

# TRULEARN HANDBOOK





# Welcome To TruLearn

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We are so glad to have you here! As an organization, we are committed to empowering students, parents, and teachers to pursue home education. We are thankful to have this amazing facility and are overjoyed to share it with you!

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# PARENTS

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## Parent Expectations

We believe that students thrive when parents are involved with their education! TruLearn expects parents to:

- Read all material given to them: E-mail, TruLearn App, and texting (SMS) are the primary forms of communication. Be sure to check these frequently and read all messages carefully.
- Adhere to the policies and plans of action in place. This ensures that our Center flows smoothly and with harmony between its members.
- Supervise and monitor their children when they are not in class. **We are a Resource Center, not a school, and we do not provide childcare unless otherwise specified.**
- We do not require parents to stay on-site with their students provided that they are in a class or parent supervised study hall.
- Promptly pick up their children (of all ages) **at the end** of their scheduled class.
- Provide supervision for their children at all TruLearn events where childcare is not provided.

## Communication

TruLearn has an app we use to communicate with our families about changes in schedule, cancellations, and other important messages. For the safety of our students who get dropped off for classes, we need to be able to communicate if changes are made to the schedule. All families that take classes with TruLearn need to use this app to stay abreast of the most up-to-date information. We do not use push notifications to sell you anything. You will receive an email inviting you to join. Please download the app and sign in.

## Parent Participation

Parents are encouraged to be a part of any and all services and programs in which students are involved at TruLearn. A parent accompanied by a child to any Center program or activity is responsible for their child's safety.

## Volunteer

TruLearn couldn't run without the help of parent volunteers! There are always opportunities to get more involved in our community. Please contact [serena@trulearnacademy.org](mailto:serena@trulearnacademy.org) for more information.



## Give

At TruLearn, our goal is to provide affordable, quality classes and opportunities for homeschooling families. In order to do all that, **we need your help!** If you can financially support TruLearn, please visit [www.trulearnacademy.org/donate](http://www.trulearnacademy.org/donate). We are a registered 501(C)3. All donations are tax deductible.

## At the Center

Make arrangements to pick up your child at the end of their scheduled class. **All students need to be accompanied by a parent/guardian on campus when not in class.**

Students may not loiter in classrooms or wander around the Center. We offer a study room and a Family area for students waiting between classes. For the convenience of parents with babies and toddlers, we also have a Family area/playroom (parent supervision required). **Volunteers and staff will bring wandering, unsupervised children to their parents with a warning. With repeated offences, your family may be asked to leave the Center for the day.**

## Missed Classes

Contact your student's teacher if they will be missing a class. We ask that students **and** parents make class attendance a top priority. Teachers are not required to make up or refund classes that your student misses.

## Registration

Registration information is available on our website: <http://www.trulearnacademy.org> at the start of each semester. Classes are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Teachers and staff volunteers are given advanced access to student registration.

## Payment

A student membership fee of \$180 per year is required for participation at the Center.

Teachers are private contractors and therefore each teacher sets their own rate for their classes and materials fees. If you are enrolled in a homeschool program that we are vendors with, we will invoice them with your written consent. We realize money can be tight, so payment plans are an option upon request.

If you need financial assistance for classes, please contact [serena@trulearnacademy.org](mailto:serena@trulearnacademy.org) for more information.



## Refund/Cancellation Policy

### *Resource Center Cancellations*

All classes scheduled by the Center are subject to cancellation. Be aware that a class may be cancelled at any time for reasons including, but not limited to: insufficient registration, teacher emergencies, government mandates, or other issues beyond our control. Please note that all teachers are asked to have a contingency plan in place for continuing classes in the event of unforeseeable circumstances. If the class is cancelled before it begins, there will be a 100% refund.

### *Family Cancellations*

Class cancellations **MUST** be received via email by both the director ([serena@trulearnacademy.org](mailto:serena@trulearnacademy.org)) and the teacher prior to the class start date for consideration of refunds.

- No refunds after the second week of class
- Contact teachers directly for refunds on materials fees—there are no refunds if supplies have already been purchased.

## Scholarship Policy

Our desire is to see all families be able to take advantage of opportunities at the Center. We are able to offer limited scholarship funds to qualifying families who also volunteer their time at the Center. A [Scholarship Application](#) must be completed and approved by the Executive Director. Ten hours of volunteer time per family is required for every \$100 scholarship awarded.

### Matching funds program

We will match up to 50% of admin fees, not to exceed \$200/student per semester.

For example:

John Smith's admin fee total	\$200
Matching fund	-\$100
Balanced owed	\$100 + 10 hours of volunteer time

### Volunteer hours

TruLearn is run almost exclusively by volunteers. There are many opportunities to get involved with volunteering. Scholarship applicants may choose an area of interest. Some examples are:

- Cleaning -
- Library – entering new books, checking in/out families' books/curriculum
- Coffee Shop
- Study Hall



# STUDENTS

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## Attendance

Because our classes meet only once or twice a week, consistent attendance is of the utmost importance. You must communicate your absences with your teachers. Disciplinary action on the basis of excessive absenteeism and/or tardiness is at the discretion of individual teachers.

## Drugs & Alcohol

The use, consumption, possession, purchase, or sale of alcohol, tobacco products, vapor products, or drugs at the Center is grounds for expulsion.

## Weapons

The Center prohibits students from carrying dangerous weapons including: lighters, butterfly knives, switchblade knives, pocket knives, daggers, martial arts weapons, metal knuckles, air guns, stun guns, guns in general, and Taser devices. Possession of these items is grounds for expulsion.

## Dress Code

We believe that appearance and conduct is a demonstrative part of your character. Our appearance should reflect modesty and decency at all times.

You will be sent home to change your clothes if you are found out of compliance with the dress code.

- Please refrain from wearing low-cut, midriff, or cut-out shirts. Shirts should not be higher than the student's waistline. No crop tops. Shirts should be modest and have sleeves.
- Sheer, low-cut, or off the shoulder shirts are not acceptable, nor are spaghetti straps, strapless, or backless shirts and dresses. Tank tops are not allowed.
- Shirts with inappropriate slogans, words, or pictures are not allowed.
- All undergarments must be covered up.
- Shorts are not school attire and will not be allowed except for PE.
- Pants with holes, rips, tears, or fraying should not be worn at the Center.
- Pajamas are not to be worn at the Center.
- Hats and slippers are not permitted
- Leggings may be worn underneath skirts, dresses, or tunics/shirts that are loose-fitting and fall at or just above the knee.





- Dresses/skirts should be modest and fall to the knee when seated.

## Cell Phones & Electronics

Cell phones are a distracting factor and negative influence at the Center. We have found the use of electronics to be counter to our mission of encouraging and equipping homeschooling families as they distract us from both growing our community and establishing academic excellence.

For this reason, cell phones and electronics are only to be used to contact parents, in cases of emergencies, or under parent supervision. At all other times, electronics should be stored away and not pulled out.

With the use of the internet in education, pornography, games in class time, and watching videos in class has been an increasingly common problem. For this reason, only Center laptops / iPads will be used. We cannot control what apps or limits are put on student devices from home, but we can control what is put on our devices. All our devices will have no access to the internet via an app, no games, and no other distractions.

Schoolwork may be completed with a Center laptop under the supervision of an adult. If you need to contact your parents, and you do not have a phone, one of the staff will be happy to help you contact them for you. Parents looking to contact their children may call the Center at (907) 841-3145. Teachers may take away phones/devices from students if they bring them to class. With repeated offences, the student will need to pay \$5 to get it back.

## Code of Conduct

Our students should be obedient to the Center rules and are respectful to all teachers, staff, members, and fellow students, as well as our building.

### Respect yourself:

- you have a purpose
- you are capable
- you can lead by example
- you are valuable

### Respect your teachers:

- keep your cellphone stored away
- be on time to class
- be attentive in class
- come to class prepared to learn
- complete assigned work before class
- bring completed assignments to class
- listen and follow directions

### Respect the TruLearn staff:

- listen and follow staff instructions
- speak with respect at all times—foul language will not be tolerated



#### Respect other TruLearn members:

- speak with kindness
- treat each other with respect
- use appropriate language
- do not meddle with the personal belongings of others
- dress appropriately

#### Respect the Center:

- walk—no running
- follow cellphone and electronics rules
- clean up after yourself
- help others around you

#### Respect the classes in session:

- walk in the halls
- speak quietly

## Discipline Policy

Our students should be obedient to adults and respectful of their fellow students. We believe corrective measures are to be done in love and grace and with compassion. Discipline is intended to build good character, responsibility, and respect for the rules that are in place. Students may be held accountable for their actions and behaviors at the Center.

The following process will take place for more serious offences, such as violence, substance abuse, willful disregard for teacher's instructions.

1. **First offense:** Student will sign a notice of a "first warning." Parents will be notified.
2. **Second offense:** Student will be asked to pay a fine of \$50 before they can return to the Center. Parents will need to meet in person with the Executive Director.
3. **Third offense:** Student will be expelled from the Center for the remainder of the semester without a refund of fees.

\*\*\*If we feel at any time that the behavior is life-threatening to another individual, immediate suspension may be applied first until proper investigation can take place.



# TEACHERS

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## Background Check

Background checks are required of each staff member, teacher, volunteer, and tutor and must be paid for by the individual. Background checks are paid for at the front desk and completed online.

## Student Teachers

Occasionally, we allow students to teach a class they feel they have expertise in. The Teacher Coordinator will consider an application from a student if he/she meets the following requirements:

- The student is at least 16 years old
- The parent is willing to actively supervise the student teacher and the class and signs off on the student teacher application.
- The student goes through the same process as a regular teacher as well as submits an essay describing why they would like to teach at the Center.
- The class is approved by the Executive Director

## Substitute Teachers

Substitute teachers must go through the same processes as regular teachers in order to teach at the Center. Guest speakers are allowed without this process so long as the teacher is present in the classroom.

## Meetings

Teachers are also required to attend mandatory teacher meetings (once per semester).

## Teacher Expectations

- Make your class descriptions/expectations clear and adhere to them in your teaching
- Maintain good communication with parents and department heads throughout the term on our Wix App
- Start class on time even if your students are late
- End class 5 minutes early to allow for cleaning/prep for the next class and to ensure students get to their next class on time—*leave your classroom clean*
- Provide a syllabus and grade for core & specialty classes



- Be involved in the culture of the Center—you are encouraged to come to our events as you are able
- Charge a materials fee for any supplies you may need as the Center does not provide them
- Be professional in the way you conduct your class
- Be professional in how you speak to your students, parents, fellow teachers, staff, volunteers and leadership
- Make attendance a top priority – excessive absenteeism/class cancellations will not be tolerated
- Provide make up classes, regardless of who can attend

## Teacher Conduct

TruLearn is committed to protecting the students in our care. Because of this, TruLearn has implemented a physical contact policy that will promote a positive, nurturing environment while protecting our students. Physical contact in any form should not give the appearance of wrongdoing. The personal behavior of teachers or staff must foster trust at all times and be above reproach. The following guidelines are to be carefully followed by anyone working at TruLearn:

- Acceptable forms of physical contact include hugs from the side, high fives, pats on the upper back, touching the arm or shoulder. With smaller children, holding a hand is usually appropriate, especially in the context of keeping contact with the child to prevent an unsafe action.
- Inappropriate touching and displays of affection are forbidden. Any inappropriate touching and inappropriate displays of affection should be immediately reported to the TruLearn Education Committee. Inappropriate rough housing, butt slapping or touching is never appropriate. Full hugging, touching or patting any other parts of the body is not appropriate.
- Physical contact and affection should only be given when in the presence of other children or Center staff/teachers.
- Do not force any physical contact, touch, or affection upon a reluctant child. A child's preference not to be touched must be respected.
- Staff, teachers, and volunteers at TruLearn should adhere to the same dress code as the students. Modesty at all times is a requirement.

TruLearn recognizes that meeting the educational needs of students may occasionally require that staff members and teachers interact with them on an individual basis. Workers should observe the following guidelines when interacting with students:

- Staff members and teachers should conduct one-to-one meetings with an individual student at a time when others are present and where interactions can be easily observed. There will be no one-to-one meeting between a staff member or teacher and a student behind closed doors. If a circumstance arises where a private one-to-one meeting does occur, the staff member or teacher will notify the appropriate member of the TruLearn Educational Committee immediately before or after the meeting.
- Staff or faculty should strive to keep verbal interactions encouraging, constructive, and be ever mindful of their mission of aiding parents in the education of their children. Staff or faculty are expected to refrain from swearing in the presence of students.



- TruLearn staff members and faculty are expected to provide adequate supervision for children in their care while working at the Center.
- Staff members and teachers are prohibited from providing special gifts to any individual student. Special occasions or special accomplishments should receive group acknowledgement and can easily be rewarded with group recognition (i.e., give mention during announcements; have the entire class sing Happy Birthday, etc.). Any requests for variance from this policy must first be addressed to a member of the TruLearn Leadership Team.
- Staff members and teachers are prohibited from engaging in any sexually oriented conversations with students.
- Staff members and teachers are not permitted to discuss any inappropriate or explicit information about their own personal relationships, dating, or sexual activities with any student at the Center. This provision includes the use of cellular phones, text messages, email, instant messaging, and online chat rooms.
- TruLearn staff members and faculty are prohibited from possessing any sexually oriented materials (magazines, cards, videos, films, etc.) on Center property or in the presence of students.



# THE CENTER

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## Safety & Liability

All members, teachers, and staff are prohibited from the use, possession, or being under the influence of tobacco, alcohol, or recreational drugs while in the facility, during a Center activity, or while working with students at TruLearn. Members, teachers, and staff are prohibited from providing any of these to students.

For the safety of our members, we have:

- clearly marked emergency exits
- individual class rosters
- background checks for all teachers and staff

While we try to keep risks to a minimum, accidents do happen. As the activity of a class increases, so does the risk. By registering your child in classes, you acknowledge and accept all risks involved. TruLearn is not responsible for paying for any medical treatment required as a result of field trip or class participation.

On occasion, our teachers and staff may take pictures of classes and special events which may be used for publications and public relations. Written notification must be given to TruLearn before any photograph or video of any children will be used.

## Reporting Abuse

In the state of Alaska, any person who has cause to believe that a child has suffered abuse or neglect should report such incidents. **When in doubt, report!** The TruLearn Leadership Team will take appropriate action on behalf of the Center when a report of abuse occurs.

## Guests

We welcome guests at the Center! For everyone's safety, you must be registered to attend classes at the Center. However, occasional visitors are allowed. If your guests plan to participate in a class, please contact the teacher in advance for permission and to determine if there are enough materials available.



## Wellness Policy

By registering for classes, you are agreeing to any increased risk of sickness associated with participation. Please DO NOT come to TruLearn with any of the following:

- temperature of 100° F or higher
- green or murky discharge from the nose or eyes
- contagious rash
- vomiting and/or diarrhea
- productive cough with fever or sore throat
- head lice

Teach your children to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow and proper hand washing techniques in order to prevent the spread of germs at the Center.

## Inclement Weather

In the event of inclement weather, classes may be cancelled for the day. Make up day(s) may be offered by the center if the calendar allows.

## Pet Policy

We are dedicated to ensuring the health and safety of our members. Some members of our community are highly allergic to certain animals and some animals could become unpredictable in ways that could result in an injury. Out of precaution and consideration of our members, we cannot allow pets inside the TruLearn Resource Center during Center class hours. Teachers teaching animal-based classes will be allowed with special permission from Department Heads for special pet guests to make appearances during appropriate classroom purposes.

## Restroom Protocol

No adult can go into a restroom stall alone with a child that is not their own. If a child needs help in the restroom, the stall door must be propped open and another adult must be in eyesight. Students cannot be in the restroom together.

Elementary students may be accompanied to the restroom for supervision and assistance when needed. However, the student should receive the minimum amount of assistance needed based upon their individual capabilities. If a staff member or faculty must go to the restroom to check up on an individual child, they should:

- Seek out another person to accompany them.
- If another person is not available to accompany them, they should go to the exterior bathroom door, knock, and ask if the child needs assistance.
- If the child requires assistance, the worker should locate the child's parents to assist them.



- If the child's parents are not present, they should locate a second person to accompany them as they verbally assist the child from outside the restroom with the door open.
- Any assistance with the straightening or fastening of garments should only be done in the presence of another staff or faculty.
- Boys under 6 years old may accompany their mother into the girls' bathroom. Mothers should not accompany their boys into the boys' bathroom.
- Only one student in a bathroom stall at a time. Multiple students should never be in the same bathroom stall at the same time.

Diapers: Only parents/guardians may change diapers. If you aren't sure where the parent is, please ask an employee, teacher, or volunteer to locate them.

## Internet Policy

No computer at or related to TruLearn is to be used by staff members, faculty, or students to engage in computer chat room discussions or visit pornographic or sexually inappropriate websites. Violation of this policy can lead to discipline from the TruLearn Leadership Team. Any questions about inappropriate use of computers or the suitability of a particular website should be discussed with the TruLearn Leadership Team.

## Social Media

TruLearn has established a social networking policy to safeguard the students, staff, teachers, and the reputation of the Center. Recognize that there is no such thing as complete privacy on a social networking site and take care in anything you post online. Keep your privacy settings at appropriate levels to protect yourself and be judicious in your postings.

Staff and teachers are prohibited from following and/or being friends with current students or posting anything on a social site of a current student unless they are a relative or guardian of that student.

Staff and teachers must use discretion when following and/or being friends with TruLearn alumnae and parents. TruLearn expects staff and teachers to maintain professional relationships and a positive representation of TruLearn at all times. Consider both uneven power dynamics and that anything posted by staff and teachers is a reflection upon the Center when social networking.

## Political Advocacy

TruLearn is not a political entity, and as a 501(c)3 organization, we are not allowed to lobby for any political agendas. We do encourage our families to be involved in matters that concern their families and homeschool rights.





## Family Area

Members will have limited access to the kitchen & fridge. Please check with the Executive Director. Because this is not our building, we cannot leave food in the refrigerator overnight. Please clean up after yourself at all times.

Study space is available upon request. All students **MUST** be supervised and/or monitored by a parent or guardian when not in class, unless other arrangements are made with volunteer staff or other parents. TruLearn **does not provide childcare**.

Please be good stewards of this wonderful facility by leaving it cleaner than you found it. Any food left out will be disposed of at the end of the day. Any personal belongings without labels will be placed in the designated Lost & Found.

## Play Area

We have the wonderful area set up for parents to sit and children to play while you wait for other children to get done with classes. Because we do not offer childcare, parents are required to supervise their children in the play area.

## TruLearn Resource Room

The TruLearn Resource Room is a growing assortment of new and used quality books, curriculum, and hands on manipulatives. We carry everything from fiction novels to curriculum, as well as manipulatives and project-based activities. Curriculum can be checked out on a school year basis, and books can be checked out monthly. Time extensions can also be given when requested. Some of the curriculum will need to be paid for as it is a consumable. In that case, we can invoice your homeschool program for you, or you can pay with cash or with credit card.

Interested in donating or borrowing? Come by during business hours or give us a call at 907-841-3145.

## Coffee Shop

The Coffee Shop will offer coffee, tea, cinnamon rolls, muffins, cookies, and more. It is a place to eat, connect, study, and grow. We seek to be a place of community and relationship for all of the students and parents TruLearn. We are open to all those who are members when we have someone to run it, and we accept cash and credit card.

Due to space and remodeling, we will have a limited area at this time. Please stay in the designated area so we do not track food around the building.



## Lost & Found

Inevitably there will be items that get left behind at the Center. If and when we find them, we will place them in the Lost & Found in the Family Lounge. **Unclaimed items are donated on the first of each month.**



# TRULEARN FAMILY

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## Board of Directors

**President of TruLearn:** Michael Augustin  
[Michael@trulearnacademy.org](mailto:Michael@trulearnacademy.org)

**Vice President:** Evan Gorman  
[evan@trulearnacademy.org](mailto:evan@trulearnacademy.org)

**Secretary:** Vicky Shestopalov  
[Vicky@trulearnacademy.org](mailto:Vicky@trulearnacademy.org)

**Treasurer:** Daniel Stossmeister  
[dan@trulearnacademy.org](mailto:dan@trulearnacademy.org)

**Director:** Sarah Holbrook  
[Sarah@trulearnacademy.org](mailto:Sarah@trulearnacademy.org)

**Director:** Vikki Rusher  
[vikki@trulearnacademy.org](mailto:vikki@trulearnacademy.org)

## Officers

**Executive Director:** Serena Augustin  
[serena@trulearnacademy.org](mailto:serena@trulearnacademy.org)

**Administrative Assistant:** Lauren Miller  
[lauren@trulearnacademy.org](mailto:lauren@trulearnacademy.org)

## Education Committee

Serena Augustin  
Luz Gorman  
Missouri Olson

Please sign up for monthly giving at  
[www.trulearnacademy.org/donate](http://www.trulearnacademy.org/donate)

**Your gifts are tax deductible!**





# HANDBOOK AGREEMENT

As parents/guardians of \_\_\_\_\_, we understand that (*please initial*):

\_\_\_\_\_ Electronic devices are not allowed in class areas. The Center will confiscate any devices that students pull out in class areas. A \$5 fine will be collected before the device is returned.

\_\_\_\_\_ Students are expected to dress modestly while at the Center. Students who do not comply with the dress code will be asked to change into suitable attire before attending class.

\_\_\_\_\_ Disrespect towards other students or staff will not be tolerated and will fall under the “three strikes” clause of Center discipline.

\_\_\_\_\_ For all students, we agree to:

- Pick our student up no later than 10 minutes after their last class ends
- Schedule classes with no more than 30 minutes between classes without a parent present. Arrange for someone to supervise my child should there be more than 30 minutes between his/her classes.
- Make sure our student is arriving at class consistently and on time
- Hold our student accountable to finish assigned classwork

Three Strikes Policy for serious offences: violence, drug use, disrespect to teachers and staff

\_\_\_\_\_ **Discipline Policy First Offense:** Student and parent will talk with the teacher. Student will be asked to sign the notice of a “first warning.”

\_\_\_\_\_ **Discipline Policy Second Offense:** Parents will need to meet in person with a staff member or executive director. Student will be asked to pay a fine of \$50 before they can return to the Center.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Discipline Policy Third Offense:** Student will be expelled from the Center for the remainder of the semester without a refund of fees.

*By signing below, we affirm that we have read and agree with the TruLearn Handbook, including all policies and requirements for students. We understand that it is our responsibility to make sure all students arrive on time to classes at the Center and that they complete their work.*

Parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_