



St. John Lutheran  
**ACADEMY**

Parent Handbook and  
Operational Policies

2023 - 2024

# St. John Lutheran Academy

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Hamilton, Texas 76531  
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Church Office: (254) 386-3158  
stjohnlutheranacademy@gmail.com

## Parent Handbook & Operational Policies 2023-2024

### Admin

Hailey Partin, Academy Director  
Amanda Belvin, Assistant Director

### Preschool Staff

Dakota Stewart, 2's Teacher  
Morgan Eilers, 3's Teacher  
Amanda Belvin, 4's Teacher  
Nikki Bowman, Preschool Teacher Aide  
Jennifer Kidd, Afternoon Teacher

### Elementary Staff

Brittany Davis, Kindergarten Teacher  
Caitlin Moseley, 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher  
Sarah Koether, Elementary Teacher Aide  
Maureen Bakenhus, Special Teacher / Elementary Teacher Aide

### St. John Lutheran Academy Board of Directors

Sabrina Sellers, Board President  
Alex Reich, Kayla Edwards, Kristen Robinson, Melanie Housden, & Pam Kalbas

### Pastor

Pastor Aaron Kalbas

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## Letter to Parents:

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! It gives me great joy that you have chosen St. John Lutheran Academy to give your child their first experiences in Christian Education. As is said in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." We are excited to work hand in hand with you this year as your child grows spiritually, socially, and intellectually.

Only with your help can your child reach their true potential. Whether it is reading together, playing catch, joining in a tea party, attending Academy activities, or just talking about their day. You are an invaluable part of your child's education!

Communication with the Academy staff is also vital. If you have a question or comment, please let us know, either by e-mail: [stjohnlutheranacademy@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnlutheranacademy@gmail.com), phone: (254)-386-3332, or in person. But please, if you need to talk in depth with your child's teacher, make an appointment with her. In addition, look for our monthly calendar, parent newsletter, Facebook updates, Brightwheel messages, church newsletter, take-home folders, and the Parent Information Board across from the Director's office. All of these are great resources set up just for you!

Also, please read and keep this handbook available to double check philosophy, policies, procedures, programs and the plethora of details that make up our day. Still have questions? Don't hesitate to reach out!

The 1<sup>st</sup> Grade class will be taught by Caitlin Moseley. The Kindergarten (Kinderoo) class will be taught by Brittany Davis. The Mighty Lion class will be taught by Amanda Belvin. The Little Lamb class will be taught by Morgan Eilers. The Little Dove class will be taught by Dakota Stewart. Nikki Bowman will be taking on the role of our Morning Preschool Teacher Aide and will be assisting in the Little Dove, Little Lamb, and Mighty Lion rooms. Sarah Koether will be taking on the role of our Elementary Teacher Aide and will be assisting in our Kindergarten & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade rooms. Maureen Bakenhus will be taking on the role of our Elementary Specials Teacher and will be providing our Elementary kids with some fun extras like Music, Art, and Science. Our afternoon program will be taught by Jennifer Kidd.

I would also like to invite you to attend St. John if you are looking for a church home. We provide weekly programs for all ages as well as Sunday worship, Sunday school for the youth, and Bible Study for the adults.

Looking forward to a fantastic year!

In His Service,  
Hailey Partin - Academy Director

# St. John Lutheran Academy

## 2023-2024 School Calendar

August 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

September 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

October 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

November 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

December 2023						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

January 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

February 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

March 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

April 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

May 2024						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

CALENDAR LEGEND	
	First & Last Day of School
	Teacher Work Days / Student Holiday
	Early Release Days
	Staff & Student Holidays
	Events / Important Dates
	Director Conference

IMPORTANT DATES FOR ST. JOHN FAMILIES			
Aug 9th - 22nd	Teacher Work Days	February 14th	Valentine's Party
Aug 22nd	Open House / Meet The Teacher Night	February 19th	President's Day
Aug 28th	First Day of School	Feb 29th - Mar 2nd	Lutheran Teachers' Conference
Sept 4th	Labor Day	March 11th - 15th	Spring Break
Oct 9th - 10th	Columbus Day / Fall Break	March 28th	Easter Program & Ham Pick Up Day
Nov 7th - 8th	Director Conference	March 29th	Good Friday
Nov 17th	Fall Festival	April 1st	Easter Holiday Observed
Nov 20th - 24th	Thanksgiving Break	May 7th	Donuts with Grown-ups
Dec 10th	Christmas Program	May 20th	Splash Day
Dec 15th	Christmas Party (Early Release)	May 23rd	Promotions & Graduation
Dec 18th - Jan 5th	Christmas Break		Last Day of School (Early Release)
		May 24th	Teacher Work Day

## Mission Statement:

"Responding to Christ's call to live, learn, and share His love"

## Philosophy:

St. John Lutheran Academy is a part of the ministry of St. John Lutheran Church. Every child is a precious unique gift from God. The goal of our early childhood curriculum is to partner with parents to help each child reach their full potential spiritually, academically, and physically; as well as help them to develop emotionally, socially, and creatively – in a Christ-centered environment from a Lutheran perspective.

## Enrollment:

### Eligibility for Enrollment

Enrollment is limited to children 2 – 6 years of age by September 1st.

Children who turn two after September 1<sup>st</sup> are eligible to enroll after early registration closes on May 31<sup>st</sup> at the Director's discretion. Children who are younger than two after September 1<sup>st</sup> must complete:

- All required enrollment forms as listed below,
- A tour with the Director, and
- An interview and interview packet with the Director.

St. John Lutheran Academy reserves the right to first admit children who are members of St. John Lutheran Church in line with normal admission policies.

Class size will be limited according to the state regulations taking into consideration the best interest of the students.

St. John Lutheran Academy admits students of any race, color, sex, and national or ethnic origin, who meet the school's criteria for admission. St. John Lutheran Academy applies education policies, admission policies, and other school administered programs equally to all students.

### Enrollment Forms

For your child's safety and to comply with state regulations, **ALL enrollment papers must be completed, and on file in the Center BEFORE your child attends St. John Lutheran Academy.**

These forms include:

- Student Enrollment Information form
- Admission Information form (DFPS - Form 2935) Inclusive of:
- Up-to-date immunization records, physician's statement, necessary emergency medical contact information, and emergency medical authorization.
- Parent's Acknowledgement of Parent's Guide to Day Care
- Discipline and Guidance Policy
- St. John Lutheran Academy Discipline Plan



- Lunch Release Form
- Tuition Payment Agreement
- Parent agreement form and a notarized custody declaration, if applicable.
- Completed Allergy Emergency Plan for the child, if applicable.

## Allergy Emergency Plan

Per state regulations, St. John Lutheran Academy is required to have a completed food allergy emergency plan posted in the child care center at all times for a child that has been diagnosed by a health-care professional with a known food allergy. The child's health care professional and parent must sign and date the plan. The plan must be kept in the child's file. A food allergy emergency plan is an individualized plan prepared by the child's health care professional that includes: (1) a list of each food the child is allergic to; (2) possible symptoms if exposed to a food on the list; and (3) the steps to take if the child has an allergic reaction.

## Nondiscrimination Policy

St. John Lutheran Academy is an equal opportunity provider. We operate in accordance with Federal and State laws, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, handicap, religion, national origin or political belief. The age range and licensed capacity of each center are posted on the center's state license.

## Children with Special Needs

St. John Lutheran Academy is committed to serving all the children with special needs that we can without fundamentally altering the nature of the service we provide — group child care. If we determine that we are unable to meet your child's needs without modifying our practices to such an extent that the nature of the service we provide would be fundamentally altered, St. John Lutheran Academy reserves the right to ask you to find an alternative means of care.

## Tuition and Fees:

### Registration & Curriculum Fees

A non-refundable enrollment fee of \$75 (\$60.00 registration fee and \$15.00 curriculum fee) will be collected at the time of registration for each school year. By registering during early registration from April 11, 2023 – May 31, 2023, the registration fee is \$75.00; the registration fee is \$100.00 (\$85.00 registration fee and \$15.00 curriculum fee) after May 31, 2023. This fee is required before your child can attend St. John Lutheran Academy. This enrollment fee covers administration costs and is not part of your tuition.

### Tuition

**PRESCHOOL AGE:** At the time of enrollment, all Preschool students will be designated as one of the following Tuition Options for SPECIFIC DAYS. To ensure your child gets the most from his/her time at St. John, we require that if you choose the 3 Half Days or 3 Full Days that you select those days to be consecutive.

**ELEMENTARY AGE:** At St. John Lutheran Academy, we offer both Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> Grade as part of our Elementary School program. To ensure your child gets the most from his/her time at St. John, we require all of our Elementary age students to attend school 5 days a week.

St. John Lutheran Academy is fully functional on weekdays in accordance with the school calendar laid out on page 7 of this handbook. Although you may choose to keep your child at home some days, you must pay for the whole month, according to your child’s enrollment status.

Parents are responsible for paying tuition corresponding to their enrollment designation and the applicable policies designated below. Monthly payments are due at the first of the month. Daily payments are due on the day of the service. If a parent would like to change the enrollment status of their child, a written request should be submitted to the Academy Director. Program changes will only be allowed at the beginning of each month. Request must be turned in no later than 5 days before the beginning of the month. After assessment of the request, a written response will be given to the parent confirming whether or not the request can be granted and instructions for future payments.

## PRESCHOOL TUITION OPTIONS

Little Doves (2s) Tuition Options				Little Lamb (3s) & Mighty Lion (4s) Tuition Options			
Program Choices	Cost		Payment Frequency	Program Choices	Cost		Payment Frequency
3 Half Days	\$260	Per Month	Monthly Payment	3 Half Days	\$195	Per Month	Monthly Payment
4 Half Days	\$347	Per Month	Monthly Payment	4 Half Days	\$260	Per Month	Monthly Payment
5 Half Days	\$433	Per Month	Monthly Payment	5 Half Days	\$325	Per Month	Monthly Payment
3 Full Days	\$520	Per Month	Monthly Payment	3 Full Days	\$390	Per Month	Monthly Payment
4 Full Days	\$694	Per Month	Monthly Payment	4 Full Days	\$520	Per Month	Monthly Payment
5 Full Days	\$867	Per Month	Monthly Payment	5 Full Days	\$650	Per Month	Monthly Payment
Drop In Options				Drop In Options			
Early Drop Off	\$5	Per Day	Daily Payment	Early Drop Off	\$5	Per Day	Daily Payment
Lunch Drop In	\$5	Per Day	Daily Payment	Lunch Drop In	\$5	Per Day	Daily Payment
Half Day Drop In (Morning or Afternoon)	\$30	Per Day	Daily Payment	Half Day Drop In (Morning or Afternoon)	\$25	Per Day	Daily Payment
Full Day Drop In	\$60	Per Day	Daily Payment	Full Day Drop In	\$50	Per Day	Daily Payment

## ELEMENTARY TUITION OPTIONS

Kindergarten & 1st Grade Tuition			
Program	Cost		Payment Frequency
5 School Days	\$542	Per Month	Monthly Payment
Field Trip Fee	\$150	One Time Fee	Fee Due at Open House
Drop In Options			
Early Drop Off	\$5	Per Day	Daily Payment
After School Care	\$20	Per Day	Daily Payment

### Monthly Payments

**Monthly Tuition is due on the first school day at the beginning of the month.** All tuition fees are due and payable by the 10<sup>th</sup> day of each month. If your payment is not made in full by that date, you will be billed a late charge of \$25.00. If fees are still unpaid by the close of business of the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the month, St. John Lutheran Academy reserves the right to withdraw your child from the program.

### Drop In

**All drop-in fees are due on the day of service.** Drop-ins are allowed on a **reservation basis as room allows.** Parents need to reserve their space with the Academy Director **at least 24 hours ahead of time** and never make an assumption that there is going to be room for your child on any given day.

Drop-in rates are set regardless of the number of hours your child stays at the facility.

### After School Care

Our After School Care program is available for our Elementary students from 2:15pm-5:15pm. **After School Care fees are due on the day of service.** After School Care will be allowed on a **reservation basis as room allows.** Parents need to reserve their space with the Academy Director **at least 24 hours ahead of time** and never make an assumption that there is going to be room for your child on any given day.

If you are interested in having your child stay for After School Care every day, please reach out to the Academy Director to set a weekly payment plan in place, instead of a daily plan.

After School Care rates are set regardless of the number of hours your child stays at the facility.

## Payment

All payments should be made at the Academy during school hours or through your online Brightwheel portal. All cash or check payments should be placed in the locked tuition box located by the Academy Director's office. Please DO NOT hand payments to the Director or any Academy Staff member.

Checks should be made payable to St. John Lutheran Academy.

Cash payments MUST be enclosed in an envelope with the child's name, date paid, and amount enclosed. These should be placed in the tuition box.

## Returned Checks

If your check for tuition payment is returned, a \$30 fee will be charged to you. That fee must be paid immediately. If you have more than one check returned you may be put on a "cash" basis only for six months. If this problem continues, your child will not be allowed to return to school.

## Attendance:

In an effort to maintain a quality program and proper staffing, please notify the Director if your child will be absent on a scheduled day of attendance.

Your child's place in our program is reserved for the school term. For this reason, there will be no reduction in your tuition for absenteeism or vacation.

## Withdrawal from Program:

A fourteen (14) day written notice is required for a child's withdrawal from the program. In all cases, there will be no refunds for payments already received.

## Discharge Policy:

The Academy Director reserves the right to cancel the enrollment of a child including but not limited to the following reasons:

1. Non-payment or excessive late payments of tuition.
2. Not observing the rules of the Academy as outlined in this Parent Handbook.
3. The child has special needs which we cannot adequately meet with our current staffing patterns that may cause unnecessary burden on the program.
4. Physical and/or verbal abuse of staff or other children by a parent or child.
5. Upon recommendation of the Academy School Board.
6. The *Behavior Plan* was put into place and was unsuccessful.

## Return Policy:

A child will be allowed to return to the Academy upon approval of the Academy Director and provided there is adequate space in the classroom. All tuition prior to the discharge must be paid in full.

## Hours of Operation / Arrival and Departures:

### Hours of Operation

Academy hours of operation are 7:45 AM to 5:15 PM Monday thru Friday during the school year. All doors will remain closed until the school opens at 7:45 AM.

Early drop off may be arranged by informing the Director that your child needs to be dropped off no earlier than 7:30 AM. This must be arranged with the Director at least 24 hours prior.

At 8:00 AM class starts.

All Half Day Little Dove, Little Lamb, and Mighty Lion students must be picked up by 11:30 AM, without exceptions.

All Kindergarten & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade students must be picked up at 2:15 PM, without exceptions.

Full Day Students & After School Care Students must be picked up by 5:15 PM, without exceptions.

Pickup after these designated times will result in a late pick-up fee. Please see the Late Pick-Up Section on the next page for details.

During **ALL** school hours of operation, the doors will be locked. This includes during the pick-up windows laid out above. There is a door bell at the Academy entrance to be used if you need to come into the school.

### Arrival / Drop-Off Procedures

Upon arrival, parents are required, by state law, to leave the child in the care of a staff member who will sign them in for the day. All children must be escorted to and from the classroom by an adult.

#### Drop-Off Procedures:

- Student drop-off begins at 7:45 AM.
- Vehicles will enter the west side of the church parking lot (closest to Cheyenne Mesa), proceed behind the church, and drive under the awning between the church and Family Life Center. Drop-off will be under the awning. Following drop-off, vehicles will exit the parking lot onto Hwy 22.
- Parents will stay in their vehicle and the Academy Director or another Academy Staff Member will help the student(s) get out of the vehicle.
- Teachers will document drop-off time and parent name.
- In the case of a late drop off, parents will be required to walk their child to the Academy main entrance doors and ring the bell. Parents will not be allowed in the school at that time in an effort to not disturb the classes that have already begun.

### Departure / Pick-Up Procedures

**Each child must be signed out daily by the parent or the person responsible for taking your child from school. If this is not done, there will be a fee of \$10.** The sign-out area is located on a table across from the Academy Office.

**By state law, we are ONLY allowed to release a child to someone 18 years of age or older. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this law.**

St. John Lutheran Academy will not release your child to anyone, other than those authorized on your child's enrollment form, without written authorization from the parent. If your child will be picked up by someone other than the individual that regularly picks them up, then a written note should be sent with the child and given to the teacher prior to the pick-up.

Identification (valid driver's license) will be checked on ANY person we do not recognize on sight. Children will not be released to other children, i.e. older brothers and sisters, unless specifically listed on the enrollment form and he or she is 18 years of age or older.

Please do not allow your child to leave the building ahead of you. Your cooperation will help ensure the safety of your child.

#### Pick-Up Procedures:

- Pick-up will occur inside the classroom.
- Little Dove, Little Lamb, and Mighty Lion pick up time is 11:30 AM.
- Kindergarten & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade pick up time is 2:15 PM.
- Full Day students & After Care students MUST be picked up by 5:15 PM.
- All parents must sign their child out on the table across from the school office.

### Late Pick-Up

All Little Dove, Little Lamb, & Mighty Lion Half Day Program and Morning Drop-In students must be picked up by 11:30 AM, without exceptions. After 11:35 AM, a \$1 per minute late fee will be calculated. This late fee must be paid in cash in an envelope in the tuition box before the next class day. A Late Pickup Notice will be sent home in your child's folder.

All Kindergarten & 1<sup>st</sup> Grade students will be ready for pick-up at 2:15 PM, without exceptions. After 2:20 PM, a \$1 per minute late fee will be calculated. This late fee must be paid in cash in an envelope in the tuition box before the next class day. A Late Pickup Notice will be sent home in your child's folder.

All Full Day Program and Afternoon Drop-In students must be picked up no later than 5:15 PM, without exceptions. After 5:15 PM, a \$1 per minute late fee will be calculated. This late fee must be paid in cash in an envelope in the tuition box before the next class day. A Late Pickup Notice will be sent home in your child's folder.

Three late pick-ups will result in a conference with the Director for possible solutions.

### Transportation:

St. John Lutheran Academy does not provide any transportation to or from the school.

## Field Trips:

Transportation for field trips will be by school van or walking. Parents will be notified in writing of any field trips requiring transportation by van. A notice of any field trip will be posted at least 1 week prior to the field trip and will remain posted until the group returns. A staff member with current training in First Aid, CPR, and Vehicle Safety will be present on the field trips.

All students attending a field trip MUST wear their school shirt. This is for easy identification and the safety of your child. If your child is not wearing the school shirt he/she will not be allowed to attend the field trip and will remain on campus in a classroom with another teacher.

## Minimum Standards Licensing Inspection:

A copy of our Minimum Standards is located in the Director's office and is available for review by all parents. The Minimum Standards can also be found on the Department of Family and Protective Services website: <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/>

Our most recent licensing report is posted in the hallway of our school by the front door.

## Open Door Policy:

St. John Lutheran Academy has an open door policy. That means that parents are encouraged to visit the school during our hours of operation to observe their child, the Academy's operation, and program activities. Open communication between parents, teachers, and the Academy Director is essential to your child's success at St. John Lutheran Academy.

Special notices and announcements will be sent home in student folders, given to you through our parent letters, sent out via the Brightwheel app, shared on our Facebook page, and posted on the Parent Information Board across from the Academy Office. The use of bulletin boards, newsletters, and monthly calendars are some of the most common forms of communication with our parents.

St. John Lutheran Academy Teachers and Director also make themselves available whenever possible for informal chats about your child. It's an integral part of the St. John Lutheran Academy's concept. We encourage you to ask about your child's day, but please remember the staff on duty is responsible for a group of children and are unable to conduct a conference during that time. You may request a conference with your child's teacher, but please do so at least 24 hours in advance. Feel free to contact the Director about any questions or concerns you, as a parent, may have.

## Parent Comments or Concerns

At St. John Lutheran Academy we are always interested in your comments, both positive and negative, regarding the care and education that your child receives. Your child's Teacher and Director should be the first two contacts for a parent's constructive criticism. If, after giving the Teacher and the Director an opportunity to explain or correct any problem or question you may have, you are not satisfied, you may contact the St. John Lutheran Academy Board of Directors at (254) 386-3158 for further explanation.

## Parent - Facility Communication

In caring for your child, it is important that good communication exist between the home and St. John Lutheran Academy. If your child is experiencing a change in the home environment that may result in changes in behavior at the school it is important for you to notify the Director. The Director and/or your child's teacher will keep you informed of any behavioral problems that may occur with your child at the school. Every effort will be made to resolve any problem that may occur. If a problem cannot be resolved, St. John Lutheran Academy reserves the right to ask you to make alternative arrangements for the care of your child.

### School Supplies:

A School Supply list is included in the Enrollment Packet given to parents at the time of registration. In addition to basic school supplies, your child must also bring:

- Backpack – Please ensure the backpack is large enough for a normal sized folder to fit inside. **Must be labeled with your child's name.**
- Lunch box – For any student staying at the school through the lunch hour. **Must be labeled with your child's name.**
- Nap mat – For any student staying at the school through the afternoon, parents must provide a 1" or 1 ½" trifold red/blue nap mat. It MUST be a trifold and we DO NOT accept 2" mats or larger. **Must be labeled with your child's name.**
- Blanket and/or pillow - For any student staying at the school through the afternoon, parents must provide a blanket and pillow. We encourage the soft rolled nap mats. **Must be labeled with your child's name.**

### Academy Activities:

#### Bible Curriculum

All classes at St. John Lutheran Academy follow the Enduring Faith Bible curriculum, which is a wonderful program created by Concordia Publishing House. It is flexible and designed to meet the individual needs of the children in their Biblical Studies. The Bible Story for the week serves as a topic from which other areas will migrate. The children will have the opportunity to re-tell the Bible Stories in the Bible Story Learning Center. The bible story will be sent home each week.

#### Chapel

A special children's worship service for all children in our school will be held once a week. This special children's chapel service will be given by our Pastor, Aaron Kalbas, and will be directed to the children's level of understanding. In keeping with the Enduring Faith curriculum, Pastor will be covering the weekly Bible story during that time. It is such a special treat to get to go to chapel! Parents are always welcome to join us in the church for chapel each week. You can find your child's chapel schedule on your monthly calendar.



## Snacks and Meals

St. John Lutheran Academy furnishes nutritional snacks twice a day at the school. Children will say a prayer of thanks-giving before every meal and snack. Snacks are served mid-morning and mid-afternoon. A snack calendar will be sent home with your child each month.

St. John Lutheran Academy does not furnish breakfast or lunch. For those children staying for an extended day, parents must provide their lunch. Lunch must be brought in a labeled lunch box or bag. St. John Lutheran Academy is not responsible for the nutritional value of the lunch provided by the parent or for meeting the child's daily food needs. Lunch will be held between 11:30 pm -12:15pm.

If your child has any food allergies, please be sure those are indicated on their medical records and given to our Director. Daily snack menus are posted on our parent information board each month and a copy will be sent home with your child at the beginning of each month.

Parents can sign-up to bring snacks on particular days by informing the Director a week in advance. It is important to check with the Director before bringing food items into the center.

Arrangements can be made with the Director if you would like to provide a snack for a birthday party or special event. The Director will inform you of how many students you should plan for. All snack items brought in by parents MUST be store-bought or purchased from a licensed bakery. For the safety of our students, no homemade goods will be allowed.

## Circle Time

The group carpet is one of the main focal points of our classrooms at St. John Academy. It's a great place for reading a book, listening to a story, having a group lesson, or receiving instructions from the teachers. The students will participate in many learning activities and mini lessons on the carpet each day. Circle time allows the teachers to teach broad topics to the whole class while allowing children to learn important social skills in the classroom. The daily circle time routine will include the following activities:

- Calendar/Counting
- Weather
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Story Time
- Game or Activity
- Music and Movement
- Daily Prayer and Scripture Reciting

## Show and Tell

Show and Tell provides an opportunity to use descriptive language, concept thinking, and storytelling. It helps children develop effective communication. It also helps children practice being respectful when someone else is talking and enforces proper consideration of others.

The students at St. John Academy will participate in Show and Tell. They will be asked to bring something that goes along with the unit of study. A Show and Tell reminder can be found in your child's folder on the Monthly Calendar. Please send only one item for Show and Tell each week and only on the day that is set for your child's class.

## Arts and Crafts

Arts and crafts are an important part of the units of study. This may take the form of free expression with crayons or paint or may be a teacher-directed craft. Emphasis is always on the process, not the finished product. It is most important that the child create his/her own work of art.

## Music

Children are given many opportunities to express themselves through music. The children sing, dance and participate to creative movement exercises that provide opportunities for rhythm, listening and self-expression. In the classroom the children may sing and move to songs, and participate in other activities using various forms of music.

## Outdoor Play

Twice a day children are given outside free playtime on our playground, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. If the weather does not permit this outside time, we will have alternative play in the Family Life Center.

## Rest Time

All students who remain in the afternoon at St. John Lutheran Academy will be required to take a nap or rest break each day. Your child is not required to sleep, but this rest period is essential to overall happiness of the children and is required by Minimum Standards. **You must provide a trifold red/blue nap mat, a blanket, and a pillow if your child would like one. You will be required to take these items home at the end of each week to wash and return at the start of each week.** We also ask that you not drop off or pick up your child during our scheduled nap times which will be posted on the afternoon class schedule. We ask that you please keep special treasures at home; it is our policy that children do not bring these items as they can be broken or lost easily and cause a distraction. Exceptions can be made by the discretion of the Director.

## Preschool Curriculum

The teachers at St. John Lutheran Academy alternate teacher-directed and child-directed activities to provide a variation of activities and learning styles. Our classrooms are designed to nurture the total development of young children. Classroom activities provide opportunities for children to participate individually, in whole groups, and in small groups.

Our preschool teachers follow a scope-and-sequence curriculum plan for teaching letters and numbers through different thematic units keeping learning lively, interesting, and memorable. The curriculum meets the requirements established by the state of Texas for preschool levels, as well as the guidelines set by the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. The teachers build weekly plans around units of study. The content and experience offered vary according to the age of the children.

# Preschool Learning Centers

Learning Centers are an essential component of the curriculum at St. John Academy. Children learn best when they are actively engaged. Learning centers in the classroom promote independence, social skills, and creativity. They help children become more responsible as they learn through self-discovery. The classrooms at St. John Academy feature learning centers equipped with inviting and developmentally appropriate materials. The materials in the learning centers will be changed out regularly to coincide with the units of study. The Learning Centers include:

**Teacher Table** -- The teachers will work with small groups to teach letters, numbers, shapes, colors, etc. They will teach games and introduce activities before they are placed into the learning centers, so the children will know how to use them.

**ABC Center** -- The ABC center has many different activities that aid in teaching letters, sounds, rhyming, and sequencing. Children become familiar with letters and their sounds, organize letters to form words, learn to communicate ideas in written form, and become familiar with letter forms, words, phrases, and stories. Many times this center will be incorporated at the Teacher Table.

**Math Center** -- The Math Center is loaded with things to count! Counting and sorting helps develop small motor control and eye-hand coordination. It teaches one-to-one correspondence as they sort and count materials. Children learn to turn rote counting skills into counting items or sets of items, while learning to identify numbers. The children explore geometric shapes and compare the size of objects. The math center has many activities that help develop patterning skills. The children explore weight and measuring instruments, as well as clocks and sand timers, which aid in teaching the concept of time. These activities combined help children learn the vocabulary and skills for building word-problem concepts.

**Building / Block Center** -- The Building / Block Center is designed to allow children to develop coordination, refine motor skills, and learn about balance. Playing with blocks helps children develop math concepts such as size, shape, weight, space, and number. Blocks allow children to develop hand/eye coordination, use their imagination and creativity, and work together to form something bigger than they could have alone.

**Dramatic Play Center** -- The Dramatic Play Center incorporates a home area that includes materials, props, and equipment that encourage children to use their imagination and creativity to role play. Children will utilize puppets, household items, office machines, tools, phones, dress-up clothes, jewelry, hats, etc. Many times this center will be set up like a kitchen area which includes a kid-sized kitchen items. This center helps expand oral language and social interaction skills as children communicate with other students, help them to understand other people and learn about their needs and responsibilities, make decisions and solve problems, express ideas with words, and learn about the world as they recreate real-life situations.

**Science and Exploration Center** -- Children learn about the natural environment, develop problem solving and questioning skills, practice observation skills, compare, and measure. They will discuss, observe, and explore their environment by working with plants and insects, working with machines and magnets, making collections, weighing and measuring, and performing simple experiments.

**Art Center** -- The Art Center gives children the opportunity to exercise their imagination and creativity by experimenting with paint, crayons, markers, clay, scissors, paper, glue, etc. The Art Center helps children express their feelings and ideas, observe, plan, create, and complete a project, and learn about colors, textures, lines, and space.

**Library Center**--The Library Center is a quiet corner with books to help children develop early reading skills, letter and word recognition, pattern recognition, using their memory to recall familiar stories, and practicing proper handling of books. The more children are exposed to books, the more they learn to love them.

**Puzzle Center**--The Puzzle Center allows children to develop hand/eye coordination by putting puzzles together, discover the properties of pictures and how they are made up of different things, develop space and shape concepts, and use imagination and creativity to visualize the puzzles as they put them together.

**Bible Story Center**--The Bible Story Center is a place children are encouraged to re-tell the Bible stories that they learn in class on the large flannel board. There will also be a Children's Bible for them to explore.

Children are active learners who touch, feel, experiment, and create. Learning centers are designed to relate to the world of active learners and planned to encourage their involvement. Preschool children are very interested in the world in which they live, and learning centers are a symbolic representation of their world.

## Elementary Curriculum

The teachers at St. John Lutheran Academy alternate teacher-directed and child-directed activities to provide a variation of activities and learning styles. Our classrooms are designed to nurture the total development of young children. Classroom activities provide opportunities for children to participate individually, in whole groups, and in small groups.

We are excited to share that we have purchased a new curriculum this year for our elementary classes! Our elementary teachers will be following the Little Minds at Work Curriculum, which is a very comprehensive curriculum created specifically for this age group. Each class has an age appropriate scope-and-sequence for teaching Science of Reading Guided Phonics, Writing, Literacy, Math, Social Studies, and Science. The curriculum is TEK aligned and meets the requirements established by the state of Texas for elementary levels. The teachers will be implementing their weekly plans around each unit of study as well as having centers available throughout the room for students to explore and further their understanding of the topics being taught that week.

Each month your child's teacher will be sending home a personalized progress report. We encourage you to schedule parent/teacher conferences to go through these progress reports together and ask any questions you may have.

## Elementary Specials

St. John Lutheran Academy is excited to share that we will be offering a Specials Class once a week this year for our elementary students. This will be an exciting class and a privilege to join each week! Specials time will offer students the opportunity to grow and learn about in art, music, and science.

## Volunteers:

### Parent Volunteers

We are always eager to accept volunteer help from our parents. We believe that you will become more familiar with the school's program when you are actively involved. From time to time we may have a special need that we will let you know about. If you have a particular talent that you feel we could utilize, please let us know! All volunteers who visit the Academy are subject to have a background check done as well as the requirements as described in the Minimum Standards. Please see the Director for further information.

### Church Member Volunteers

Since St. John Lutheran Academy is a ministry of St. John Lutheran Church, it will be common for there to be volunteers from the church helping with lesson preparation, snacks, and centers in the classroom. All volunteers who visit the Academy are subject to the requirements as described in the Minimum Standards.

## Discipline and Guidance:

We believe that your child deserves to feel good about his/her self. A healthy self-image comes from positive experiences like being praised for good behavior and repeatedly experiencing success.

St. John Lutheran Academy's discipline guidelines are fair, consistent, and encourage children to make wise decisions. At St. John Lutheran Academy, discipline consists of character-building and responsibility, positive reinforcement, redirection, or "sit and watch". The use of physical punishment is against our policy and is not tolerated, no exceptions.

Parents will be notified when a behavior is unacceptable. If the child's behavior does not improve, the school has the right to withdraw the student from the program.

The discipline plan at St. John Lutheran Academy is displayed in a Christ-like manner by praising good behavior, changing the environment, redirecting a child, or quietly removing a child from the group when necessary. Children will be taught expectations for correct behavior, proper manners, and encouraged to live and act accordingly.

The discipline plan consists of the following strategies:

- Encouraging children to "use their words" and to problem solve when having a disagreement with another child. Facilitating children in their attempts to settle their own disputes.
- Redirecting behavior when this seems potentially effective.
- Giving children two favorable choices, as well as encouraging them to, "make good choices."
- Separating a child from the group. A child may be asked to sit in a "think about it chair" for a short period of time to give the child a chance to regain control if they are having a difficult time. "Think about it" time will be age appropriate in length and done within the classroom.
- Counseling children individually about their behaviors.

- Making parents aware of disciplinary concerns and working together to create a discipline plan.

A very important part of the school experience is helping children learn how to get along in the world and enjoy being with other children, as well as following the direction of an adult other than their parent. The teachers at St. John Lutheran Academy will focus on the positive behaviors of the children and reinforce those behaviors as often as possible.

## Chronic Disruptive Behavior

We will make every effort to work with the parents of children having difficulties in our program. A chronic disruptive behavior may include but is not limited to:

- Physical harm to self, or others
- Chronic biting
- Verbal outbursts, profanity, and/or disrespectful behavior toward adults or children
- Uncontrollable behavior of any kind

We are here to provide quality care for all children and their families. When a child displays chronic disruptive behavior that has been determined to be upsetting to the physical or emotional well-being of themselves or another child, the following actions may be required:

**Initial Consultation:** The Academy Director may deem it necessary to have a conference with the parent(s) of a student. The problem will be defined on paper. Goals will be established and the parent will be involved in creating approaches towards solving the problem. A form will be signed by the Director and parents stating concerns.

**Second Consultation:** If the initial plan for helping the child proves unsuccessful, the parent will again be required to meet with the Academy Director. Another attempt will be made to identify and document the problem, outline a new approach to the problem and discuss the consequences if progress is not apparent.

**Withdrawal:** If the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> plans have been followed and no progress has been made towards solving the problem documented, the child may be withdrawn from the program. The Academy Director has the right to have a child withdrawn from the program for any reason at any time if necessary. If a child is withdrawn from the program, no refunds will be made of any monies already paid to the school.

**Suspension:** The Academy Director may immediately suspend a child from the program at any time a student exhibits a behavior that is harmful to themselves or others. A parent may be called at any time the child exhibits uncontrollable behavior that cannot be modified by the school staff. That parent may be asked to take the child home immediately. Suspensions from the Academy program may vary from a few hours to an indefinite period. If a child is suspended from the program, no refunds will be made of any monies already paid to the school.

## Injuries:

The staff at St. John Lutheran Academy makes every effort to ensure the safety of your child. Unfortunately, accidents may occur. In caring for your child, we will ensure you are aware of any of your child's injuries or illnesses that occur at the school. St. John Lutheran Academy has permission to take such reasonable measures as are, in the judgment of the school, necessary to the welfare and safety of the child. The Academy will administer first-aid including cleaning wounds and applying antiseptics unless parents advise otherwise in writing. All staff members have been certified in Pediatric First Aid, as well as CPR.

In case of a medical emergency, we will call 911 and then parents will be notified immediately afterwards. If we cannot reach a parent, we will call the person you have indicated on the enrollment form to make medical emergency decisions about your child. Please keep these numbers updated on all enrollment forms. Your signed emergency medical release will also assist us in getting prompt medical attention in case a parent/guardian cannot be reached. The child will then be taken to Hamilton General Hospital Emergency Room or Clinic, or an emergency vehicle will be called. If needed, the child will be given first aid or CPR by the Academy staff.

All other minor injuries will be recorded by the teacher and parent will be informed at pick-up. In some cases an illness/incident report will be completed by the teacher. The parent will need to sign this form and a copy will be retained for our records.

## Illness:

We ONLY accept well children. You are the best judge of your child's health and we trust you will not bring a sick child to the Academy. Any child with an oral temperature of 100.4 degree or higher (under the arm temperature of 99.4 or greater) may NOT attend. We are depending on you to help us maintain this policy. Your child should be kept at home if he/she shows any sign of illness. Please do not administer Tylenol, Motrin, etc. and then bring your child to school. This only masks the problem and risks the wellness of our other students. Should your child become ill during the day, you will be notified to pick up your child promptly.

If your child is seen by a doctor and diagnosed with a noncontagious illness, you may bring him/her back the next day with a note from the doctor stating such.

For the well-being of all children in our classroom, you must keep your child home if:

- He/she has a fever or has had one during the previous 24 hours;
- He/she has a heavy nasal discharge;
- He/she has a constant cough;
- He/she is fussy, cranky, and generally not himself;
- He/she has symptoms of a communicable disease;
- He/she has diarrhea or vomiting during the previous 24 hours;
- He/she has head lice, pink eye, or other contagious skin conditions.

Parents must notify the school if a child has been exposed to a communicable disease outside of the Academy.

If your child is sent home due to illness, he/she cannot return to the school until he/she has been free from symptoms for 24 hours. If they were sent home due to fever, vomiting, or diarrhea they must be out a complete 24 hours from the time sent home. A form will be sent home with the child stated the earliest time they are able to return. Illnesses that are highly contagious (i.e. pink eye) will require a release by a health care professional before being allowed back at the school. These rules will be strictly enforced. This allows your child time to recover and stop the spread of infection to other children.

Although multiple levels of sanitation and disinfectants to kill germs are used daily at the school, sick children exposed to other children can cause a spread of the illness. Please have a back-up sitter for those times when your child is ill and cannot attend.

**If your child is sick, tuition must still be paid for length of time child is absent.**

## Covid-19 Illness Policy:

Any child who has any of the following new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19 may not enter St. John Lutheran Academy:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19

In the case of a student who was diagnosed with COVID-19, the individual may return to school when all three of the following criteria are met: at least 1 day (24 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); and the individual has improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and at least 5 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; or

In the case of an student who has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to school until the individual has completed the same three-step criteria listed above; or If the student has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to school before completing the above self-isolation period, the individual must obtain a medical professional's note clearing the individual for return based on an alternative diagnosis.

A student with known close contact to a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19 cannot return to school until the end of the 5-day self-quarantine period from the last date of exposure.

If a parent believes that they or the child has had close contact to someone with COVID-19 but are not currently sick, they should monitor their health for the above symptoms during the 5 days after the last day they were in close contact with the individual with COVID-19.

## Medication:

Medication is not dispensed or distributed by the teachers or director at the Academy. If your child is in need of medication throughout the day, it is the responsibility of the parents to come to the school and give it to their child. Please tell you child's teacher if you have given your child a medication that could cause drowsiness or a change in toileting habits.

## Immunization Requirements:

Your child has 2 weeks from their birthday to get the required vaccines. If vaccines are not received by 2 weeks after his/her birthday, your child will not be permitted to attend our program until the vaccine requirements are met. **Tuition must be paid for the length of time your child is out.**



Academy immunization requirements follow the guidelines set by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

This chart summarizes the vaccine requirements incorporated in Title 25 Health Services, §§97.61-97.72 of the Texas Administrative Code (TAC). This chart is not intended as a substitute for consulting the TAC, which has other provisions and details. The Department of State Health Services is granted authority to set immunization requirements by the Human Resources Code, Chapter 42.

Age at which child must have vaccines to be in compliance:	Minimum Number of Doses Required of Each Vaccine							
	Diphtheria / Tetanus / Pertussis (DTaP)	Polio	Hepatitis B (HepB) <sup>1</sup>	<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b (Hib) <sup>2</sup>	Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) <sup>3</sup>	Measles, Mumps, & Rubella (MMR) <sup>1,4</sup>	Varicella <sup>1,4,5</sup>	Hepatitis A (HepA) <sup>1,4</sup>
0 through 2 months								
By 3 months	1 Dose	1 Dose	1 Dose	1 Dose	1 Dose			
By 5 months	2 Doses	2 Doses	2 Doses	2 Doses	2 Doses			
By 7 months	3 Doses	2 Doses	2 Doses	2 Doses	3 Doses			
By 16 months	3 Doses	2 Doses	2 Doses	3 Doses	4 Doses	1 Dose	1 Dose	
By 19 months	4 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	4 Doses	1 Dose	1 Dose	
By 25 months	4 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	4 Doses	1 Dose	1 Dose	1 Dose
By 43 months	4 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	4 Doses	1 Dose	1 Dose	2 Doses

### 2023 - 2024 Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Child-Care

A complete Hib series is two doses plus a booster dose on or after 12 months of age (three doses total). If a child receives the first dose of Hib vaccine at 12 - 14 months of age, only one additional dose is required (two doses total). Any child who has received a single dose of Hib vaccine on or after 15 - 59 months of age is in compliance with these specified vaccine requirements. Children 60 months of age and older are not required to receive Hib vaccine.

If the PCV series is started when a child is seven months of age or older or the child is delinquent in the series, then all four doses may not be required. Please reference the information below to assist with compliance:

- For children seven through 11 months of age, two doses are required.
- For children 12 - 23 months of age: if three doses have been received prior to 12 months of age, then an additional dose is required (total of four doses) on or after 12 months of age. If one or two doses were received prior to 12 months of age, then a total of three doses are required with at least one dose on or after 12 months of age. If zero doses have been received, then two doses are required with both doses on or after 12 months of age.
- Children 24 months through 59 months meet the requirement if they have at least three doses with one dose on or after 12 months of age, or two doses with both doses on or after 12 months of age, or one dose

on or after 24 months of age. Otherwise, one additional dose is required. Children 60 months of age and older are not required to receive PCV vaccine.

For MMR, Varicella, and Hepatitis A vaccines, the first dose must be given on or after the first birthday. Vaccine doses administered within 4 days before the first birthday will satisfy the requirement.

Families who choose to be exempt from vaccinations for reasons of conscience must submit a notarized affidavit from the Department of State Health.

For more information visit: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/default.shtm>

## Vaccines

DTaP: Diphtheria, tetanus, and pertussis (whooping cough); record may show DT or DTP

IPV: Inactivated Polio virus

Hib: *Haemophilus influenzae* type b vaccine

MMR: Measles, mumps, and rubella vaccines combined

HepB: Hepatitis B vaccine

HepA: Hepatitis A vaccine

Varicella: Chickenpox vaccine

PCV: Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine

## Shot Records:

Parents are required by law to provide a current shot record at time of enrollment prior to the child being able to attend. Students will not be permitted to start any program until this is received. As immunizations are given throughout the year, a copy of the updated record **MUST** be given to the office. This is mandated by the state. A signature or stamp of the child's doctor is required on the record.

## Hearing & Vision Screening Requirements:

Along with your child's immunization records, the Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act requires all children age four and older by September 1 to be screened for vision and hearing problems upon entering a licensed facility for the first time.

We will conduct the screening at the school in the fall. Written evidence of this screening must be on file in the school office. Parents are ultimately responsible for the vision and hearing screening. This screening can also be done by the child's physician.

## Clothing:

When dressing your child for school, please remember to check the weather and make sure your child is dressed appropriately. Remember that they will be using paint, glue, markers, playing in sand, etc. so please dress children in comfortable play clothes and tennis shoes.

**Children are not allowed to wear flip flops or sandals without a back strap.** Please bring appropriate winter clothing for cold months, we do go outside.

**Please label all clothing and personal articles and bring an extra set of clothing to be kept at the center.** Soiled clothing should be taken home and replaced with a fresh set the next day. Even older children occasionally spill their drinks or get paint on their clothes!

### Animals:

From time to time, St. John Lutheran Academy may have classroom pets that meet the requirements by Texas Child Care Licensing. A notice to parents will be posted outside any classroom door when a pet is present.

If you would like to bring in a pet for Show and Tell please make arrangements in advance with the Director. Some children are allergic to animals and advance notice must be given to all parents. Proof of current vaccinations for the animal is also required. Due to the high risk of contracting and spreading salmonellosis, the Academy does not allow children to bring chickens, ducks, and reptiles such as snakes, turtles, lizards, iguanas, and amphibians, such as frogs and toads.

### Treasures from Home:

Toys are not to be brought from home unless specifically requested for "Show and Tell" by the teacher or if they are used by the child to make him/her feel more secure. Other toys can be easily lost or broken and can become sources of conflict between children. St. John Lutheran Academy will not be responsible for toys brought to the center.

### Lost Articles:

We cannot replace lost articles. If your child brings money or something valuable to St. John Lutheran Academy, it is important that the teacher or Director be informed. Please check in lost and found if an item is missing.

### School Programs and Parties:

We will celebrate the following events during the school year: Fall/Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine's Day, 100<sup>th</sup> day of school, Easter, class promotions, and Graduation for the Kindergarten class. All of these events will be held during school hours with the exception of our Christmas Program, which will be held on Sunday afternoon. Each family may be asked to help in contributing refreshments, favors, or assistance for these events. Information will be posted in advance of each event.

Birthdays and other events may be celebrated at the Academy during snack or lunch time, but presents are not to be exchanged. If a birthday is to be celebrated away from school, we ask that you not bring the invitations to school unless the entire class is invited. Please notify the teacher in advance if you wish to bring snacks for a birthday.

## School Closing Policy:

If conditions cause Hamilton ISD to be closed, St. John Lutheran Academy will also be closed. We will operate at the discretion of the Director for the safety of the children. Announcements will be made on KCLW (900 FM), KWXV (Channel 25), our Academy Facebook page, and thru the Brightwheel app.

## Pesticides:

St. John Lutheran Academy periodically uses pesticides as a part of our total building maintenance.

## Parent Tax Statement:

A tax statement will be available through Brightwheel for parents of each child enrolled in the school to access.

## Custody Situations:

St. John Lutheran Academy prefers NOT to get involved with custody disputes and will follow a court order exactly as written. If your family has a court order on file, you must provide us with the most recent copy. *PLEASE NOTE: PER STATE LAW, IN THE ABSENCE OF A COURT ORDER, BOTH PARENTS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS.* With this being said, it is imperative that all enrollment forms are completed with both parents information. A copy of a child's birth certificate may be requested at the Director's discretion. In the event that a custody dispute takes place on our property, the local police will be called and asked to handle the dispute. Our staff will not be placed in the middle of such disputes. If a custody issue creates a risk for our facility or staff, St. John Lutheran Academy has the right to terminate care immediately.

## Emergency and Relocation Plans:

### First Aid Kits

First Aid kits are located in each of the classrooms and in the main Academy office.

### Emergency Backpack

The emergency backpacks are located in the Academy Office and the Kindergarten classroom.

The Backpack includes:

- Children's' emergency information sheet
- First Aid Kit
- Emergency supplies

## Bad Weather / Tornado

A tornado/bad weather drill will be completed every 3 months. All St. John Lutheran Academy classrooms and staff shall evacuate to the bathrooms. Staff will remain there with the children until permission to return is given by the Director. The Director is responsible for getting the backpack to the designated area.

## Fire

The Academy classes should follow the emergency exit plan posted in each classroom. All staff and children will practice a fire drill once a month. Everyone is to be out of the building in 3 minutes. Our fire location meeting place is the East side of the school. Everyone is to meet there and wait. Staff needs to have a head count, which will be compared to the daily sign-in sheets which the director will have. All children must be accounted for at that time. The Director is responsible for calling the fire department. Fire extinguishers are located in each classroom, the kitchen, and hallway. The Director will be responsible for getting the emergency backpack to the designated area.

## Armed or Harmful Person on Property

In the event of a gun threat or presence of an armed person outside or inside the church or school building, the Academy Director and/or Assistant Director will call the authorities or 911. A code word will be given to the staff to notify such a case. If a harmful person is directly inside the building then all staff members will follow our Academy lock-down procedure and remain there until permission is given by the Director or authorities to come out.

## Preventative Safety

All teachers should be aware of their classes and the church environment at all times. Looking for possible points of danger, all teacher supplies, etc., could pose a threat to children and must be kept out of children's reach. Plug covers should always be kept in place and broken items should be reported to the Director. Always be on alert for safety of the children. If an unknown person is in the Academy entry way, do not allow them through until proper identification is known. Each classroom is equipped with telephones allowing direct communication amongst the teachers and staff.

## Relocation Plan

In case of a weather, threat, or harmful situation inside the school, the Academy staff and Director have been formally trained with the local authorities and have a set plan in place. Children will remain their teacher and parents will be notified ASAP. Staff will have a head count, the sign-in sheets in hand and the emergency backpack.

## Child Abuse:

### Awareness

All members of the St. John Lutheran Academy staff participate in training annually regarding the prevention and response to abused and neglected children. Additional information about child abuse can be found in this handbook in the "Child Abuse" section, the Enrollment Packet and on the parent information board.

### Definition

Abuse is the physical, mental, or sexual mistreatment, neglect of the health and welfare, or the exposure to any unreasonable risk of a child, including the failure to help, remove or prevent a child from being subjected to abuse. The word child is defined as anyone between the ages of birth and 18 years.

- Physical abuse includes but is not limited to: striking, shoving, shaking or hitting a child, even if it is intended as discipline. It also includes a child being left in a situation where the child could be exposed to physical injury.
- Mental abuse includes but is not limited to: subjection to regular humiliation, yelling at, being ignored or blamed for things beyond their control.
- Sexual abuse includes but is not limited to: direct sexual contact such as intercourse, other genital contact or touching but also includes being made to watch sexual acts, look at an adult's genitals, pornography or its production.

Neglect of a child includes (1) failure to provide a child with food, clothing, shelter and/or medical care; and/ or (2) leaving a child in a situation where the child is at risk of harm.

### Preventing Child Abuse

#### **Ten Ways to Help Prevent Child Abuse**

- Be a nurturing parent: *Children need to know that they are special, loved and capable of following their dreams.*
- Help a friend, neighbor or relative: *Being a parent isn't easy. Offer a helping hand take care of the children, so the parent(s) can rest or spend time together.*
- Help yourself: *When the big and little problems of your everyday life pile up to the point you feel overwhelmed and out of control – take time out. Don't take it out on your kid.*
- If your baby cries...*It can be frustrating to hear your baby cry. Learn what to do if your baby won't stop crying. Never shake a baby – shaking a child may result in severe injury or death.*
- Get involved: *Ask your community leaders, clergy, library and schools to develop services to meet the needs of healthy children and families.*
- Help to develop parenting resources at your local library.
- Promote programs in school: *Teaching children, parents and teachers prevention strategies can help to keep children safe.*
- Monitor your child's television and video viewing: *Watching violent films and TV programs can harm young children.*
- Volunteer at a local child abuse prevention program: *For information about volunteer opportunities, call 1.800.CHILDREN.*

- Report suspected abuse or neglect: *If you have reason to believe a child has been or may be harmed, call your local department of children and family services or your local police department.*

## Responding to Child Abuse

Child abuse and neglect are against the law in Texas, and so is failure to report suspected cases of child abuse. If we/you suspect a child has been abused or neglected, the law requires that we/you make a report to the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (DPRS). Persons making reports in good faith and without malicious intent are protected by law from liability, and their identities are kept confidential. Persons making false and malicious reports are open to the scrutiny of the criminal justice system.

There are two options for reporting abuse, neglect and exploitation to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services:

**By Phone:** Call the Abuse Hotline, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, toll-free **1-800-252-5400** from anywhere in the US to report abuse or neglect that occurred in Texas.

**By Secure Internet Website:** From your internet browser, go to <https://www.txabusehotline.org>. When you get to the web site, there will be directions to the links to report abuse or neglect against children. If you have trouble or questions about making a report on the website, call (512) 929-6784 or **1-800-252-5400** for help.

You can also visit the DPRS website at [www.tdprs.state.tx.us/childcare](http://www.tdprs.state.tx.us/childcare). Our local DPRS licensing office is located in McLennan County at 801 Austin Avenue, Waco, Texas 76703, and their phone number is (254) 756-5571.

Upon the observation of any inappropriate behavior and after the report of such behavior, all staff is expected to treat any observation or report with confidentiality and respect for the persons involved; cooperate fully with civil authorities, the Academy Director, and the agents of St. John Lutheran Church.

## Gang-Free Zones:

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature, Regular Session, Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code includes section 42.064, effective September 1, 2009. This new statute requires that information about “gang-free zones” be distributed to parents and guardians of children in care at licensed child care facilities. The gang-free zone is within 1,000 feet of St. John Lutheran Academy. Any gang-related criminal activity or anyone engaging in organized criminal activity within 1,000 feet of St. John Lutheran Academy is in violation of this law and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law. If any criminal activity should occur, St. John Lutheran Academy will notify parents in writing.

## Safety of Children's Products:

In accordance with the Senate Bill 95 of the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature, Regular Session, 2009, St. John Lutheran Academy certifies that all bulletins and notices issued by the United States Product Safety Commission regarding unsafe children’s product have been reviewed. Also, to the best of our knowledge, all children’s products in St. John Lutheran Academy are safe and in compliance.

A current list of all toy hazard recalls by the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission is posted in the front of our school and available for review by all parents and guardians. You may also view the most current updates on line at [www.cpsc.gov/](http://www.cpsc.gov/)

## Policy Changes:

If there are any changes in the Parent and Operating Handbook, a written notice of the policy change will be sent home to parents in the children's folder with a request for a signature acknowledging the policy change.

***“Train a child the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”***

***Proverbs 22:6***



## Parent Acknowledgement:

I have read the Parent and Operational Policies Handbook and fully understand and agree to uphold all of the policies as set forth in the Parent and Operational Policies Handbook of St. John Lutheran Academy. If I do not follow these policies, I understand that St. John Lutheran Academy reserves the right at any time to remove my child from the program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date