

St. John Lutheran Preschool and Kindergarten



Parent Handbook and Operational Policies

2018 - 2019

St. John Lutheran Preschool

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Parent Handbook & Operational Policies 2108-2019

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Stephanie Batla, President
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Rev. Keith Reich

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Letter to Parents

Welcome to the 2018-2019 Preschool year! It gives me great joy that you have chosen St. John 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 will 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 be reading together, playing catch, joining in a tea party, attending Preschool activities or just talking about their day, you are an invaluable part of your child's education.

Communication with the Preschool staff is also vital. If you have a question or comment, let us know, either by e-mail stjohnlutheranpreschool@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 entries, Remind 101, the church newsletter, e-mails, take-home folders and the Parent Information Board across from the Preschool office. All of these are great resources.

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? Give us a call!

The Kinder/Bridge class will be taught by Tiffani Logan, the Mighty Lions will be taught by Kayla Edwards and Haley Turner, and the Little Lambs will be taught by Kayla Edwards and Elizabeth James. We are also welcoming Jacy Virnau and Mary Jo Singleton to our team this year.

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,
Tiffani Logan - Director

Important Dates

- Preschool Opens on Monday, August 27
- Last Day of School Friday, May 10
- Preschool Closes on Friday, May 17

Student Holidays

We will have **no school** on the following holidays:

September 3	Labor Day
October 8	Staff Development Day
November 19-23	Thanksgiving Holidays
December 21 -January 4	Christmas Holidays
January 24 & 25	Lutheran Teachers' Conference
February 18	President's Day
March 11-15	Spring Break
April 19	Good Friday
April 22	Bad Weather Day

Early Release Days

School will **close at 12:00pm** on the following days:

December 20	Early Dismissal for Christmas
May 24	Last Day of Preschool

Class Events

- Christmas Program – Little Lambs, Mighty Lions and Kinder / Bridge – Sunday, December 16
- Kinder / Bridge Easter Party – April 17
- Little Lamb Easter Party – April 18
- Mighty Lions Easter Party – April 17
- Kinder Send-Off Program for the Mighty Lions will be Sunday, May 12, 2019 at 3:00 P.M
- Graduation Program for Kinder / Bridge will be Sunday, May 12, 2019 at 1:00 P.M.

Mission Statement

“Responding to Christ’s call to live, learn, and share His love”

Philosophy

St. John Lutheran Preschool 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 prospective.

Enrollment

Eligibility for Enrollment

Enrollment is limited to children three, four and five years of age by October 1. Our facility is not equipped to with a diaper changing station. Therefore, according to the DFPS minimum standards we are not allowed to enroll children who are not potty trained.

Children who turn three after October 1 are eligible to enroll after early registration closes on May 30 at the director’s discretion. Children who are younger than three after October 1 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 Preschool 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 Preschool admits students of any race, color, sex and national or ethnic origin, who meet the school’s criteria for admission. St. John Lutheran Preschool 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 Preschool. 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 Preschool Discipline Plan

- Talent Release Form/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 Preschool 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 Preschool 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 Preschool 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 Preschool 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 March 20th, 2018 – May 30th, 2018, the registration fee is \$75.00; the registration fee is \$100.00 (\$85.00 registration fee and \$15.00 curriculum fee) after May 30th, 2018. This fee is required before your child can attend St. John Lutheran Preschool. This enrollment fee covers administration costs and is not part of your tuition.

Tuition

At the time of enrollment, all children 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, all Little Lambs are enrolled in Tuesday/Thursday mornings and all Mighty Lions are enrolled on Monday/Wednesday/Friday mornings.

St. John Lutheran Preschool is fully functional on weekdays in accordance with the calendar laid out in the “Important Dates” section of the 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. If a parent would like to change the enrollment status of their child, a written request should be submitted to the Preschool Director. 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.

Tuition Options	Designed for	Cost		Payment Frequency
2 Half Days	Little Lambs <i>Tues/Thurs Only</i>	\$100	Per Month	Monthly Payment
3 Half Days	Little Lambs/Mighty Lions	\$150	Per Month	Monthly Payment
4 Half Days	Little Lambs/Mighty Lions	\$200	Per Month	Monthly Payment
5 Half Days	Little Lambs/Mighty Lions	\$225	Per Month	Monthly Payment
Kinder/Bridge	Kindergarten OR Kinder/Bridge	\$265	Per Month	Monthly Payment
All Day Every Day	All Students	\$135	Per Week	Weekly Payment
All Day Every Day Kinder	Kindergarten OR Kinder/Bridge	\$150	Per Week	Weekly Payment
4 Full Days	Little Lambs/Mighty Lions	\$120	Per Week	Weekly Payment
3 Full Days	Little Lambs/Mighty Lions	\$100	Per Week	Weekly Payment
2 Full Days	Little Lambs/Mighty Lions	\$70	Per Week	Weekly Payment
Drop In	Little Lambs/Mighty Lions	\$30	Per Day	Daily Payment
Half Day Afternoon Drop	Little Lambs/Mighty Lions	\$25	Per Day	Daily Payment
Kinder Drop	Kinder/Bridge Students	\$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 10th day of each month. If your payment is not made in full by that date, you will be billed a late charge of \$10.00. If fees are still unpaid by the close of business of the 15th day of the month, St. John Lutheran Preschool reserves the right to withdraw your child from the program.

Weekly Payments

Weekly Tuition is due each Monday for the week you are beginning. A late fee of \$10.00 will be added to your account at 5:30pm on Friday of the same week if the fee has not been paid. If fees are still unpaid by the close of business of Wednesday of the next week, your child will not be allowed to return to school.

St. John Lutheran Preschool is fully functional on weekdays in accordance with the calendar laid out in the “Important Dates” section of the handbook. Although you may choose to keep your child at home some days, you must pay for the whole week, according to your child’s enrollment status.

All Day – Every Day rates will be pro-rated for the days when the preschool is not open all week. A notice will be sent home to inform you of any upcoming pro-rated weeks.

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 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 at the daily rate for every day you drop-in that is not your child's regular day of school. An Afternoon Drop In rate with a price break can be used for days where you are extending your child's regular day into the afternoon.

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

Payment

All payments should be made at the preschool during school hours. All payments should be placed in the locked tuition box located at the sign-in area. After your payment has been processed, a receipt will be placed in your child's folder.

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

Cash payments should be enclosed in an envelope with the child's name and date paid, amount enclosed and 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 your 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. For All Day Every Day children being withdrawn, parents are responsible for payment through the fourteen day period. In all cases, there will be no refunds for payments already received.

Discharge Policy

The preschool 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 fees.
2. Not observing the rules of the preschool as outlined in the 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 children by parent or child.
5. Upon recommendation of the Preschool Board.
6. The *Chronic Disruptive Behavior Plan* was put into place and was unsuccessful.

Return Policy

A child will be allowed to return to the preschool upon approval of the preschool 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

Preschool hours of operation are 7:45 A.M. to 5:15 P.M. Monday thru Friday during the school year. Early drop off can be arranged by informing the director that you need to be dropped off no earlier than 7:30 A.M. Pickup after 5:15 P.M. needs to be arranged with the director or teacher(s) and will be no later than 5:30 P.M. Exceptions to this schedule can be found on the “Important Dates” page of this handbook.

During school hours of operation, the doors will be locked. There is a door bell at the Preschool entrance if you need to come into the Preschool. Class starts at 8:00am.

Hours of Operation

The Preschool opens its doors at 7:45 A.M. The preschool doors will remain closed until the school opens at 7:45 A.M.

At 8:00 A.M. class starts and the front doors will be locked.

All Part-Time and Half Day students must be picked up between 11:15 A.M. and 11:30 A.M. without exceptions.

All Kinder/Bridge students must be picked up at 12:00 P.M. without exceptions.

All Day Students must be picked up by 5:15 P.M. without exceptions.

Arrival/Departure Procedures

Upon arrival, parents are required, by state law, to leave the child in the care of a staff member. All children must be escorted to and from the classroom by an adult. **Each child must be signed in and out daily by the parent or**

the person responsible for taking your child to school. The sign-in sheets are located on a table across from the Preschool Office.

St. John Lutheran Preschool 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 or approved in advance by the office.

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

Late Pick-up

All Part-Time and Half Day students must be picked up between 11:15 A.M. and 11:30 A.M. without exceptions. **After 11:30 A.M. 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 Day – Every Day and Drop In students must be picked up no later than 5:15 P.M. without exceptions. **After 5:15 P.M. 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 Kinder/Bridge students will be ready for pick-up at 12:00 P.M. without exceptions. **After 12:00 P.M. 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 Preschool does not provide any transportation to or from preschool. However, transportation from the Hop Bus is available to preschool students. The Hop Bus is operated by Hill County Transit and not affiliated with our preschool. If your child plans to ride the Hop bus you must make arrangements directly through Hill County Transit (800-791-9601) and notify the preschool. Any changes to your child's bus schedule **must be made in writing** for that particular day or by phone to our Director by 10:00 A.M.

Field Trips

Transportation for field trips may 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 and CPR will be present on the field trips. Kinder/Bridge will often have field trips weekly.

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 preschool by the front door.

Open Door Policy

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

Special notices and announcements will be sent home with the children, given to you through our parent letters, and our newsletter. The use of bulletin boards, newsletters, and monthly calendars are some of the most common forms of communication with our parents.

St. John Lutheran Preschool 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 Preschool'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. You may request a conference at any time. 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 Preschool we are always interested in your comments, both positive and negative, regarding the care and education that your child receives. Your child's Teacher/Director should be the first contact for a parent's constructive criticism. If, after giving the Teacher the opportunity to explain or correct any problem or question you may have, you are not satisfied, you should call St. John Lutheran Preschool Board of Directors at (254) 386-3158 for further explanation. Parent Communication forms are located beside the Parent Information board and are available anytime. Completed forms can be given to the Director or placed in the tuition box.

Parent - Facility Communication

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

Preschool 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 – Must be labeled with your child’s name
- Lunch box – For any student staying at Preschool through the lunch hour. Must be labeled with your child’s name.
- Nap mat – For any student staying at Preschool through the afternoon. Must be labeled with your child’s name.
- *Optional:* Blanket and/or pillow - If your child would like one - For any student staying at Preschool through the afternoon. Must be labeled with your child’s name.

Preschool Activities

Curriculum

The teachers at St. John Preschool 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 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. A lesson plan is posted each week on the “Parent Information Board,” which is located across from the Preschool Office.

St. John Preschool uses Little Lambs, which is a program that comes from the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod and 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.

Learning Centers

Learning Centers are an essential component of the curriculum at St. John Preschool. 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 Preschool 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.

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.

Technology--Children use software programs with audio, video, and graphics that help them learn to follow directions while developing math, reading, and problem solving skills. The computers and Kindles help children develop hand-eye coordination as well as fine motor skills, provide the opportunity to practice keyboarding skills, and help them become familiar with computer terminology.

Listening Center--The Listening Center provides children the opportunity to listen to stories as they are read aloud. The children have the opportunity to manipulate books and investigate images on their own.

Block Center--The 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 and office 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. 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.

Home Living Center--The Home Living Center is set up like a kitchen area which includes a kid-sized stove/oven, sink, refrigerator, table and chairs, plastic food, plates and utensils, and baby dolls and clothes. Children will learn to understand and experience the adult world through imitation. This center helps expand oral language and social interaction skills as children communicate with other students, helps 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.

Creative Play Center--Playing with cars, trucks, trains, animals, and doll houses provides for many new vocabulary words as children learn the names of each, what they do, what they eat, or where you can find them. Additionally, children can create all kinds of scenarios that the vehicles, animals, and people might find themselves in, providing further language and vocabulary development as well as sparking their imagination and creativity.

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.

Reading Center--The Reading 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.

Circle Time

The group carpet is one of the main focal points of our classrooms at St. John Preschool. 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

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.

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 Preschool will participate in Show and Tell. They will be asked to bring something that starts with the “letter of the week,” or 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.

Chapel

A special children’s worship service for all children in our preschool will be held once a week for each class. Special children’s chapel service will be given by our Pastor and it will be directed to the children’s level of understanding. We learn about Jesus Christ and how He died for our sins. The children also learn about what a special place God’s house is, the items in the church and what they symbolize, and about prayer. It is a special treat to get to go to chapel! Parents are 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 Preschool furnishes nutritional snacks twice a day at preschool. Children will say a prayer of thanks-giving before every meal and snack. Snacks are served in the morning between 9:00-10:30 am and in the afternoon between 3:00-3:30pm. A snack calendar will be sent home with your child each month.

St. John Lutheran Preschool does not furnish lunch. For those children staying for an extended day, they must bring their lunch. Lunch must be brought in a labeled lunch box or bag. St. John Lutheran Preschool is not responsible for its nutritional value or for meeting the child’s daily food needs. Lunch will be held between 12:00 pm -12:45pm

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 your 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.

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.

Naptime

All students who remain in the afternoon at St. John Lutheran Preschool will 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 required by minimum standards. **You must provide a nap mat and a blanket or pillow if your child would like one. You should take these items home to wash at the end 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 treasures and stuffed animals 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.

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 Preschool are subject to the requirements as described in the Minimum Standards. Please see the Director for further information.

Church Member Volunteers

Since St. John Lutheran Preschool 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 Preschool 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 Preschool's discipline guidelines are fair, consistent and encourage children to make wise decisions. At St. John Lutheran Preschool, discipline consists of character building and responsibility, positive reinforcement, redirection or "sit and watch". The use of physical punishment is against our policy.

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 Preschool 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 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 for a short period of time to give the child a chance to regain control if they are having a difficult time. “Time-outs” 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 preschool 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 Church & Preschool 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 preschool director may deem it necessary to have a conference with the parent(s) of a preschool 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 preschool 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 1st and 2nd plans have been followed and no progress has been made towards solving the problem documented, the child may be withdrawn from the program. The 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 preschool.

Suspension: The preschool 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 preschool staff. That parent may be asked to take the child home immediately. Suspensions from the preschool 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 preschool.

Injuries

The staff at St. John Lutheran Preschool 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 preschool. St. John Lutheran Preschool has permission to take such reasonable measures as are, in the judgment of the preschool, necessary to the welfare and safety of the child. The preschool will administer first-aid including cleaning wounds and applying antiseptics unless parents advise otherwise in writing. Our staff has been certified in First Aid/CPR.

In case of a medical emergency, we will call 911 and then parents will be notified immediately. 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 preschool 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 accept only well children. You are the best judge of your child's health and we trust you will not bring a sick child to the preschool. 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. 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, please 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;
- He/she has head lice, pink eye, or other contagious skin conditions.

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

If your child is sent home due to illness, he/she cannot return to the preschool 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. Illnesses that are highly contagious (i.e. pink eye) will require a release by a health care professional before being allowed back at preschool. 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.

Medication

Medication can be dispensed as needed. The dispensing information must be prescribed by your physician and logged on an Authorization for Dispensing Medication form that you are required to have filled out and sign. Medication must be in its original container and labeled with your child’s name and the date medication is left. Medication can only be administered in amounts according to the label directions. 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

Preschool 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.

2017-2018 Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Child-Care Facilities

Age at which child must have vaccines to be in compliance:	Minimum Number of Doses Required of Each Vaccine							
	DTaP	Polio	HepB	Hib	PCV	MMR	Varicella	HepA
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 ¹	3 Doses ²			
By 16 months	3 Doses	2 Doses	2 Doses	3 Doses ¹	4 Doses ²	1 Dose ³	1 Dose ³	
By 19 months	4 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses ¹	4 Doses ²	1 Dose ³	1 Dose ³	
By 25 months	4 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses ¹	4 Doses ²	1 Dose ³	1 Dose ³	1 Dose ³
By 43 months	4 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses	3 Doses ¹	4 Doses ²	1 Dose ³	1 Dose ³	2 Doses ³

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

TB Testing Requirements

All staff is required to have TB Testing prior to employment at the facility. Based on local health department guidelines, proof of TB testing is not required in order to be enrolled in our program.

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. 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 preschool in the fall. Written evidence of this screening must be on file in the preschool 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 you're your child is dressed appropriately. Remember that they will be using paint, glue, markers, playing in sand, etc. 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 Church & Preschool 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 preschool 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 Preschool will not be responsible for toys brought to the center. We also ask that students do not bring stuffed animals or toys to sleep with during naptime.

Lost Articles

We cannot replace lost articles. If your child brings money or something valuable to St. John Lutheran Preschool, 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: Christmas, Easter, Kinder Send Off for the Mighty Lions class, and Graduation for the Kinder/Bridge class. These events will be held on Sunday afternoon with the exception of Easter, which will be held during school hours. Other celebrations we may have during the school year include but are not limited to are: Fall/Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day, and 100th day of school. 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 School 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 or age-appropriate party favors for a birthday party.

Extra-Curricular Opportunities

Periodically, St. John Lutheran Preschool will partner with individuals to offer registered students music, dance, tumbling, or other activities afternoon hours. In the case this occurs, parents will receive participation release form, information about the teacher(s) and activities and cost. A staff member trained in First Aid and CPR will always be with the children while they are participating in these activities.

School Closing Policy

If conditions cause Hamilton ISD to be closed, St. John Lutheran Preschool 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) and on KWXV (Channel 25).

Pesticides

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

Parent Tax Statement

A tax statement will be given to the parents of each child enrolled in the preschool.

Custody Situations

St. John Lutheran Church & Preschool prefers NOT to get involved with custody disputes. St. John Lutheran Church & Preschool will follow a court order exactly as written. If your family has a court order on file, please 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 Church & Preschool has the right to terminate care.

Emergency and Relocation Plans

First Aid Kits

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

Emergency Backpack

The emergency backpack is located on a hook in classroom 1. The Emergency Backpack is blue.

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 Preschool 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 Preschool classes should follow the emergency exit plan posted in each classroom. All staff and children will practice a fire drill once a month. All classrooms will exit building at the entrance of the Preschool. The Sunday School classroom will exit through the front door of the Family Life Center. There are also exits in each classroom. Everyone is to be out of the building in 3 minutes. Our fire location meeting place is the East side of the preschool. 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 front wall, 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 preschool building, the Director will call authorities or 911. A code word will be given to the staff to notify such a case. If harmful person is directly inside the building then all staff should lock classroom doors and gather all children located in the bathroom in each room or the storage room in the century room. Remain there until permission by the Director or authorities to come out.

Preventative Safety

All teachers should be aware of their classes and 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 Preschool entry way, do not allow them through until proper identification is known. Each classroom is equipped with walkie talkies allowing direct communication amongst the teachers and staff.

Relocation Plan

In case of a weather, threat or harmful situation inside the church, the Preschool staff and children will relocate to the church sanctuary. All staff and children will be relocated after local authorities are called. Children will remain there and parents will be notified. 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 Preschool 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 you 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. 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 are expected to treat any observation or report with confidentiality and respect for the persons involved; cooperate fully with civil authorities, the preschool director, and the agents of St. John Lutheran Church.

Gang-Free Zones

As a result of House Bill 2086 that passed during the 81st 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 Preschool. Any gang-related criminal activity or anyone engaging in organized criminal activity within 1,000 feet of St. John Lutheran Preschool 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 Preschool will notify parents in writing.

Safety of Children’s Products

In accordance with the Senate Bill 95 of the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, 2009, St. John Lutheran Preschool 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 Preschool 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 preschool and available for review by all parents and guardians. You may also view the most current updates on line at 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 Operating Procedures Handbook and fully understand and agree to uphold all of the policies as set forth in the Parent and Operating Procedures Handbook of St. John Lutheran Preschool. If I do not follow these policies, I understand that St. John Lutheran Preschool reserves the right at any time to remove my child from the program.

Student

Parent

Date

Director

Date