NOTES



COOKSON HILLS

CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

60416 Highway 10 ■ Kansas, OK 74347

