

FAITH LUTHERAN SCHOOL Early Childhood Education



2023-2024 PRESCHOOL PARENT HANDBOOK

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Welcome to Faith Lutheran School! The decision to entrust your child – your most valued possession – to Faith Lutheran School is an honor we do not take lightly. By making the decision to educate your child in a Christian environment, you are laying a strong foundation for your child’s future; we are honored to be a part of that process. We at Faith Lutheran School commit to helping your child grow in a well-balanced manner. Our goal for your child is that they are fulfilled and prepared in every way for the challenges that face each of us in everyday life.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to provide excellence in education while sharing God’s love with our students and their families. Our principal goal is to work with the family and church to build a firm foundation for future development through educational excellence and Biblical values.

PHILOSOPHY

At Faith Lutheran School we believe children are important. As a ministry of Faith Lutheran Church, we strive to provide a loving Christian environment from a Godly perspective so each child will know they are special and loved. We feel the development of a child’s self-esteem and confidence is important in building positive relationships with others. We see each child as a unique individual by respecting and responding to their individual needs. Although specific learning experiences are planned each day, we leave room for creative learning that is so important for young children. As children enter the elementary years their intellectual and spiritual needs are much greater. The child-centered learning environment in each of our classrooms includes integrating intellectual and spiritual growth and provides a nurturing, structured and stimulating place where our students can develop creativity and build problem-solving skills.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Faith Lutheran School does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, color, religion, or national or ethnic origin in admittance, education, or other administrative policies and extends to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally made available to students at the school.

REQUIRED POLICIES FROM THE TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Faith Lutheran School is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. The following policies are required by Child Care Licensing per The Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers 746.501.

WWW.DFPS.STATE.TX.US/CHILD_CARE/CHILD_CARE_STANDARDS_AND_REGULATION/S/DEFAULT.ASP

1. HOURS OF OPERATION

Faith Lutheran School is open from 7:00 am-6:00 p, Monday-Friday. The educational hours of operation are 8:00 am to 1:30 pm and Pre-K 8:00 am to 3:30 pm. FLS follows closely with the Huntsville ISD calendar with a few exceptions. We are closed to observe holidays.

2. PRESCHOOL DAILY SCHEDULE

7:00 a.m.	FLS OPENS Infants and One Year Old students report to classrooms Twos, Threes & Pre-K students report to Drop Off Area
7:30 a.m.	Twos, Threes and Pre-K students move into classrooms
8:00 a.m.	SCHOOL DAY BEGINS
9:00 a.m.	SNACK BEGINS (Schedules vary)
11:00 a.m.	LUNCH BEGINS (Schedules vary)
11:30 a.m.	PRESCHOOL REST TIME BEGINS (Schedules vary)
12:00 p.m.	INFANTS – THREES SCHOOL DAY ENDS/EXTENDED CARE BEGINS
3:30 p.m.	PRE-KINDERGARTEN SCHOOL DAY ENDS/EXTENDED CARE BEGINS
5:30 p.m.	REMAINING TWOS – PRE-K STUDENTS GATHER IN PICK UP AREA Infants and One Year Old students should be picked up in their classrooms
6:00 p.m.	FLS CLOSES

3. RELEASE OF CHILDREN

Per Texas state laws, parents have a right to access their child at any time. However, we can request that parents drop off their children by 8:00 am each day so that the child take part in our full educational program. In the event that a parent is unable to pick up their child, they may authorize another legal adult to pick up. Children will not be released to a minor under the age of 18. Authorized adults must be listed on the enrollment form to pick up and the authorized adult must bring a picture ID. Children will not be released to adults without a picture ID.

Drop off and pick up must be done through the front office of Faith Lutheran School. It is imperative that parents do not drop off or pick up their children from the playground. Licensing requires that children be signed in and out daily. This is done through the front office of our

school. The adult must ensure the child has been received by a staff member. According to childcare licensing standards, CHILDREN MAY NOT ENTER THE BUILDING OR CLASSROOM UNESCORTED.

4. ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION POLICY

Children who are ill should not attend preschool. Faith Lutheran School observes the standards set by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services for ill children. The most common standards for exclusion are:

1. Illness that prevents the child from participating in childcare activities, including outdoor play. If a child is too ill to go outside, they must stay at home on this day. Per childcare licensing 746.3601(1) (See #59)
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than caregivers can provide without compromising the health, safety and supervision of the other children.
3. Tympanic (ear) temperature of 100.0 or higher, accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness.
4. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrollable diarrhea, 2 or more vomiting episodes in 24-hours.
5. Contagious examples: Pink Eye, Rashes, Hand Foot & Mouth, etc.

If a child becomes ill while in our care, we will contact the parent immediately. We will care for the child apart from the other children with proper supervision and give extra attention to hand washing and sanitation practices.

Parents need to pick up children within 1 hour of notification. In the event of **severe** illness or injury, or if a parent fails to pick up their child within a reasonable amount of time, Faith Lutheran School **may** call for an ambulance at the parent's expense.

If a child is sent home from our program, they may not return until the child is **symptom-free without medication** for 24 hours. Faith Lutheran School has the right to ask for a doctor's statement when a child must leave due to illness.

Disinfecting/Cleaning Protocols

Cleaning and disinfecting are done constantly in the classrooms. The staff at Faith Lutheran School has increased the number of times they clean and disinfect during the day. Faith Lutheran School strives to be a clean and healthy environment for children and staff.

5. MEDICATION

We will administer medications in the following manner:

- **Prescription medication can only be accepted if it is in the original container and hasn't reached its expiration date.**

- All medications will be kept in the front office in a cabinet. Topical ointments, inhalers, epi-pens, and heart medications are kept with the child in their classroom. These must be kept in a location that is secure and out of the reach of the children.
- All medications will also be administered in the front office. The exception to this is the above medications which are kept in their classroom.
- Refrigerated medications will be kept in the Director's office refrigerator.
- Nonprescription medication may only be administered by following the manufacturer's recommendation on the label. All medications (prescription and nonprescription) must remain in the original packaging. A note from the child's health care professional must be provided if manufacturer's recommendations are not listed.
- Before any prescription or nonprescription medication can be administered, including sunscreen/bug repellent, Faith Lutheran School must have permission in writing by the child's parent or guardian. Please fill out the medication forms and enter instructions into the Daily Medication Logbook, which is located in the front office. Please bring a copy of the information given to you by the pharmacy.
- **Medication will only be given if prescribed three or more times a day.** If your child is prescribed medication once or twice a day, parents must administer this before dropping off and after pick up at home.

Health forms are required to be completed at the time of enrollment showing allergies, physical handicaps, a statement of general health, and a current immunization history. These must be updated and kept current.

6. PROCEDURES FOR HANDLING EMERGENCIES

In case of minor injury or accident, the staff will administer basic first aid. All injuries or illness not requiring immediate parental notification will be documented and reported to parents when the child is picked up at the end of the day. In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), the staff will call 911, giving the location and nature of emergency. As appropriate, the staff will administer CPR or first aid measures. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified.

All children must have an emergency medical release form on file in case of such an emergency.

If a child ingests or comes in contact with a poisonous substance, the staff will contact the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.

7. PARENT COMMUNICATION

Open communication with parents is very important to a child's success. Faith Lutheran School has multiple ways of communicating with parents. In some situations, parents may be asked to sign documents acknowledging that communication has taken place. Listed below are ways that Faith Lutheran School may communicate with parents:

- ✓ Through email notifications
- ✓ Written memos placed in your child's weekly folder
- ✓ ProCare
- ✓ Smart phone notifications through Remind101
- ✓ Verbal communication with the child's teachers and Director

Parent/Teacher conferences are also available and encouraged. Your partnership and understanding of our curriculum and expectations is imperative for the success of your child.

8. DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

Faith Lutheran School staff members are trained to use a positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Just a few examples used in this situation are praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only on unacceptable behavior and reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements and redirecting behaviors. Faith Lutheran School staff will never use corporal punishment or negative discipline that may hurt or humiliate a child. Research has shown that positive guidance teaches children skills which help them get along in their physical and social environment. This aim is to develop personal standards in self-discipline, not to enforce a set of inflexible rules. Giving children understandable guidelines and redirecting their behavior helps them to develop internal control of their actions and encourages acceptable behavior. Positive cooperation is required from the family when dealing with disruptive behavior. We feel that consistency from all parties involved is the best way to handle these issues. In some cases, when the administration feels a behavior significantly disrupts the educational and/or spiritual environment a child may be shadowed. Shadowing is the assignment of a caregiver for a child. The caregiver always remains near the child to redirect them and protect other children. In the event that shadowing requires the placement of an additional staff member, the parents of the child being shadowed will be charged additional fees. **Shadowing is not always an option due to staffing restraints.**

9. SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF CHILDREN

The safety of children and employees is important to us. While our goal is to work with children and families, aggressive behavior may place others at risk. Faith Lutheran School reserves the right to terminate care for aggressive behavior at any time. **No reduction or refund of tuition fees will be given in these situations.** Aggression and violence toward staff will not be tolerated. Suspension or expulsion is a consequence of such actions. Following a dismissal, any parent or child who harasses, threatens or in any manner causes harm to anyone affiliated with Faith Lutheran School by calling, writing, or any other means, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. On rare occasions, a student may be suspended or excluded from attendance at Faith Lutheran School. Every effort will be made to work in partnership with the child's parents to improve the behavior of the child. If the school administration feels it is in the best interest of the child or other children in attendance, the student may be excluded from attendance.

10. SAFE SLEEP FOR INFANTS

Faith Lutheran School follows the Infant Sleep Safety Guidelines as listed in the Child Care Minimum Standards and as outlined by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. All infants will be placed on their backs to sleep. To avoid suffocation, nothing is allowed in the crib but the infant, including blankets and stuffed animals. Sleep positioning devices are prohibited unless instructed by the child's health care professional, in writing. An "Infant Sleep Exception" form must be completed by the health care professional. All cribs at Faith Lutheran School meet the CPSC safety guidelines. Crib compliance documents are on file in the front office and classrooms. Pacifiers are allowed; however, straps that attach to the child's clothing and pacifiers with stuffed animals attached are prohibited.

11. FOOD SERVICE & PREPARATION

Although Faith Lutheran School does not provide or serve breakfast, children are permitted to bring and eat breakfast upon arrival if the student arrives at FLS BEFORE 7:45am. If your child arrives after 7:45am, please make sure they have already eaten breakfast as instruction begins at 8:00am.

A well-balanced lunch, including milk and water will be served to students daily. Snack times may vary from class to class. Snack menus are posted in each classroom.

We encourage parents to send spill proof cup for water in the classroom. Childcare licensing requires cups to be labeled with your child's first name and last initial. Infant bottles must be labeled as well.

Students with diagnosed food allergies will be required to submit a food allergy emergency plan prepared by the child's health care professional prior to admission. The food allergy emergency plan must include a list of each food the child is allergic to, possible symptoms if exposed to food on the list and steps to take if the child has an allergic reaction. The required food allergy emergency plan must be signed and dated by the child's health care professional and the child's parent. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services requires the Food Allergy Emergency Plan to be posted where food is served and prepared.

The Food Allergy Emergency Plan must include:

- The child's name
- What food the child is allergic to
- Signs of allergic reaction if given the food
- How to treat the reaction
- Alternative food to be given when substituting
- Signature from the child's health care professional

12. IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Immunization records must be current for all children in Faith Lutheran School. A copy must be in the student's file. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that your child's immunizations are current. Failure to keep children current on immunizations may lead to disenrollment.

Faith Lutheran School may have children enrolled that have not received immunizations due to personal belief. A notarized affidavit must be on file for these children. Per federal law, childcare programs are prohibited from discriminating against a family's personal belief, including immunizations.

13. HEARING AND VISION SCREENING

Pre-Kindergarten students will receive a hearing and vision screening during the school year. You will be notified prior to the screening and will receive information if further testing is recommended.

14. ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Upon selecting Faith Lutheran School to meet your child's educational needs, **all enrollment paperwork is required 3 days before the child is allowed to start our program.** Incomplete paperwork will not be accepted, Paperwork required for enrollment includes:

- Enrollment Application Forms
- Copies of Parent/Guardian's Driver's licenses may be requested
- Consent Check List
- Acknowledgement of Policies Form
- Authorization for Emergency Medical Attention
- Physician's Statement / Immunization Record
- Handbook Agreement

- Infant Feeding Preference (if applicable)
- Infant Sleep Exception Form (if applicable)

Parents will be notified with within 30 days of any policy change in writing. Signatures from parents may be required.

Parents must notify Faith Lutheran School in writing of any changes in enrollment information, such as telephone numbers, email addresses, home addresses and payment information.

Faith Lutheran School reserves the right to dismiss a child at any time with or without cause.

Infants through Pre-K: Enrollment is limited by availability. Class placement is determined by age as of September 1.

The school reserves the right to admit children of its own congregation and other area Lutheran congregations first, in line with its normal admission policies.

Faith Lutheran School operates its educational program from mid-August through May. We offer a separate summer program during June, July and part of August. Our hours of operation are

7:00a.m. to 6:00p.m. Monday through Friday. We observe holidays and breaks as indicated on our calendar.

Pre-registration for our summer program and the following school year opens to current families and Faith Lutheran Church members in mid-February. Pre-registration applications with registration fees will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. Registration will open to the public on March 1st and available openings will be filled on a first come, first served basis. Priority will be given to families on the waiting list.

15. WATER ACTIVITIES

Water days are occasionally held during the summer sessions. This special event involving water play will be limited to the use of sprinklers, slip and slides and individual water dispensing handheld apparatus. State mandated ratios are followed for this special activity. Parents will always be notified in writing before water activities.

16. ANIMALS

Faith Lutheran School may have classroom pets that meet the requirements by Texas Child Care licensing. A notice to parents will be posted outside any classroom when a pet is present, which could also include Petting Zoo and special guests' pets.

17. SUNSCREEN AND BUG REPELLANT

Faith Lutheran School will apply sunscreen and/or bug repellent as needed. Sunscreen and bug repellent must be provided by the parent, must be in original container, and must not be expired. A "Sunscreen/Bug Repellent Permission Slip" must be completed by the parent before these items can be applied.

18. QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS

If parents have questions or concerns about our program, we encourage you to have open communication with your child's teacher and the Director. Through open communication, we can ensure that all parties are well informed and working as partners in the child's education. Please understand that there are times information cannot be shared with parents about decisions made for the best interest of Faith Lutheran School.

19. PARENT PARTICIPATION

We encourage parent involvement, especially with all school events. Before having direct access to children, Faith Lutheran School will run a criminal background check on all volunteers. Parents must complete a "Volunteer Orientation" before participating in program events on a regular basis.

20. PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION

Friends of Faith, our Parent/Teacher Organization supports all students and staff of Faith Lutheran School. The organization plans programs designed for all parents throughout the year. Look for fliers and information in your child's cubby about *Friends of Faith* events.

21. MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CHILD CARE CENTERS

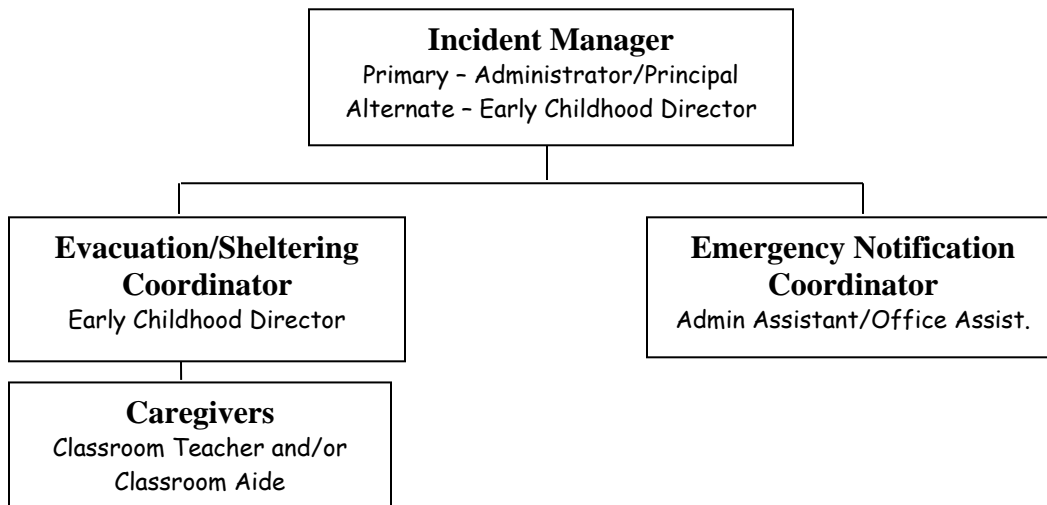
Faith Lutheran School is licensed and regulated by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Faith Lutheran School follows the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. Parents may review a copy of these standards in our front office or view the standards online at www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/default.asp Faith Lutheran School encourages parents to view our compliance history with Child Care Licensing. Our most recent inspection is posted on our parent communication board or you may view at www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Search_Texas_Child_Care/ppFacilitySearchDayCare.asp Parents may also contact our local childcare licensing office at 512-438-4800 Department of Family and Protective Services, you may do so at the following location: 2017 N. Frazier, Suite C1, Conroe, TX 77301, (936) 756-1551

22. STATE CONTACTS

Parents may access the Texas Child Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400. Parents may access the Department of Family and Protective Services and Health and Human Services website at www.dfpd.state.tx.us/child_care

23. FAITH LUTHERAN SCHOOL EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PLAN

Emergency Organizational Structure



Incident Manager:

- Responsible for overall operational control
- Assumes any duty not carried out or assigned to coordinators and/or caregivers

Evacuation/Sheltering Coordinator:

- Ensures accountability of all staff and students
- Ensures appropriate sheltering for staff and students

Caregivers:

- Responsible for orderly movement and immediate safe shelter of students in their care
- Responsible for immediate accountability of students in their care
- Responsible for obtaining class emergency contact information, authorization for emergency care and child tracking system
- Responsible for any necessary notification of parents
- Responsible for continuing to care for each student until he/she is released according to dismissal procedure as stated in parent handbook

Emergency Notification Coordinator:

- Responsible for notifying appropriate emergency services (Fire, EMS, Police, Health Dept.)
- Responsible for obtaining school emergency contact information
- Responsible for items needed to meet student's medical and nutritional needs

Student Emergency Information:

Each classroom will have an emergency clipboard which contains parent and emergency contact telephone numbers for each child in the class, authorization for emergency care for each child in the class and the child tracking system (roll sheets) for the class. In addition, a copy of our Emergency Preparedness Plan and a list of all employees' personal cell phone numbers will be included. It is the responsibility of the caregiver for each class to have possession of the emergency clipboard in any emergency situation or emergency drill.

Parent and emergency contact telephone numbers for each child enrolled, authorization for emergency care for each child enrolled and class roll sheets for each class will be kept in a red Emergency Binder, placed in a centralized location in the school office. In addition, a list of current employees with personal cell phone numbers will be kept with this information. The Emergency Contact Coordinator will be responsible for possession of this information in any emergency situation or emergency drill.

Relocation to the designated safe area or alternate shelter:

Students will be lined up or placed in strollers, bye-bye buggies, or emergency crib based on age and as appropriate. Students will be counted prior to leaving the classroom as well as when they have reached the designated safe area or alternate shelter. In addition, roll sheets will be used to ensure accountability of all students. (See emergency evacuation and relocation diagram located near the door in each classroom for the designated safe area or alternate shelter.)

Communication:

Primary Communication Devices during emergencies will be Walkie-Talkies in each classroom. Personal cell phones or landline intercom system will be used as a last resort in case of emergencies. Walkie-Talkies, land lines, and/or cell phones will be used to communicate with all necessary parties.

In the event of an emergency, parents and guardians identified on the child's emergency card and/or registration form will be notified via phone call or text message of the type of emergency, sheltering location and any additional details specific to the emergency as soon as all children are safely sheltered. For lockdowns, children will not be released until the area is deemed safe by local law enforcement.

The primary emergency phone number for Faith Lutheran School is: 936-291-1706

The secondary emergency phone number for Faith Lutheran School is: 936-295-5298

Alternate Shelter Away from Faith Lutheran School:

Should evacuation from Faith Lutheran School be necessary, all students will be relocated to:

First Alternate: Church of the Nazarene, 3707 Highway 30 West

Second Alternate: Church of Christ, 3737 Highway 30 West

Alternate Shelter will be determined based on the circumstances of the emergency. The Evacuation/Sheltering Coordinator will give direction to Caregivers regarding which alternate shelter will be used.

Caregivers will be responsible for safely walking students across Sumac Road and through the parking area leading to the Church of the Nazarene. If relocating to the Church of Christ, Caregivers will safely walk students through the Church of the Nazarene parking lot and through the grassy area leading to the Church of Christ.

Drills:

Fire drills will be held once per month.

Severe weather sheltering drills will be held four times per year.

Crisis lock-down drills will be held four times per year.

Emergency evacuation drill will be held once per year.

Nightlock Lockdown System:

Each classroom is equipped with a Nightlock Lockdown system. The device is in a plastic container mounted on the wall next to the door. When container is opened, the device can be removed. The device slides into the ground near the base of the door to protect the classroom from intruders. The device should *only* be used in lockdown emergencies and *never* for other emergencies, such as fire.

Walkie-Talkies:

Walkie-Talkies are essential to our Emergency Preparedness Plan. As such, it is *essential* that each classroom be equipped with their Walkie-Talkie at all times. The Walkie-Talkie should stay on the teacher at all times, including when they are on the playground, at lunch, or in music, art, or religion classes. Walkie-Talkies must be turned in at the end of the day so they may charge for the following day.

Our primary form of *non-emergency* communication remains the intercom system on landline phones. If a landline is not accessible or no one is answering, then the Walkie-Talkie may be used. This is how to communicate via Walkie-Talkie:

Communicator: “Mrs. Stephanie/Dr. M, switch to channel 3.”

Receiver: “Switching.”

Communicator and Receiver switch to Channel 3.

Receiver: “Go ahead.”

Communicator explains the issue and what is needed.

At the end of communication, both parties state they are switching back to Channel 2 and switch back.

POSSIBLE EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

LOCK-DOWN: DANGER INSIDE THE BUILDING

An announcement will be made by the Incident Manager via Walkie-Talkie, classroom phones/intercoms, and/or by personal message. The Emergency Notification Coordinator will call 911. All children and caregivers will move to the nearest safe room and lock doors using the Nightlock Lockdown system. Direct Caregivers will take attendance and account for all children in their care. Windows will be secured, window coverings will be closed, and children and Caregivers will move away from windows when possible. Lights and sound will be turned off and children will be kept as quiet as possible. Caregivers will make every effort to keep the children safe and calm. Caregivers will care for the children in their secure locations until an announcement is made via Walkie-Talkie or personal message confirming the threat is clear.

LOCK-DOWN: DANGER OUTSIDE THE BUILDING

An announcement will be made by the Incident Manager via Walkie-Talkie, classroom phones/intercoms, and/or by personal message. All children and caregivers will move to the nearest safe room and lock doors using Nightlock Lockdown system. Direct Caregivers will take attendance and account for all children in their care. Windows will be secured, window coverings will be closed, and children and Caregivers will move away from windows when possible. Caregivers will care for the children in their secure locations and continue normal classroom activity until an announcement is made confirming the threat is clear.

FIRE

Upon hearing the fire alarm, smoke detector, Walkie-Talkie announcement, or personal message, each class shall evacuate the area according to the posted routes and assemble in the designated area outside the building. The Emergency Notification Coordinator will call 911. Direct caregivers will take attendance and account for all children in their care. Caregivers will care for

the children in their designated locations until an announcement is made confirming the threat is clear.

SEVERE WEATHER

An announcement will be made by the Incident Manager via Walkie-Talkie, classroom phones/intercoms, and/or by personal message. All children and Caregivers will move to the designated area of the building as indicated on the emergency evacuation map. The children will sit “crisscross applesauce” facing the wall with their hands locked behind their heads. Direct Caregivers will take attendance and account for all children in their care. All interior doors will remain closed. Caregivers will care for the children in their secure locations until an announcement is made via Walkie-Talkie or personal message confirming the threat is clear. Overall accountability of all children in care will be the responsibility of the Evacuation/Sheltering Coordinator as noted above.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES

In the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease in the area, Faith Lutheran School will follow guidelines as set by the Department of State Health Services.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In case of a serious injury or medical emergency, First Aid/CPR will be administered by any trained staff member and 911 will be called by the first available staff member. The Emergency Contact Coordinator will make an immediate attempt to contact a parent. Until the arrival of a parent, physician, or ambulance, the Incident Manager will be in charge and make all decisions regarding the care of the child.

24. BREASTFEEDING

Faith Lutheran School we support a mother’s right to breastfeed or provide breast milk for their child while in our care. Faith Lutheran School will provide a comfortable place with a seat for mothers to breastfeed their child if they choose to do so. Parents may also provide breast milk for their child to be served while in our care. Breast milk should be clearly labeled with the child’s first name and last initial.

25. CHILD ABUSE REPORTING LAW REQUIREMENTS

Faith Lutheran School staff are **REQUIRED** by Texas State law and licensing requirements to report immediately to the police or Child Protective Services (CPS) any instance when there is reason to suspect the occurrence of physical, sexual, or emotional child abuse, child neglect, or exploitation. Our staff receive annual training on recognizing and preventing abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse. Faith Lutheran School has made a commitment to help increase awareness and prevention techniques to employees and parents through trainings, memos and monthly newsletters. Faith Lutheran School will also coordinate with community organizations on strategies to prevent abuse and neglect. The staff is prohibited under Texas law to notify parents when the police or CPS is called about possible child abuse, neglect, or exploitation, except on the recommendation of CPS or the police. Some examples of abuse and neglect are leaving a child in

a vehicle unattended, not securing a child in a seat belt or booster seat, unexplained marks or bruises on opposite sides of the body, and child hygiene issues. If parents feel they need assistance with possible child abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse, we encourage you to get help. Please call the National Parent Hotline at 1-855-427-2736 or visit www.helpandhope.org/find-help.html The statewide Abuse & Neglect phone number is 1-800-252-5400, if you would like to report any suspected abuse or neglect.

26. WELL CHECKS

Faith Lutheran School staff will do a visual check of the children upon arrival each morning. If a staff member notices anything unusual, they are required to point this out to the parent at that time. If your child has an accident overnight, please notify staff members when dropping off so that we can assist in watching the child for side effects. A Faith Lutheran School staff member may complete an “Incident Report” to document these situations.

27. OPEN DOOR POLICY

Faith Lutheran School has an open-door policy. Parents and legal guardians may visit the center at any time to discuss the care and education of their child with the center director and staff or to observe their child. This visit may be limited to the office area due to other entry restrictions and/or disruptions to the classroom setting. (State Licensing can close a campus during a pandemic. This means only registered children and staff may be inside the facility.)

28. GANG FREE ZONES

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is designated a gang-free zone. Criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalties.

29. FIREARMS

Firearms are prohibited in an educational facility serving minors. Individuals who have an Open Carry or Concealed Handgun License may not bring these firearms into our facility. Firearm may be kept in the licensed individual’s personal vehicle while on our premises.

FAITH LUTHERAN SCHOOL POLICIES

30. TUITION AND FEES

Payments

Tuition is calculated on a school-year basis and charged monthly. Tuition is due by the fifth of the month. We offer sibling discounts. Contact the school office for more information.

Non-Payment

There will be a \$25 charge on any payment rejected by the bank.

A \$25 late fee will be assessed for payments received after the fifteenth day of the month. If arrangements have been made through the office to pay tuition on another date, late charges begin accruing the first school day after the agreed upon date.

Delinquent Accounts

Accounts become delinquent if payment is not received in accordance with the above policy. For delinquent accounts, communication with FLS is critical. On very rare occasions, FLS reserves the right to approve a repayment plan. Repayment plans that extend beyond May of the current school year will not be accepted.

Registration for the summer or the following school year will NOT be allowed for delinquent accounts.

Accounts that are more than 60 days delinquent or fail to follow their approved repayment plan may be given to our collection agency. Students associated with these accounts will be excluded from attendance and resulting vacancies will be filled.

Withdrawal

Two weeks written notice must be given for withdrawing a child from Faith Lutheran School. A Notice of Withdrawal Form must be completed and turned in to the school office a minimum of two weeks prior to the date of withdrawal. Payment is expected through the day of withdrawal. The delinquent account policy also applies to outstanding tuition resulting from withdrawal.

Late Pick Up

Faith Lutheran School closes at 6:00 pm each day. We understand that on rare occasions, circumstances beyond control cause parents to run late. In the event the student will not be picked up by 6:00 pm, please notify the school office immediately. **A late fee of \$20 per 15 minutes will be assessed for any child picked up after 6:00 pm.**

REGISTRATION FEES are non-refundable and are due at the time of registration in order to secure a place for your child.

CURRICULUM FEES are due in full with the September tuition payment and are non-refundable after the start of school. Curriculum fees are subject to the delinquent accounts policy.

Registration opens for the summer program and the following school year for current FLS families and Faith Lutheran Church members mid-February. Registration opens to the public on March 1. Spots will be filled on a first come, first served basis. Registration fees must accompany the registration application.

30. CONFIDENTIALITY

Within Faith Lutheran School, Confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with the employee of Faith Lutheran School who have a “need to know” in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive Information about the faculty, other parents and /or children will not be shared with parents, as Faith Lutheran School strives to protect everyone’s right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, or other health related information of anyone associated with Faith Lutheran School.

Outside of Faith Lutheran School, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except otherwise provided by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of Faith Lutheran School, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

Any parent who violates the Confidentiality policy will not be permitted on school property thereafter. Refer to the policy regarding Parents Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of a child

32. PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Please understand, young children are present in our building. Some adult language is not appropriate for young children. Faith Lutheran School prohibits swearing or cursing on our property. Threatening staff, children, or other parents will not be tolerated per Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Faith Lutheran School has the right to terminate care in the event of disruptive behavior from a parent or guardian. Faith Lutheran School must follow particular rules on discipline and guidance as outlined in the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. All adults, including parents, must follow these rules while on our property. Failure to follow discipline and guidance rules will lead to immediate termination of care. In the event that a parent is dissatisfied with any situation at Faith Lutheran School, parents are to maintain composure and handle issues professionally with the center Director and/or staff. Conversations that take place in the classroom must be developmentally appropriate for the children who are observing and must not be aggressive in tone. Any behavior that places a child at risk will lead to immediate dismissal from the program.
PARENTS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES.

33. PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Children must be signed in and out by the custodial parent or adult person approved by the parent(s). Parents who fail to sign children in or out will be charged a \$5 penalty for each occurrence. Please understand that due to liability issues, the staff of Faith Lutheran School are not permitted to take children home from our center. Faith Lutheran School employees may not be added as an authorized pick up or emergency contact for any child enrolled but their own.

During a pandemic situation, staff will record signing in/out and log temperatures of the children. In order not to confuse school toys with a child's personal property, children do not need to bring playthings from home. Faith Lutheran School staff cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal toys. Two exceptions to this are a stuffed animal for use during naptime and for Show & Tell purposes. You will be notified by your child's teacher if and when the class will have Show & Tell. There are several ways you can help us maintain the best possible teaching atmosphere for your child:

- Communicate any concerns regarding our program or your child immediately to the center Director.
- Pick up and read the notices and information left for you in your child's folder and/or posted outside your child's classroom, at the reception desk, or in e-mail.
- Pick up your child's papers/projects. Their work is very important to them and provides another means of communication between parent and child. This can help the parent share in the child's day.
- Please be aware of the scheduled mealtimes. Make sure your child arrives in time to be included in those meals. Meals cannot be saved or rearranged for children who arrive after these times.
- Staying hydrated is very high on our priority list during the day. Please provide a container for water that your child will use throughout the day. This will be sent home daily for cleaning purposes.
- Nap mats are needed for nap time. These will be sent home on Friday so that you can launder them over the weekend.
- Uniforms are to be worn by those in the Elementary classes.
- Periodically check on your child's supply of extra clothing. Please take home soiled clothing promptly. Faith Lutheran School cannot provide clothing for children that have accidents. The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services do not allow smoking, vaping, or the use of any tobacco product on the premises, either indoors or outdoors.

Faith Lutheran School reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause.

Possible reasons for the refusal of admission include but are not limited to:

1. The need to maintain compliance with Licensing Regulations.
2. Staff deems the child too ill to attend.

3. Domestic situations that present a safety risk to the child, staff or other children enrolled at Faith Lutheran School if the child were present at the school.
4. Parents failure to maintain accurate, up to date records.
5. Parents' failure to complete and submit required documentation in a timely fashion.

34. WITHDRAWAL FROM PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

A Thirty (30) day written or electronic notice (Withdrawal of Enrollment Form) must be given for withdrawing a child from Faith Lutheran School. If a family fails to give a thirty-day notice, Faith Lutheran School has a right to draft from the family's bank account when proper withdrawal notice has not been given. Faith Lutheran School has a right to refuse service to any family for any reason. Partial tuition installments will not be refunded.

35. CUSTODY SITUATIONS

Faith Lutheran School will NOT to get involved with custody disputes. Faith Lutheran School will follow court orders 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, Faith Lutheran School has the right to terminate care, including, but not limited to decisions about the child's care, health, and education. Parents must have these conversations at home and notify the center of any mutual decisions made by both parties involved.

36. INCLEMENT WEATHER / EMERGENCY CLOSURE POLICIES

Faith Lutheran School will follow the standard set by the Huntsville ISD for inclement weather closures.

In the event that the school closes due to inclement weather-related issues, the closure will be posted on our school's Facebook page, Remind 101, website, and parent email group.

Faith Lutheran School does not offer credits or refunds on inclement weather times or other emergency closures.

Faith Lutheran School will follow Huntsville ISD **in most cases but not all**. You will be informed when this takes place. Faith Lutheran School does not offer credits or refunds on emergency closures that are in the best interest of the safety of the children, families and community.

In case of serious emergencies such as earthquakes, fire, storms, or loss of power/water, parents will be notified, if possible, and children will be cared for until parents or emergency contacts arrive. Please refer to our Emergency Preparedness Plan for more information on evacuations and relocation of children.

37. CURRICULUM

The curriculum of Faith Lutheran School is engaging and designed to meet the needs of all children enrolled in our program. It focuses on whole group, small group and individualized instruction. Classroom instruction is both developmentally appropriate and challenging with a hands-on approach to learning. Academic requirements established by the State of Texas for preschool and primary levels are exceeded. Our program of study is revised and updated regularly to ensure our students receive a quality educational experience.

38. CHILD TO STAFF RATIO

Faith Lutheran School exceeds state ratios and licensing expectations. From time to time, Faith Lutheran School may follow state ratios, but will never be non-compliant unless under emergency situations.

39. NAP TIME

Supervised rest periods are provided for all children under five years of age who remain at Faith Lutheran School six or more hours a day, and for all other children who show a need for a rest time. Parents will need to provide a sleep mat to rest on for naptime. Please provide a clean blanket and sheet for naptime and take them home Fridays for washing. Parents may also bring in a special blanket, pillow, or stuffed animal if desired, but they must be able to fit in the child's cubby. Childcare licensing requires that all children be offered a nap or rest period. Children should in class prior to or after nap time in their classroom. **Do not drop children off during nap times.**

40. CLOTHING

Preschool children must have a complete change of clothing, **clearly marked with the child's name**, left in your child's backpack at Faith Lutheran School. Preschool children must be dressed for the weather. Accidents can happen, even for the older preschoolers, or if they get wet on the playground.

Flip-flops are prohibited at Faith Lutheran School for safety reasons. Likewise, parents and visitors are expected to dress appropriately when on school campus. Clothing that does not promote modesty is discouraged.

41. PERSONAL BELONGINGS

Parents must supply all bottles for their child. Please label everything with your child's first and last name. Childcare licensing prohibits children from walking with or sleeping with cups or

bottles. During drop off time, parents are to ensure that children are sitting at a table if they are leaving their child with cups. Faith Lutheran School uses washable crayons, markers and paint during art time, but the children's clothing may get stained from just being kids! Please dress your children in play clothes since PLAY is what we do!! Please leave all valuable items at home since Faith Lutheran School cannot be responsible for broken or lost items.

42. OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play is a regular part of the daily routine. Children should be prepared to play outside some part of every day. Please do not request that your child stay indoors. Per the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, children too sick to go outside should not be at school. Children may not wear flip flops due to the danger these shoes may cause on the playground.

43. BIRTHDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

Most children enjoy celebrating special events with their preschool friends (birthdays, new babies, and holidays). Parents may send a "store bought" treat to share with the class. Please make arrangements with the teacher several days in advance. Your child's teacher is aware of any allergy restrictions and can keep you informed as to what can and cannot be brought into the classroom. If parents wish to invite children in the classroom to private parties, teacher will only be able to pass invitations out if one is provided for all children in the class.

44. SCHOOL SAFETY POLICIES

Our facility is equipped with a fire sprinkler system and fire drills are practiced monthly. In the event that a parent is present in the building when the alarm system is activated, parents are asked to assist the center in emergency preparedness.

Parents will be notified of any incidents other than minor scrapes or bumps with a phone call. Faith Lutheran School will also give a written report at pick up time. A signature from the parent or responsible individual will be required acknowledging that this information was shared. First aid will be applied to minor incidents. In the event medical attention is required, we will notify you immediately. Parents are responsible for all medical fees.

45. CAMERAS

Faith Lutheran School has closed circuit cameras located in various buildings throughout the center. The Director and Administrative Staff has access on site to monitor these cameras. The privacy of the children is very important to us. For this reason, the cameras are not available over the internet. Cameras are for surveillance only. Audio and video footage is not available to parents.

46. PHOTOGRAPHS

Faith Lutheran School believes in the benefit of using real life pictures in our educational program. Photos taken of the children will be done with a school owned camera or phone and will only be used in our program. If parents choose to take pictures of events held at our

program, they may only photograph their child, unless written permission is given by the other parents. Please note that during certain parent events, such as Christmas programs, and all school events, photographs may be taken. If you wish for your child to not be photographed, you may want to remove them from these events.

47. OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

Employees of Faith Lutheran School are prohibited from outside employment with parents of the organization including but is not limited to, babysitting and/or nanny- type jobs. This is only allowed when both the parents and childcare staff sign a “Child Care Waiver for Worker” form which must be turned in to Faith Lutheran school. A copy of this form will be kept in the student’s file and the staff’s personnel file.

48. BITING

When Biting/Illicit Behavior Does Occur:

Our Staff strives to ensure each child’s safety while in our care. The Staff’s job is to keep the children safe and help a child that bites or displays violent behavior, learn different, more appropriate behavior. We do not use techniques to alarm, hurt, or frighten children per Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards’ Discipline and Guidance Policy.

For the Child that was bitten/injured due to another child’s behavior:

1. First aid is given to the injury. It is cleaned with soap and water. If the skin is broken, the injury is covered with a bandage.
2. Parents are notified if the injury broke the skin or if the injury is in an area on the neck or above.
3. The Boo-Boo Report is filled out documenting the incident.
4. Parents’ signature is acquired at pick up and documentation is placed in the child’s file.

For the child that caused the injury:

1. The teacher will address the child in a firm, calm tone using phrases such as “You may not hurt your friends” and “We use gentle hands and feet” and the child will be redirected to another activity.
2. A classroom Incident Report and a School Incident Report for school records (dependent upon severity of injury and behavior) is filled out.
3. The parents will be notified by phone, email, and in person upon pick up and signature will be acquired, and document is placed in the child’s file.

When Biting/Behavior Continues-Second Occurrence:

1. The aforementioned steps will be followed for the injured child and the child who caused the injury.
2. The child will be shadowed at the parent’s expense to help prevent any biting/injury incidents. While being shadowed, the child will be given positive attention and approval for positive behavior.
3. The child will be observed by the classroom staff to determine what is causing the child to bite or act out in a violent manner (teething, communication, frustration, etc.) The Director/Management Team may also observe the child if the classroom staff is unable to determine the cause. A meeting between parent/guardian and Director will occur at this time.

When Biting/Behavior becomes excessive-Third Occurrence:

1. If the child again inflicts **1 bite/injury** in one-week period (5 weekdays) to either another child or the staff member, **following the conference** the child will be suspended for **5 business days**.
2. If the child inflicts **1 bite/injury** after the **5-day suspension** to either another child or the staff member, the parents will be asked to make other day care arrangements effective immediately.

49. POTTY TRAINING

Although potty training is not a part of the preschool curriculum, our staff will be happy to support you in your efforts. Because we know each child is different and develops at his or her own natural pace, Faith Lutheran School will not refuse admission of a child based solely on whether or not she or he is potty-trained. The only exception is in our Pre-K Classes. Please communicate your individual needs to your child's teacher, who will assist you in a reasonable manner. Frustrated or distressed child will not be made to sit on the toilet.

Staff will provide regular opportunities to go to the restroom and implement simple reward systems at the parent's request. Non-flushing potty chairs and potty seats are not permitted. In potty training rooms the child will be placed in a pull up when accidents happen that may cause unsanitary conditions. The staff will keep a record of "incidents" to help determine when a child can wear underwear instead of a pull up. The standard is to go two weeks without any accidents.

50. CELL PHONES

Proper parent communication is imperative when working with young children. It is difficult to communicate when cell phones are in use. Effective December 1, 2010, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services passed new regulations prohibiting the personal use of cell phones and personal electronic devices in classrooms. Please end all calls prior to entering the building so that our staff can properly communicate with you. Teacher's personal cell phone use is prohibited. Please call the school phone number and calls can be transferred to your child's classroom.

51. PROMOTION OF INDOOR & OUTDOOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Faith Lutheran School strongly believes and supports the need for physical activity each day. When children participate in physical activity every day, multiple health benefits accrue. Regular physical activity builds healthy bones and muscles, improves muscular strength and endurance, reduces the risk for developing chronic disease risk factors, improves self-esteem, and reduces stress and anxiety. Beyond these known health effects, physical activity may also have beneficial influences on academic performance. In addition, cognitive skills and motor skills appear to develop through a dynamic interaction. Research has shown that physical movement can affect the brain's physiology.

Infants will be given opportunities for physical activity, including supervised tummy time.

Toddler age children will participate a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten children will participate a minimum of 90 minutes of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Opportunities for active play may overlap with outdoor play when weather permits.

Faith Lutheran School will promote all children's active play every day. Children will have ample opportunity to do moderate to vigorous activities, such as running, climbing, dancing, skipping, and jumping, to the extent of their abilities.

All children will participate each day in:

- o Two occasions of active play outdoors when weather permits, which includes our extended care times.
- o One session of P.E class that will promote moderate to vigorous activities daily.
- o Two or more structured or teacher-led activities or games that promote movement over the course of the day.
- o Continuous opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills.

Physical activity may take place in the classroom, P.E class or on the playground, when weather permits.

When participating in physical activity, children's clothing should protect them from sun exposure and permit easy movement (not too loose and not too tight) that enables full participation in active play. Footwear should provide support for running and climbing. Hats may be worn to protect children from sun exposure.

Examples of appropriate clothing/footwear include:

- Gym shoes or sturdy shoe equivalent
- Clothing for the weather, such as a lightweight, breathable jacket without any hood and neck strings.

Examples of inappropriate clothing/footwear include:

- Footwear that can come off while running or that provide insufficient support for climbing.
- Clothing that can catch on playground equipment, such as those with drawstrings or loops.

When weather conditions prohibit outdoor play, physical activities will occur in the classroom during the scheduled outside time. Classroom teachers have activities planned in advance for “rainy days”.

We, at Faith Lutheran School, know that you trust us with your most valuable treasure, your child, and we strive to serve our families the absolute best in early education and childcare. We believe that excellent early childhood development is the foundation for a bright future for our children at Faith Lutheran School.

52. ACCREDITATION

Faith Lutheran School’s preschool and elementary program is nationally accredited through National Lutheran School Accreditation. Accreditation is an ongoing process that evaluates a school based upon national standards and our school’s unique mission. It results in ongoing school improvement and positive, directive change.

53. ATTENDANCE

We believe children benefit from the opportunities offered by our program when they attend regularly. Full benefits of our program can only be expected with full participation and attendance. We recommend preschool students arrive no later than 7:45am and be picked up no earlier than the class lunch time. For pre-kindergarten students, we recommend they be picked up after 3:30pm.

In the event your child will arrive after 10:00 a.m., please notify the school so the child can be added to the daily lunch count.

54. CHAPEL

Children will attend a chapel service each week on Wednesday. Parents are welcome to attend chapel with them providing they check in as a visitor with the front office prior to joining the class.

55. PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES

Communication between parent and teacher is essential in caring for and educating your child. If at any time you would like to have a conference with your child’s teacher, you are encouraged to set up an appointment. Conferences to discuss academic progress will be scheduled in January for all students in Pre-Kindergarten. Additional conferences may be held as needed. At Faith Lutheran School, we have an open-door policy. You are welcome to observe your child, our facilities and our program activities any time.

Please check your child’s backpack daily and carefully read any messages found as you sign your child in/out each day on ProCare

56. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES/CALENDAR MODIFICATIONS

If there is a need to modify or make additions to any of our existing policies, parents will be notified of these changes in the form of an addendum letter. Upon receipt of an addendum, please add it to your Parent Handbook.

If necessary, Faith Lutheran School reserves the right to modify the school calendar. Parents will be notified in advance if modifications are needed.

57. TOYS AND ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Our classrooms have age-appropriate toys and equipment for student use. No toys, games, electronic devices or like items should be brought to school. One small stuffed animal may be brought to school to be used during nap time.

We trust this handbook will help acquaint you with our school policies and procedures. If you have any questions or concerns regarding our policies and procedures, please call the school office to make an appointment with the Principal or Early Childhood Director.