



FAMILY HANDBOOK
2023-2024

St. George's Episcopal School is an inclusive community, inspiring preschool children to love learning by nurturing each child's mind, body and spirit.

Please keep this handbook for reference throughout the school year.

St. George's Episcopal School
4301 N. IH 35
Austin, TX 78722
(512)452-6063 - Office - - (512)673-2288 - Cell
(512)532-8137 - Fax
www.stgeorges-austin.com

Administrative Staff:

Gabriela (Gabi) Rips
Assistant Head of School
gabi@stgeorges-austin.com

Cindy Bogle
Administrative Assistant
cindy@stgeorges-austin.com

Carla Genusa
Educational Director of Infant/Toddlers
carla@stgeorges-austin.com

Mari Vasquez
Educational Director of Preschool
mari@stgeorges-austin.com

Jerri Thompson
Head of School
jerri@stgeorges-austin.com

<i>Important Information about the School's Operation</i>	5
Statement of Mission and Philosophy	5
Goals and Objectives	5
Organizational Structure	5
Licensing Authority	6
Accreditation	7
Liability Insurance	7
<i>II. Important Information about Enrollment</i>	7
Registration	7
Waitlist	8
Enrollment Requirements	8
Enrollment Forms	8
Student Medical Form	9
Confidential Information Form	9
Guidance and Discipline Form	9
Family Handbook Acknowledgment	9
Hours of Operation	10
Classroom Divisions and Groupings	10
School Year Calendar	11
School Closing	11
Tuition	11
Financial Assistance	12
Withdrawal	12
Grievance Procedures	13
<i>III. Important Information about Staff and Delivery of Instruction</i>	13
Teacher Qualifications and Training	13
Curriculum	14
Infants (Red and Green Room):	15
Toddlers (Purple and Orange Rooms):	16
Preschool (Yellow, Pink, Blue, and Rainbow Rooms):	16
Fun Zone:	17
Early Birds:	17
Outdoor Playground:	17
Religion	17
Toilet Learning and Toilet Training	18

Daily Schedules	19
Nap	19
Screen Time	19
Supervision	19
Guidance and Discipline	20
Biting	21
Children Who Need Special Accommodations	22
Dismissal	23
<i>IV. Important Information about Communication with Parents</i>	24
Parent Orientation	24
Communication	24
Parent Resources	25
Drop Off and Pick Up	25
Saying “Goodbye” (separation)	25
Parent Visitation	26
School Attire	26
Assessment / Parent Conferences	26
Parties and Celebrations	27
Birthday Book Program	28
Enrichment Opportunities	28
Parent Involvement and Special Events	28
Parent, Teachers, Friends Committee (PTF)	28
School Traditions	29
Fundraising	29
Policy Regarding Holiday Camp	30
Policy Regarding Child Custody Matters	30
<i>V. Important Information about Health, Safety and Nutrition</i>	31
Snacks	31
Water Bottles	31
Lunch	31
Severe Allergies	32
Health	32
Medication	34
Special Medical Devices	34

Sunscreen/Ointments/Teething Gels/Bug Repellents	34
Hand washing	35
Safety	35
Eco-friendly environment	38
Universal Precautions	38
Pest Control	38
Live Pets and Animals	38
Child Abuse and Neglect	38
<i>III. Frequently Asked Questions</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>IV. Family Handbook Acknowledgement</i>	<i>1</i>

Important Information about the School's Operation

Statement of Mission and Philosophy

The purpose of St. George's Episcopal School (The School) is to provide a well-rounded program for the children of St. George's Church (The Church) and its surrounding diverse community. Through our programs of School and Extended Care each child can grow and develop spiritually, cognitively, physically, emotionally and socially within a Christian atmosphere. We believe each child is a gift of God, a unique person valued for his/her own worth, growing and learning independently. A love of learning is fostered through an environment that is rich with opportunities for growth in a variety of activities and experiences, both indoors and outdoors. By offering a wide variety of developmentally appropriate activities and materials, The School gives every child the opportunity of building self-esteem while experiencing challenge and success.

Goals and Objectives

The early years are critical to a child's later success in learning. The following are goals that the school shall strive to achieve:

- Presentation of curriculum through developmentally appropriate practice
- Tailoring curriculum to meet children's individual needs and learning styles
- Providing a welcoming atmosphere for families
- Teaching that reflects the most current thought in early childhood
- Ongoing parent education for the families served by this program
- Ongoing teacher education for the staff

Organizational Structure

The affairs of the school are governed by the School Board, which meets the fourth Monday of every month. This Board is composed of the Rector, a representative from the Church Vestry, school parents, community representatives, and parishioners of St. George's Church. Election of new members is held in May each year. Terms begin in August and are three years in length.

The School Board supports the teachers and the Head of School and makes policies for the governance of the School. This is done through Board committees, including Governance, Building and Grounds, and Finance. Teacher salaries and benefits make up 85% of the cost of running St. George's School. In order to keep tuition fees reasonable, the School Board works hard to raise funds and ensure the financial solvency of the school.

The School has an administrative staff consisting of the Head of School, Assistant Head of School, Administrative Assistant, Educational Director of Infant/Toddlers, and Educational Director of Preschool. There are lead teachers, assistant teachers and team support teachers. The Head of School reports to The Board and the Rector of The Church.

Licensing Authority

The School is licensed by the Department of Family and Protective Services of the State of Texas. All of the guidelines for operating procedures, administration of the school, and laws are outlined in the Minimum Standards (revised October 2021). A copy of this document is on file and available to all employees. It is required that each staff member review this manual annually as a part of the employee training process. The Minimum Standards is available for parents' review and is located in the school office.

Each licensed center is responsible to a licensing representative who visits the facility on a regular basis. Any cited violations are posted for the public for a period of 60 days, and are available on-line at <http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/>. The results of the visit are also posted in the school office for review.

The School is licensed as a Child Care Center. A child care center is defined as a childcare facility that provides care less than 24 hours a day for more than 12 children under the age of 14. The center is licensed for 109 children. If you have questions about the services provided by this center, or Childcare Licensing, you may call the Childcare Information Line at 1-800-862-5252, or the Child Abuse Hotline at 1 800 252-5400.

Contacting DFPS:
(512) 834-3195
14000 Summit Drive, Suite 100
Austin, TX 78728
www.dfps.state.tx.us

We are required to notify parents that St. George's is located within a gang-free zone. This means that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of our school is a violation of Texas law and is subject to increased penalty.

During the school day, St. George's is a tobacco-free campus. During this time, smoking and the use of any other tobacco product is prohibited on any portion of the church and school grounds. Please notify the school office if you witness someone who is not in compliance with this policy.

The school is also notified of any recalls issued by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. When a product is relative to the age of children we provide care for, the announcement is printed and posted in the office. Parents can access the recall announcements at www.cpsc.gov.

Parents will also be notified of any policy changes through an email. The Family Handbook is updated yearly and posted on our website. All parents sign an acknowledgement that the handbook has been received and read. If a parent does not have access to the internet a hard copy will be provided upon request.

Accreditation

St. George's Episcopal School is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). We are also licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (TDFPS). St. George's is also certified as a Texas Rising Star (TRS) child care provider. To find additional information regarding TRS, you can visit www.texasrisingstar.org.

Liability Insurance

The School meets all state requirements regarding insurance coverage for children enrolled in a licensed facility. Coverage is reviewed yearly by the Head of School.

II. Important Information about Enrollment

Registration

Registration is held in February for the following fall. The school follows a traditional school year (mid August-late May). A summer camp program is offered in June, July, and part of August. The school is closed one week between the summer and fall programs for teacher in-service. The online registration process is prioritized, and is first come, first serve.

The priority in registration will be:

- Currently enrolled students
- St. George's parishioners
- Siblings of currently enrolled students
- Previous years waitlisted students
- General public

When a class becomes full a wait list will be formed. As space becomes available parents will be contacted in the order of the priority list above. In order to be registered, all families must pay an annual enrollment, supply fee and last month's deposit, the amount of which is set by the School Board. The annual enrollment fee is non-refundable. Also, in order for currently enrolled families to register for upcoming programming their financial obligations must be current.

Registration for summer programming will be held no later than March. Currently enrolled students will be asked to confirm their enrollment for summer before we open to the general public. Summer camp is optional for currently enrolled families.

Waitlist

In order to be considered on the school's waitlist, an application and fee is required. If an opening does not become available during that school year, then families will be emailed prior to the week of registration with directions on how to enroll for the next upcoming school year. These families are given priority before the general public.

Enrollment Requirements

Enrollment in The School shall be open to any child according to the priority registration schedule, provided the program can meet the needs of that child. Enrollment shall be granted without discrimination in regard to socioeconomic status, race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, handicap, marital or veteran status, sexual orientation, or parenthood.

In determining whether a child will be admitted to St. George's School, the school will consider the child's chronological age, developmental progress, potential for positive school participation and conduct, and the expressed commitment of the child's family to support the mission, policies, practices, and curricular goals of St. George's Episcopal School.

Consideration for new admission to St. George's requires the submission of an application form. This form is also used as a wait list form, and if an opening is not available, then the option to pay the waitlist fee will be given. When a space becomes available, a non-refundable enrollment fee is due. Then the enrollment packet and a deposit are due by May 1. The deposit will be applied to the last month of the upcoming school year (acting as May's tuition). Refer to the Withdrawal section of this handbook for refund information on May's tuition. The supply fees are due in August before the new school year begins.

In order for a child to attend any of the programming of The School, The School must be provided current records of enrollment, and the family must be current with all fees, and tuition. It is requested that if information changes during the course of a child's enrollment, parents notify the school immediately of any change. It is particularly important that the school office and your child's teacher have up-to-date telephone numbers where parents can be reached at all times.

All enrollment information on children is kept confidential. Child files with health information are kept in a locked file cabinet, but are available upon request to those who have written authority to view files, the child's legal guardians, and regulatory authorities.

Enrollment Forms

These forms must be filled out truthfully and completely, including emergency contacts, permission to release, the financial agreement, health insurance information, and the hold harmless agreement. Enrollment forms are filled out each year. Parents must sign and date the forms. If information on the forms changes during the school year, parents are expected to provide updated information. If any information provided is deemed false, this could result in the child not being able to attend.

Student Medical Form

A medical form must be completed for each child *every year*. This form must have the signature of the child's physician. **All children who enroll in The School must be immunized.** Texas licensing requirements state that all immunization records must be current. Any child who is under-immunized must show a plan of how they are catching up with the health departments recommended immunization schedule.

As your child receives new immunizations, please bring the doctor's written verification to us so we can update our records. Quarterly immunization audits are performed, if your child is missing any immunizations, you will be notified and expected to bring in proof of immunizations within 3 days. In addition, keep us informed about allergies and any medications your child is taking. Please notify the office with changes in emergency and doctor telephone numbers. For further information regarding the school's health policies see the section entitled "Health" found in this handbook.

All students who are four years old by September 1 of that school year will need a vision and hearing screening. Your child's pediatrician should conduct this test at the child's four-year check-up.

Confidential Information Form

The Confidential Information Form is designed for the use of your child's teachers. It helps us understand your child so that we might meet individual needs. Please fill it out as completely as possible and turn it in prior to the beginning of school. The confidential information form will be reviewed by the Head of School and shared with your child's teacher and/or any other individual with an educational interest in your child, such as Texas Department of Family and Regulatory Services, or any other governmental agency as applicable. Before sharing information with an outside agency the school must receive written consent from the family.

Guidance and Discipline Form

Every family must sign a Guidance and Discipline Policy form to indicate they have read and understand our agreement as a DFPS licensed facility and the requirements of all staff to adhere to the DFPS rules regarding guidance and discipline. A detailed explanation of the policy is explained in the Guidance and Discipline section of this Handbook.

Family Handbook Acknowledgment

Every family must sign a Family Handbook Acknowledgment form indicating they have read, understand, or have asked clarifying questions regarding The School's policies.

Hours of Operation

School Office	8:00 AM – 5:30 PM
Early Birds	8:00 AM - 9:00 AM
School	9:00 AM to 3:30 PM
Fun Zone	3:30 PM to 5:30 PM

It is important that parents adhere to the hours of operation when dropping off and picking up children. The time before School begins is used by the lead teachers as preparation for the day, so they will be unable to service your child until the actual drop off time at 9:00. Please refrain from asking your teacher if your child may come early. Likewise, we ask that you be prompt when picking up your child. There is a \$10 late fee assessed to your monthly bill, after the first five minutes, and then a late fee of \$5.00 per child for every additional minute (or any part thereof) will be charged. This fee will be assessed on your next monthly bill. The time is designated by the school's clock and is determined by the school staff.

Children will be brought to the school office for late pick up after the first 5 minutes. As a courtesy to the staff and to your child, we ask that you call the school office and notify us if you are running late, so we can make any special arrangements necessary. Late charges are assessed with or without notification. Being consistently late in picking up your child can result in your child's dismissal from the program.

Classroom Divisions and Groupings

The School is divided into 3 programs, Early Birds (8:00-9:00 AM), School Day (9:00-3:30), and Fun Zone (3:30-5:30 PM). All classes are grouped by age, and class offerings may change from year to year, depending on enrollment and need. Children remain in their assigned classes from September to May. Depending on summer enrollment, children may also remain in their class until the end of the summer program (mid-August). Typically children are grouped in the following classes: (Age as of September 1)

- Infants: Red Room (3-11 months) Rose Room (varies) Green Room (12-16 months)
- Toddlers: Purple Room (17-23 months) Orange Room (24-29 months)
- Pre-schoolers: Yellow Room (2 ½'s - 3's) Blue & Pink Room (3's) Rainbow Room (Pre-K-4's)

Class sizes are well below the minimum standards for teacher-child ratios, and can be found on our Tuition and Fees Sheet on our website. There are two teachers in each classroom. The program is organized and staffed to minimize the number of groups, teaching staff, and classroom transitions by an individual child.

Children's placement is the responsibility of the Head of School, who will receive input from former teachers, parents, and outside professionals when necessary, when placing children in classes. The School supports a developmentally appropriate philosophy and advocates for small age ranges per classroom.

School Year Calendar

The school calendar is set by the Head of School. As a general rule, the school year runs from mid-August through late May. A separate summer session for children runs from June through mid-August. The School follows the Austin Independent School District calendar with regard to Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Spring Break holidays. AISD teacher in-service days may or may not be taken by the school. Likewise, The School may take some in-service days that AISD does not take, for teacher training, such as MLK day, as well as certain religious holidays. All families are given a school calendar at the beginning of each new school year, listing all the holidays for the year. The calendar is also posted on our website. In the unlikely event that a change must be made to the approved school calendar adequate parent notice will be given.

School Closing

In the event of bad weather or a national or community emergency, please tune in to local radio and television for closure information. Also, check the school's website. If AISD schools are closed due to bad weather or a national or community emergency, St. George's Episcopal School will also be closed. If AISD schools have a *late start*, the time used to determine our late start will be from the start of Early Birds (8 AM). In the event we must close the school after the school day has begun because of an electrical outage, plumbing or water cut-off, national or community emergency, or for any other reason, the school office, or your child's teachers will call and notify parents that they must immediately pick up their child. It is a health requirement that there be running water in order for school to be in session.

Tuition

The School is categorized as a non-profit 501c3, so it is 100% tuition driven and relies on payment of tuition in order to operate. Tuition is set by the school's Board of Directors and is reviewed yearly. Tuition is due on the first day of each month. Credit is not given for a child's absence – including vacations, illness or other holidays; nor is credit given if the school must be closed due to weather events, national or community emergencies, or any other events beyond the school's control.

A tuition invoice will be e-mailed to you monthly, reflecting the current balance due. You will also receive a statement on the 11th of the month. Checks may be dropped

off in the school office during business hours, or you may mail your tuition to St. George's Episcopal School, 4301 N. IH 35, Austin, TX. 78722. Please make checks payable to St. George's School and note that it is for school tuition, and place your child's name in the memo. Please do not send your child's tuition to school with your child or give it to your child's teacher.

Tuition is late after the 10th of the month. If your child's tuition is not paid by the 10th of the month, a \$30.00 late fee will be charged to your account. The late fee will increase to \$35.00 after the 15th and \$40.00 after the 25th of the month. The following procedures will be implemented in the collection of non-paid tuition:

11 days past due – Courtesy call or a past due written notification

15 days past due – Notification in writing

25 days past due – Call by the Head of School requesting payment arrangements

Second letter of notification:

30 days past due – Notification from the Head of School that your child will not be allowed to attend classes until all the delinquent amounts are paid in full and any current tuition payments are also paid, unless prior arrangements have been made.

45 days past due - Certified letter stating revocation of enrollment and dismissal of the child.

If a check is returned for insufficient fees, then you may be charged a \$25.00 processing fee.

Occasionally families have special situations arise which cause them to fall behind in their monthly tuition. In that event please call the school office and speak with the Head of School about whether special payment arrangements can be made. We are happy to help you when possible.

Financial Assistance

St. George's offers financial assistance to families experiencing financial hardship and have currently enrolled students. The St. George's Board of Trustees has established a Financial Assistance Committee that serves to implement this policy. Applications are available in the school office.

St. George's is also a Work Source/Child Care Solutions provider. Work Source/CCS helps eligible low- to moderate-income families afford quality childcare in Travis County. They offer a subsidized child care program funded by the State and the US government. To apply for childcare please call WorkSource/Child Care Solutions at (512) 597-7191 or go online to www.worksourceaustin.com/childcare/information.

Withdrawal

During the school year, if a parent needs to withdraw a child from our program the parents should inform the office in writing at least **one month** before the date of

withdrawal. The May tuition deposit will be refunded with 30 days written notice of withdrawal up to February 28th; from March 1 thru May 31 there will be no refund of the May tuition. If it is necessary to withdraw prior to school starting, the May deposit will be refunded with written notice, before July 1. After July 1, the May deposit will be applied to September's tuition and no refund will be given.

After school has commenced, if it is necessary to withdraw in the middle of a month, the tuition for the child's last partial month of attendance will be prorated only with 30 days prior notice. If less than thirty days' notice is given then the tuition for the partial month attended will be due in full. (For example: If your last day of school will be November 10, then you must notify us by October 10, in order for November's tuition to be prorated. Otherwise November's tuition would be due in full.) Enrollment fees are nonrefundable.

Re-enrollment is at the discretion of the Head of School, and considered on a case by case basis.

Grievance Procedures

It is in the best interest of children, families, teachers, and the school for concerns and complaints to be addressed in a timely and professional manner. For parents who have a concern or complaint about a school-related issue, please follow the procedure in this order:

- Speak to your child's teacher first. If not resolved to your satisfaction,
- Speak to the Head of School next. If not resolved to your satisfaction,
- Speak to the Rector. If not resolved to your satisfactions,
- Finally, you may write a letter to the School's Board President, board_president@stgeorge-austin.com. A list of all Board Members is located in the school office and on the website. The Board has the final decision in all matters pertaining to The School. After a decision is rendered, the President will send a response to the parent, in writing.

Grievances that may cause the school to dismiss a family could be (but are not limited to):

- Parents are verbally disrespectful to teachers or school employees
- Families engaging in actions negatively impacting the Mission of the school which supports an open and inclusive community
- The family is consistently, repeatedly late in picking up the child
- The family consistently, repeatedly disregards the policies and procedures set forth in the Family Handbook
- Nonpayment of tuition or fees
- The child's health or educational needs become such that the school is unable to provide appropriate schooling

- Custody arrangements between parents are such that the school cannot satisfy one or both parents' wishes. See section entitled Policy Regarding Child Custody Matters.
- If dismissal is the result of a parent's conduct, all children in the family are dismissed.

The School's policy complies with federal and state civil rights laws.

The recommendation for dismissal from the school lies with the Head of School. If parents disagree with the recommendation for dismissal, they must state their case to the Rector first, then, if necessary, in writing to the Board of Directors (The Board) of the school according to the grievance procedures in this Handbook. The Board may or may not request a personal interview with the parents and all concerned parties, as well. After a review of all the facts, The Board will make the final decision regarding a child's/family's dismissal from the school.

III. Important Information about Staff and Delivery of Instruction

Teacher Qualifications and Training

The School is fortunate to have outstanding early childhood professionals working with your children. All employees meet the licensing requirements in order to be able to teach in a licensed facility in the State of Texas, including background checks, and FBI fingerprints. All of our lead teachers have Early Childhood/Child Development degrees, Elementary Education Degrees, thirty-six college education hours, or Child Development Associate (CDA) credentials.

In order to work at The School, all staff must receive 30 hours of in-service training yearly, as well as 24 hours of pre-service training and 8 hours of orientation to the school. Orientation and Pre-Service covers the following:

- An understanding of DFPS minimum standards
- An understanding of St. George's School's Policies and Procedures
- An understanding of our policy regarding prevention, recognition, and reporting of child abuse and neglect
- An understanding of the procedures to follow in handling emergencies
- The location and use of fire extinguishers and first-aid equipment
- Preventing and responding to emergencies due to food or an allergic reaction
- How to administer medication
- Understanding building and physical premises safety
- Handling, storing, and disposing of hazardous materials including blood borne pathogens
- Infant/Child Rescue Breathing, CPR and First-Aid
- Developmental stages of children
- Age-appropriate activities for children

- Positive guidance and discipline of children
- Fostering children's self-esteem
- Supervision and safety practices in the care of children
- Positive interaction with children
- Preventing and controlling the spread of communicable diseases, including immunizations
- Recognizing and preventing shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma
- Safe Sleep practices and the prevention of SIDS
- Understanding early childhood brain development

All teachers also receive a TB test. It is also highly recommended that teachers of infants receive the pertussis vaccine and yearly flu vaccination.

Curriculum

A well designed Scope & Sequence for every age level is available in the school office for parents and teachers. Teachers use these guidelines to design the lesson plans so specific objectives are met in areas of language arts, math, social studies, science, technology, self-help, fine motor, and gross motor. The school also uses a curriculum designed by Rice University, The Rice Storytelling and Culture Project, to enhance language development in children. The pre-kindergarten class uses a handwriting curriculum titled, Handwriting Without Tears, to enhance fine motor and letter and number recognition. We also use the Texas Pre-Kindergarten Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) standards and goals. SAES and NAEYC guidelines are taken into consideration in all planning and implementation of activities. Most classes use themes to form the basis of activities, and the classes teach concepts through learning, such as math, writing, art, science, block, and dramatic play, etc. Our curriculum is consistent with the philosophy of our school and addresses central aspects of child development. A description of classroom centers and the skills they develop are available in the school office or on our website

Materials and equipment used to implement the curriculum reflect the lives of the children and families we serve; reflect the diversity found in society; encourage exploration, experimentation, and discovery; promotes action and interaction; are organized to support independent use; are rotated to reflect changing themes; and accommodate children with special needs.

Infants (Red and Green Room):

It is the goal of The School to provide a loving, safe environment in which the infant may grow and develop trust. This will be achieved by providing nurturing teachers, a predictable environment, respect for parents' wishes, and strong communication with parents. The infant curriculum places importance on language, motor, and emotional development.

For the safety of all infants, we follow safe sleeping practices. Infants 12 months and younger are placed on their backs for sleeping, unless otherwise ordered by a physician. Infants are kept in the line of sight during sleeping time, and swaddling is not

permitted. Their heads will remain uncovered. Infants are also not allowed to sleep in swings, car seats, high chairs or other equipment not certified for sleep. If they arrive asleep in equipment not certified for sleep, they will be moved to a safe and supervised sleep area. Pillows, blankets, quilts, comforters, sheepskins, stuffed toys and other soft items are not allowed in cribs or rest equipment for infants younger than 12 months. The School will not allow baby walkers.

For infants who require the use of cloth diapers, the policy states that the diaper must have an absorbent inner lining completely surrounded by an outer covering made of water-proof material. Both the diaper and outer lining will be put into a plastic bag and sent home for laundering.

Children are checked every two hours and as needed for diaper changes. When a soiled diaper is discovered a change will happen within 5 minutes or less. Staff must keep one hand on the child at all times when using an elevated service to change a diaper or soiled clothing. Diapering areas must not be used for other purposes, i.e. storing objects, food, etc.

Infants who are breastfeeding are supported by the school, accepting and storing breast milk in ready-to-feed sanitary containers labeled with the infant's full name and date and time the milk was expressed. The breast milk can only be stored for 48 hrs. and no more than 24 hours if previously frozen in our refrigerator. Quiet areas for mothers to breastfeed are also made available for mothers who wish to breastfeed at the school. Additional breastfeeding and formula feeding policies and procedures are given by the teachers at Parent Orientation or on your first day. The school can provide additional resources regarding breastfeeding, if needed.

Parents of infants who are not on table food will be given a monthly feeding schedule to be filled out and signed by the parents with directions on how to feed their baby. All food must be sent in the original container, labeled with the child's first and last name, and a date it was sent. Powder formula must be sent in the original container, labeled with the child's full name and specific directions of how to mix. Neither bottles nor food will be warmed in a microwave, and infants younger than 12 months will be held for bottle feedings. Bottle propping is a forbidden practice. We do not serve cow's milk to infants younger than 12 months without a doctor's permission. When infants transfer to sippy cups, they must be seated when drinking.

Toddlers (Purple and Orange Rooms):

It is the goal of The School to provide a loving, safe environment in which the toddler may grow and develop. This will be achieved by providing an enriching, hands-on, multi-sensory curriculum that places importance on the child's readiness to learn new things within the context of a nurturing classroom and loving teachers. Through a variety of learning centers, children will explore their room and the activities prepared for them. All classes are offered a time to attend Chapel on Wednesday and Thursday where simple bible stories are told and birthdays are recognized. The School also offers ancillary classes during the morning curriculum consisting of music and motor skills. Music and Motor Skills is offered twice a week.

A typical daily schedule for toddlers consists of hands-on activities, music, snack, outdoor play, lunch, and nap. Children are checked every two hours and as needed for diaper changes. When a soiled diaper is discovered a change will happen within 5 minutes or less. Staff must keep one hand on the child at all times when using an elevated service to change a diaper or soiled clothing.

Parents must label and date all food that is brought. Teachers should encourage all children to feed themselves because the children take pride in doing so. Toddlers should not walk or crawl with bottles, sippy cups, or regular cups. Autonomy is a major milestone for toddlers and we do everything to support their personal growth and development through routines.

Toilet training is another major milestone in this area for some, and we want to partner with parents when the decision is made to start the process. Toilet training classes are offered once in the fall and once in the spring for parents. We encourage all parents to attend months prior to beginning the process of toilet training.

Preschool (Yellow, Pink, Blue, and Rainbow Rooms):

It is the goal of The School to provide the building blocks of learning that will enhance children's success in elementary school and beyond. Our curriculum is designed to create a safe environment in which the child can learn through exploration and experimentation. Through a multi-sensory, hands-on approach, children are introduced to language development, pre-reading concepts, early math and science concepts, pre-writing and fine motor activities, developmentally appropriate social studies units, technology, art, large muscle activities, and music. These concepts are taught through classroom learning centers that utilize play as the basis of developmentally appropriate practice. Children are introduced to concepts as they show readiness, and all activities are designed with the child's individual needs in mind. Instilling a love of learning and a joyful attitude toward school are paramount goals of the curriculum.

A typical day in preschool consists of learning centers, snack, ancillary class, group time, outdoor play, lunch, nap, and afternoon snack.

All classes are offered a time to attend Chapel on Wednesday and Thursday where simple bible stories are told and birthdays are recognized. The School also offers ancillary classes during the morning curriculum consisting of music and motor skills. Music and Motor Skills is offered twice a week.

Fun Zone:

Fun Zone begins at 3:30 PM and ends at 5:30 PM. It is the goal of The School to provide excellent programming for all children enrolled in full time care. The afternoon's programming will be a continuation of the morning's learning experiences, but with separate lesson plans that reflect young children's physical and emotional needs as they begin to tire later in the day.

The afternoon curriculum provides a continuation of planned activities such as art, story time, outside play and free play in centers. It is a priority of Fun Zone that children are allowed to practice their social skills, conflict resolution skills, and self-help skills, as well.

Early Birds:

Children who arrive between 8:00-9:00 AM are given an opportunity to explore the room and toys before going outside. If a child wants to finish their breakfast, teachers will assist with the child's needs up until the time they go outside.

Outdoor Playground:

Outdoor play is a critical time of the day for our children. Each class spends an hour in the morning during the "School Day". Children enrolled in "Fun Zone" will spend an additional hour in the afternoon outdoors. Our outdoor playgrounds are an integral part of our curriculum and offer children a time to courageously explore and take calculated risks.

The School has two playgrounds, one for infants/toddlers and one for preschoolers. The preschool playground has a creek bed that at times has a water feature. We ask for children to bring a pair of water shoes to use outdoors. These water shoes need to have rubber soles and securely fit around their feet, so they can safely climb. Rain boots and galoshes are not allowed at school.

All children are expected to go outdoors during the school day and again during fun zone. The school subscribes to <http://www.tceq.texas.gov/> in order to receive daily emails regarding ozone levels. When levels are unhealthy, children's time spent outdoors will be limited to 20 minutes at a time. When the air temperature is 90 and the heat index is between 91-97 degrees or the air temperature is 94 and the heat index is between 97-103 degrees, children's time spent outdoors will be limited to 20 minutes at a time. Water bottles will accompany children outside and teachers will remind the children to stop and drink. When the air temperature is below freezing and the wind chill is below 32 degrees, children's time spent outdoors will be limited to 20 minutes at a time and children will wear coats, hats, and gloves.

Religion

The religious goals for St. George's Episcopal School include (a) the careful exposure to appropriate stories from the Old and New Testaments and to the seasons of the church calendar, (b) the experience of God's presence in the peaceful setting of the church during worship, and (c) the experience of God's love through daily interaction with caring and empathetic teachers in a secure and loving environment.

Every Friday, close to drop off time, the entire school gathers together in the church to have chapel led by the church's rector or The Head of School. This is a short service based on the Episcopal liturgy that includes songs and prayers appropriate for preschool. A special birthday prayer will be offered on the chapel day closest to each child's birthday. Parents are always welcome to join us in chapel.

We welcome children of all faiths. Our teachers believe in the principles of Christian love, thought and living as expressed in their daily lives. The children are helped to become aware of God's love as they participate in a caring Christian community. Chapel time is offered weekly in the church sanctuary, in addition to planned and spontaneous prayers, religious songs, and activities in the classroom. An emphasis is

placed on the development of such moral values as honesty, responsibility, accountability, kindness, cooperation, fairness, tolerance, and understanding. Traditional religious holidays such as Christmas, Thanksgiving, and Easter, reflect the school's Christian values. Christ's love is reflected through teachers' thoughts, words, and deeds in their approach to the children in their care. Tolerance for others' religious backgrounds is encouraged by willingness to share different cultural perspectives so that children of all faiths feel welcomed and valued.

Toilet Learning and Toilet Training

It is The School's policy that children do not have to be toilet trained until they are entering Pre-K. The exception to this rule is determined by the child's developmental level and not their age. Teachers are trained on how to properly introduce children to toilet learning before embarking on toilet training. They are here to help parents see the readiness signs before beginning toilet training. A regular routine of taking children frequently to the bathroom needs to be established.

In the fall and spring each year, the Head of School will hold a toilet learning vs. toilet training seminar for parents to explain the difference and the process.

Daily Schedules

The lead teacher is responsible for posting and maintaining a daily schedule of events for his/her classroom. This schedule should reflect segments of the day such as greeting upon arrival, snack time, outdoor time, learning center time, Chapel, and other such events indicative of the child's day. The daily schedule will be posted on the parent bulletin board for parents to view and on the school's website.

Nap

Nap or rest time is part of each child's day. Providing children with a nap is a licensing regulation for children who are in care for more than 5 hours a day. If your child does not nap, then a rest period for 45 minutes to an hour is provided, followed with a quiet activity on their mats, while the other children are napping. Each child is provided a comfortable mat. Parents are asked to bring a small bed roll with an attached pillow. Our space is limited for storing sleep items. These items will go home weekly to be laundered.

Screen Time

Screen time is not used at the school, except during spring break camp, and summer camp. When screen time is used the class must provide parents with the show and get approval. Those children not participating will be given another activity during the program. Occasionally the older classrooms will use educational videos that are aligned with lessons.

Supervision

Children's safety is always at the forefront of what we do at The School. Teachers supervise by positioning themselves to see as many children as possible. Teachers are annually trained on Active Supervision methods to ensure the children are safe at all times. Teachers will use the 6 principles of Active Supervision while in the classroom and on the playground.

1. Set up the environment for success
2. Position staff
3. Scan and Count
4. Listen
5. Anticipate Children's Behavior
6. Engage and Redirect

Teachers who are with infants, toddlers, or young twos must have children in line of sight and sound by looking up or turning in place at all times by at least one teacher. Therefore, infant/toddler/twos teachers must rotate around the room, so children can be seen and heard in each learning center. These rules apply when children are sleeping too. Infants, between the ages of 3-16 months, must be checked every 3 minutes during their sleep to ensure they are still breathing.

Teachers who work with preschoolers supervise primarily by sight. Teachers supervise by sound if a child is out of direct sight. When a preschooler is out of direct sight and sound, it is for no more than 1 minute, and the child is in a safe environment.

Any classroom with mirrors installed in strategic locations are not used as a substitute for line of sight supervision, but are merely an added precaution for extra support.

Choking Hazards

For all children under the age of 3, the school asks for parents to be mindful of items sent with your child to school. Teachers use a choke tube to determine if an item is considered a choking hazard. Items to avoid are: metal snap clips for hair, matchbox cars, rings, whole grapes, chunks of peanut butter, etc. If teachers find items that are considered choking hazards they will be removed and you will be notified.

Guidance and Discipline

Each employee has the responsibility to be mindful of student conduct at all times and to intervene if students are harming each other or school property. Classroom teachers have the authority and responsibility to develop and communicate rules for classroom behavior. The School's approach to discipline involves redirection and intervention before children lose control. When disciplining children, best practice brings the child into the solution by asking what went wrong, and how they would solve the problem. In extreme circumstances, a brief cooling off period may be imposed, one

minute for every year of age of the child, preferably in a quiet area in the classroom. Teachers are to frequently check on the child, and ask the child if they are ready to join the group again.

“Time out chairs or areas” or other forms of demeaning discipline are not acceptable. Under no circumstance is the use corporal punishment acceptable, such as physical or psychological punishment with a child, nor will teachers withhold food as punishment.

Examples of physical punishment include shaking, spanking, slapping, hitting, jerking, squeezing, kicking, biting, pinching, excessive tickling, and pulling of arms, hair, or ears; requiring a child to remain inactive for a long period of time.

Examples of psychological punishment include, shaming, name calling, ridiculing, humiliation, sarcasm, cursing at, making threats, or frightening a child; ostracism, withholding affection.

Examples of coercion include, rough handling (shoving, pushing, pulling, grasping any body part); forcing a child to sit down, lie down, or stay down, except when restraint is necessary to protect the child or others from harm; physically forcing a child to perform an action (such as eating or cleaning up).

If an appropriate use of restraint is necessary, such as holding a child from harming themselves or others, the Head of School will be informed immediately following the action. Only trained staff can use this method of discipline.

Teachers are empathetic and understanding in dealing with each child as he/she learns to play and work with others. We expect our teachers to know that a large part of early learning allows children to learn from their mistakes. Teachers are trained in the technique of redirection in order to manage behavior. Children are encouraged to talk through their inappropriate behaviors with adult guidance and prompting. If children are unable to manage themselves in a particular activity or classroom center, teachers may remove them from that area and provide them something else to do. It is the responsibility of teachers and parents to use positive guidance to help children learn appropriate social behaviors and self-control.

During school hours, teachers are responsible for the appropriate redirection and discipline of children. **We will remind parents to ask for assistance from a teacher rather than attempt to discipline or redirect a school friend.** Positive guidance techniques utilized may include redirection, setting limits and consequences, giving choices, problem-solving, and giving the child time to regroup in a safe place. Matters of discipline are ordinarily dealt with by the teacher or, if necessary, by the Head of School. In either case, this will be done in a close cooperative effort with the parents.

Discipline must be individualized and consistent for each child, appropriate to the child’s level of understanding, and directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control. A staff member may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction.

Parents are key to the success of any behavior management of young children. Teachers will talk with parents by phone or conference, should inappropriate behavior become an ongoing concern. Our goal is to become a team with parents, working together for the benefit of the child. Parents are encouraged to talk with teachers should they feel that their child is having difficulties at school, or if they can provide insight into their child's behavior. Teachers address challenging behavior by assessing the function of the child's behavior, developing individualized plans, and using positive behavior support strategies. If a conference is needed, it is requested that the teacher call the parent(s) to set up a conference. Please refrain from discussing confidential matters at drop off and pick up times.

As a last resort, if for any reason a suspension, expulsion, or other exclusionary measures must be used for the child's safety, the Head of School will make that determination. Seclusion is not a method used at The School. The complete suspension policy (under 'Dismissal') is stated in the Family Handbook, and follows federal and state civil rights laws.

Biting

Biting is a behavior often seen with toddlers, but can also be seen at any age in group care. While our approach to biting is consistent and universal, there are circumstances that cause us to treat each incident with an understanding of development and possible causes. Children can bite for many reasons: frustration, lack of language, oral-motor stimulation, excitement, and even happiness. As you can see, the reasons vary greatly, causing a different approach with each situation. The procedures that will remain consistent and universal are seen in the following ways:

- First, we try to program the day to avoid boredom, frustration, or over-stimulation. We provide a calm and cheerful atmosphere with a mix of stimulating, soothing, age-appropriate, activities and multiples of favorite toys. We also work to model acceptable and appropriate behaviors for the children, helping them learn words to express their feelings and giving them tools to resolve conflicts with our help.
- Second, if a bite does occur, we help the child who was bitten. We reassure him or her and care for the bite. If the skin is not broken, we use a cold pack. If the skin is broken, we follow medical advice and clean the bite with soap and water. If it is likely the bite may get dirty, we will cover it to keep it clean. If your child is bitten, we will call you to let you know about the bite. The teachers fill out an incident report, give a copy to our Head of School, and will have you sign one when you pick up your child. We also respond to the child who did the biting. We show the children strong disapproval of biting. Our specific response varies by circumstances, but our basic message is that biting is the wrong thing to do. We also help the child who bit learn different, more appropriate behavior, and we let his or her parents know there's a problem so we can work together to solve it.
- Third, the teachers and administration analyze the cause of ongoing biting. We develop a plan to address the causes of the biting, focusing on keeping children

safe and helping those who are stuck in biting patterns. When we need to develop such a plan, we share the details with parents so they know specifically how we are addressing this problem.

- Fourth, parents are notified if their child starts to bite. We ask parents to keep us informed if their child is biting at home. Children who bite in our program do not necessarily bite at home. But if your child is biting in both places, it is important for all of us to be consistent in dealing with it. Communication is very important in order to help your child stop biting.

We wish we could guarantee that biting will never happen in our program, but we know there is no such guarantee. You can count on us to deal appropriately with biting, so it will end as quickly as possible. We will support your children to the best of our abilities whether they bite or are bitten.

Children Who Need Special Accommodations

It is the desire of The School to welcome all children into our midst, to the best of our ability. In order to do that, we ask that parents inform the school if/when their child has been diagnosed with a condition or impairment that may impact the child's successful participation in the normal activities of the school. For children who have needs we feel we may not be meeting adequately, we may make recommendations for professional evaluations which could result in suggestions for personalized, supplemental, educational counseling and therapy, or as a last resort, alternate schooling. If an educational consultant or therapist needs access to a child during school hours, arrangements will be made through the Head of School and the child's teachers.

All children who are receiving special services will have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Your child's teacher or the Head of School will initiate the process once we are informed that your child is receiving services outside of the school. It is our goal to work with the therapists to ensure a positive and successful time at school for your child. By building a partnership with your child's therapist, we can provide valuable information regarding your child's needs and our teachers can gain valuable information on how to best meet your child's needs while in our care.

Should a parent feel the need for a referral to a professional such as an educational diagnostician, child psychologist, child development specialist, speech therapist or behavior management specialist, the Head of School will provide a referral list. This list is by no means comprehensive, but has been compiled as a resource for parents. For children three years and older, the local public school can provide services for children living in its attendance area at no cost to the family. For children younger than three, services are provided by Early Childhood Intervention at 1-800-250-2246.

Dismissal

Occasionally it is necessary to ask a child to leave The School. Removal from The School is a last resort after all other means of working with the child and his/her family

has proven unsuccessful. The removal of children from school is based on the following guidelines:

- Is the child's behavior a danger to himself?
- Is the child's behavior a danger to others in the class or school environment?
- Is the child's behavior destructive to the equipment?
- Is the child's behavior hampering the learning and/or safety of others in the class?

After notifying parents of the unacceptable behavior, a conference will be scheduled. The school will make recommendations during the conference up to and including a referral for professional guidance. After guidance has been sought, and it is the conclusion from all parties that it is best for the child to be dismissed, then The School will dismiss the student. A list of professionals and other schools will be provided again at that time. Dismissal is immediate. Students dismissed from the school are not eligible for re-enrollment without an Individualized Family Service Plan and Individual Education Plan.

IV. Important Information about Communication with Parents

Parent Orientation

The Thursday night before the start of school, parents are invited to attend a Parent Orientation. The evening will begin as an assembly with the Head of School and then parents are dismissed to their child's classroom. Teachers will visit with parents to discuss curriculum, classroom expectations, and answer parent questions.

Communication

The School and individual classrooms use a variety of methods for communicating with parents, face-to-face, daily activity reports through ProCare Connect, email, flyers, and phone calls.

ProCare Connect is The School's social media site. The site is also password protected and has security settings in place. Teachers are instructed to check on permissions, signed by you on your enrollment agreement, before posting any picture of your children to any social media site. St. George's is not responsible for how parents share information, however we expect parents to respect others' right to privacy. Staff are trained on social media usage and must comply with our social media policy.

The School's website also provides easy access to the Family Handbook, The School calendar, enrollment information, and some forms and documents routinely used by The School.

Each classroom has a parent bulletin board outside their classroom with information such as, daily schedule and hot topics. Each classroom door also posts flyers with illness communication, special events, etc.

Monthly invoices, payment receipts, and other documents are customarily distributed by email. Phone calls to parents are made in some instances, such as when children become ill while at The School and must be picked up. When announcing school closings, the school will use ProCare Connect and email.

Face-to-face communication is important, so teachers and staff will use every opportunity to interact with you on a daily basis. We ask that cell phone use while at the school be limited and not used when entering a classroom or playground.

The Head of School will communicate on a monthly basis, via email, important information and events that are happening around the school through the Head of School's Hot Topics.

Parent Resources

The School office has several resources to support parents in many ways, i.e. Professional Referral List, Educational Brochures on a variety of topics, Books, The School's Scope and Sequence, children's developmental milestones, and Extra-curricular activities.

From time to time the school may ask professionals, such as language specialists or behavioral specialists, to observe in particular classrooms with the purpose of helping teachers improve their practice.

Drop Off and Pick Up

Parents are to walk children to class and pick them up from class each day. Drop off and pick up times are a wonderful way for teachers and parents to connect. For safety reasons, never allow your child to walk alone. If someone other than those who are designated on the enrollment form is to pick up your child, please notify the office in writing by filling out the Permission to Release form. Late charges will be assessed in the event you are late picking up your child. Please refer to the section entitled "Hours of Operation" in this Handbook for further explanation of late fees.

Parents are not to leave an unattended child(ren) in the car while away from the vehicle. If you need assistance with this, please call the school office. Idling cars are also not allowed on the property.

Children must be signed in / out each day using an electronic system. It is important to follow this licensing regulation as it helps teachers keep a constant count on how many children they have at all times.

Children are considered in your care until you either sign them in or sign them out. If a teacher witnesses a safety violation concerning your child's well-being after signing them out, the teacher will ask for your assistance to maintain your child's safety.

Saying “Goodbye” (separation)

To help achieve the goal of allowing your child to become independent, emotionally healthy, and well adjusted, we recommend the following practices with children age two and older:

- If possible, children should be walked in, not carried.
- Present your child to the teacher on arrival. The greeting between teacher and child is invaluable.
- Many things about the child's health and state of mind can be determined in that brief time and nothing should interfere with it. The teacher will then help the child join into classroom activities.
- Good-byes at school should be part of a normal, everyday routine every child goes through. Separation should be sweet and brief, with reassurance about the planned pick-up time.
- Parents should encourage children to make friends with the teachers and look forward to being at school without feeling guilt or disloyalty to a parent.

Parent Visitation

Parents are welcome to visit any area of the facility as long as the visit does not interrupt the child’s ability to function with the class. In cases of divorce, the office must be notified when the non-custodial parent is attempting a visit. The classroom is not meant to be a place where parents conduct their supervised visits with their children.

School Attire

Children should be dressed in comfortable play clothes when attending school. Often children will be using paint, food coloring, shaving cream, and other art media that could be messy. Although every effort is taken to keep clothes from getting soiled, school is a place where children will get dirty. Therefore, dress your child in clothes that you won’t worry about getting stained. **Please do not allow your child to wear sandals, boots, slippery-soled shoes, rain boots or flip-flops.** These shoes are a safety hazard. It is recommended that children wear sneakers or tennis shoes. Please provide an extra change of clothes in case of emergency. Remember, children will go outside everyday unless it is raining hard, so please dress children appropriately for the weather.

Assessment / Parent Conferences

The purpose of assessment is two-fold; (one) it helps us determine whether our curriculum is meeting our goals and (two) it helps our teachers ensure that we are meeting each child’s needs in all areas of development. The age specific scope and sequence used by all teachers is the guiding tool that our assessments are based on. All assessments are kept confidential between the child’s teachers and the Head of School and shared only with parents. If parents agree, assessments are shared with educational professionals who desire to support teachers with specific teaching methods that will benefit development.

Varying types of evaluation tools, based on a qualitative perspective, are used throughout the school year for parent conferences. Teachers gather information about each child through a system known as authentic assessment. During each day teachers' record children's growth using anecdotal notes, photographs, samplings of children's work, event samplings, and/or video samplings. These items are placed in a portfolio designed specifically for the individual child and kept confidential. Teachers use this information and record their findings using three types of tools. Training on how to use these tools and interpret the information is an ongoing process. Teachers meet with their assistants on a weekly basis to interpret and use assessment results to align curriculum and teaching practices to the interests and needs of the children.

The first parent conference happens at the beginning of October (Columbus Day), and is a face-to-face conference. This adjustment conference is an informal assessment using a narrative model. The teachers will discuss social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development.

The second parent conference happens in February (President's Day) and is a face-to-face conference. This assessment is a formal assessment using a rating scale and based on information gathered during the school year. The information discussed is based on cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.

The final parent conference happens in mid-May. Teachers meet with families face-to-face and discuss the child's progress. A criterion-referenced assessment, known as a checklist, is used to measure mastery of specific objectives in all domains. The assessment is filled out by the teacher and sent home to parents for review before coming in to discuss the findings. Together the teachers and parents evaluate how the child has progressed through the year.

At any time during an evaluation of a child if a teacher feels the child is not within the developmental norms, he/she will meet with the Head of School and a plan of action will go into place. Parents will be contacted to gather more information and possible suggestions for further assessment of the child by a medical or early childhood professional will be given, at which time a norm-referenced or standardized test may be used. A list of professionals is kept in The School's office for referral purposes. Written consent should be given by the parents if information about a child's development is to be shared with other agencies or programs.

Parents are welcome to comment on evaluation methods regarding their child and the program will try to meet the needs of the family. During evaluations of children, teachers are sensitive to children's race, values, culture, identity and home language. Each evaluation is sent home prior to the conference and parents are encouraged to make comments on their child's growth and development.

Parties and Celebrations

Classroom parties and celebrations are an integral part of the early childhood classroom and provide a good way for parents to volunteer in the classroom. In the Preschool classrooms, parties are held to celebrate Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter. Room parents assist teachers with organizing the holiday parties. It is asked that every parent help with at least one party during the year. Please keep party activities, snacks, and favors simple, nutritious and inexpensive. Please check with your child's teacher regarding any allergies before supplying any food for parties or other classroom events.

In the Toddler classes teachers may or may not ask for parent volunteers for the class parties because children at this age often are upset by parents' visits to the classroom. Class parties are held at the discretion of the teachers and will be held as teachers feel the children are ready and able.

Birthdays may be celebrated by bringing special birthday treats (see Food Allergy Action Plan in the handbook) that are healthy for your child to share with classmates. Please do not bring donuts, candy or juice. Please check with your teacher before bringing treats to school, however, as some children may be allergic. Your child's teacher will be the best guide as to an appropriate treat. Please DO NOT send candles, favors, or plan a birthday party for your child at school. Likewise, do not distribute your child's birthday party invitations at school unless all the children in the class are invited. All children who attend Chapel will be recognized for their birthday with a birthday crown, and special song. Parents are welcome and encouraged to attend the Birthday Chapel.

Birthday Book Program

St. George's Episcopal School is pleased to continue a birthday book program to support our school while celebrating the birthdays of our students. If you would like to donate a book in honor of your child for his or her birthday, please fill out the form on our website under parent information or ask in the office.

This book will be selected and purchased from a list of librarian-recommended books. A nameplate, with the birthday boy or girl's name, will be placed inside the book. The Head of School will present this book to your student, and then read this new book to the class on or near the day of the child's birthday. The book will remain in the classroom for that month and then be retired to our library for use by other classrooms.

Enrichment Opportunities

You can register your child for extra-curricular classes during the fall and spring semesters. These classes require an extra fee that is paid to the instructor. Parents must make all the enrollment arrangements through the instructor, as these extracurricular programs are NOT managed or affiliated with The School. Please be sure to inform the teachers of your child's extra activities.

Parent Involvement and Special Events

The School welcomes all parent involvement. There are many ways in which parents can become involved in school activities, as listed below. We also have parent suggestion boxes at each of the school entrances. These suggestions can be made anonymously.

Parent, Teachers, Friends Committee (PTF)

The PTF is comprised of parent volunteers as well as the school's administration and teachers. PTF plans some of the special events during the school year and coordinates all parent volunteer activities for the year. Special events planned are:

Annual Fund Drive
A Knight for St. George's
Teacher Appreciation Week
Parent Socials and Family Picnics

School Traditions

- Parent Orientation – takes place the Thursday before school begins. Parents are invited to hear from the Head of School, PTF chair, and teachers.
- Blessing of the Backpacks and Find Your Room Day – takes place prior to the opening of school. Parents and children are invited to Sunday Church service for a special blessing to start their school year and then they go to our classrooms to meet the teacher and familiarize themselves with the school.
- Holiday Parties – are held approximately four times a year and parents are asked to provide food, games, a small favor, and parents are asked to attend.
- Grandparent's Day – is held in early September. We invite Grandparents to the classroom for a special circle time and then playground time.
- Annual Fund - this is our fall fundraiser and is handled by the Parent Teacher Friends Committee.
- Tis the Season – this event is held the Thursday before Thanksgiving. It is our holiday gift to our families. The teachers plan fun activities for the children and their parents. All activities are centered around the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday, plus there is a visit from Santa Claus.
- The Christmas Pageant – before our Christmas break the parents are invited to watch the re-telling of the Christmas story. The Pre-K class portrays the story and the younger children are the choir.
- Week of the Young Child – during a week in April we recognize the national week of young children with fun and festivities.
- The Slaying of the Dragon – this event is held in late April and parents are invited to come and watch as children slay the mighty box dragon.
- A Knight for St. George's (KSG) - This evening fundraiser for parents is in conjunction with Slaying of the Dragon and features dinner, silent auction and music to come together and celebrate the school. It is usually in late April.
- Teacher Appreciation - During a week in May, the Parent Teacher Friend Committee organizes how they want to recognize teachers.
- Mother's Day Teas – are held the Friday before Mother's Day in May. This event features refreshments prepared by the children and their teachers. Grandmothers

- are also extended an invitation to the Tea. If Mother or Grandmother is unable to attend, another relative or friend is welcome to attend.
- Parent Education Events – are held occasionally during the school year featuring early childhood professionals with a wide range of topics. Parents are always encouraged to attend informative events.
 - St. George’s School Evaluation - takes place at the end of each school year. Parents are asked to fill out a form evaluating the program, making suggestions for improvement. Parent input and involvement is very important in The School as the school strives to meet the needs of the families it serves. The results of the family evaluations will be made available on our website.

Fundraising

ANNUAL FUND DRIVE - The Annual Fund Drive is conducted each year, beginning in November and running through December. Donations provide a tax-deductible opportunity for parents, grandparents, faculty, parishioners and friends to support new and existing programs that enhance the school. Volunteers solicit the entire St. George’s community to meet Fund Drive goals and 100% participation.

A KNIGHT FOR ST. GEORGE’S - This evening fundraiser for school supporters is in conjunction with St. George’s Day and features dinner, silent auction, music, and an opportunity to come together and celebrate the school. It is usually in late April.

Policy Regarding Spring Break Camp

It is the policy of our school that we will offer programming for all children during spring break camp with these stipulations:

- All families must sign up ahead of time for care in camp. A sign up link will be emailed to families 6 weeks prior to camp. Staff is hired according to the number of children who will be in attendance.
- There is a charge per day per child charge for care during camp. This charge is added to your monthly invoice. This charge pays staff salaries for the day. You must provide a two week notice if a change in enrollment occurs, otherwise you will still be expected to pay the fee.
- We require a minimum number of children in order to be open. If it is necessary to cancel a day due to low enrollment, you will be notified at least one week in advance and you will not be charged.
- All programming is closed for religious holidays, national holidays, and selected teacher workdays. You will receive a calendar at the beginning of the school year that states the days that The School will be closed.

Policy Regarding Child Custody Matters

It is the goal of the school to work in partnership with parents to implement our programs in a safe, nurturing environment. As a general presumption, all parents (whether biological or adopted) and legal guardians have the rights enumerated in the

Texas Family code, 153.071. Where there is no Order modifying the parental rights, both parents share the same rights and responsibilities with respect to their child/children. In order to accomplish the goal of partnership between school and parents, divorced or separated parents shall comply with the following guidelines:

- Upon enrollment, a parent is to supply the Head of School with the divorce decree or court order establishing the rights of each parent. Any modifications to those orders shall be provided immediately upon issuance by the Court.
- Campus personnel will make their best efforts to interpret and comply with the terms of the orders affecting the parent child relationship.
- Parents are welcome to attend school functions and volunteer in the classroom as long as their presence is in compliance with court orders and as long as their presence is not disruptive to their child or the class as a whole. The school determines if parents are a disruption.
- The school campus will not be used as a visitation site.
- The parent shall not ask the teacher or administration to inform them when the other parent visits the school, participates in school activities, asks the teacher for information, or requests information from the office.
- Students will be released consistent with the terms of the court order – that is, they will be released only to those person(s) identified in the order and only at such times required. The school's enrollment form release and emergency information must be consistent with the court order. If the order allows for a parent to designate another competent adult to retrieve their child from school, such designation must be in writing and signed by the parent.
- The school reserves the right to ban any person who causes a disruption or has no legitimate purpose for being on campus.
- If the school finds that it is impossible to work with the family due to the parents' disagreement regarding the interpretation of court orders; or if either parent refuses to comply with court orders, the school shall ask that the family leave the school.

V. Important Information about Health, Safety and Nutrition

Security

The school has a layered approach to security starting with a 6ft. fence surrounding the playground and buildings. Security cameras are also strategically placed around the campus and can be easily monitored. The gates are password protected, as are the classroom doors.

Snacks

Parents are responsible for sending two nutritious snacks per day, and a drink. The children's water bottles will be available for snacks and throughout the day. Snacks should be healthy, low sugar foods. Juice is not recommended. For your child's safety, any food that is expired will be thrown away. The School will notify you if this happens, so we can work together to provide an alternative.

Water Bottles

Water will be served with snacks, so water bottles are required in order to ensure hydration, especially during the hot spring and summer months. Label all items sent to school clearly with your child's **first and last name**. Teachers will label water bottles if needed. Water bottles are also taken outside for morning and afternoon play time.

Lunch

Licensing requires that children's lunches must meet nutritional guidelines. The guidelines state that a school lunch should contain protein (meat, cheese, eggs), vegetables (carrots, celery, beans, tomatoes, etc.), fruit (apple, banana, grapes, etc.), and grains (crackers, bread, whole wheat products, etc.).

Parents are responsible for supplying the child's lunch. Lunch containers must be labeled with your child's **first and last name and dated**. For your child's safety, any food that is expired will be thrown away. The School will notify you if this happens, so we can work together to provide an alternative.

There are no provisions for heating lunch items, so please provide your child with food that does not require heating. No carbonated beverages or candy or sweets are allowed. Some suggestions for a healthy lunch are a sandwich, crackers and cheese or soup in a thermos, raw vegetables and dip, fresh fruits and juices, yogurt and milk.

No child will have lunch withheld for any reason. Likewise, teachers will always ask that children at least try their lunch, even if they say they do not want to eat. At least one teacher sits with children while they are eating snack or lunch. Children are never forced to eat what they do not want to eat. Unopened items will be returned in lunch kits; however, partially eaten, messy items will be thrown out.

Children are prohibited from sharing lunches with one another. Please note that the following items are discouraged for you to send in your child's lunch as they are choking hazards: hot dogs, whole grapes, nuts; popcorn, raw peas, hard pretzels, spoonfuls of peanut butter and chunks of raw carrots or meat larger than can be swallowed whole.

A toothbrush can be included in your child's lunch, if you prefer for them to spend a few minutes cleaning their teeth and gums.

Severe Allergies

The School will make every reasonable effort to meet the needs of children with severe allergies. Please notify the office if your child has severe food allergies that require specific protocols such as antihistamine and/or epi-pen. Parents must have doctor's orders accompany the medication as well as the Authorization for Dispensing Medication form and Allergy Action Plan form completed in order for us to administer treatment and in order for the child to attend school.

All epi-pens are placed in the child's classroom in a designated box and stored in a locked cabinet. The epi-pen must be in its original prescription container. Teachers are trained as to how to administer epi-pens. Every effort is taken to safeguard children from others' snacks but unknown additives may be present in some products.

The Allergy Action Plan is placed on the Look First Board in the classroom along with the Allergy Alert Card. If the action plan calls for Benadryl first, then the Benadryl is kept with the Epi-pen, along with the proper dispenser.

Food Allergy Action Plan

Currently we do not have a policy that states "no _____" in the room due to an allergy, but instead take it on a case by case situation.

Teachers manage allergies by placing a child at a table during a meal time with children who do not have that particular allergen.

When classroom parties or birthday parties are celebrated the teacher is responsible for communicating with parents what allergen to avoid. Classrooms that have children with severe allergies that require an Epi-pen can not have baked goods brought from home to school. Only store bought products that are allergen free are allowed.

- Administration team reads through every medical form and confidential form and flags any allergies
- Parents are contacted to ensure we have an Allergy Action Plan
- The Allergy Action Plan lists all symptoms to watch for in case of contact with the allergen
- Epi-pens, if needed, and Benadryl, if needed is brought to school with doctor's prescription and permissions to administer
- Epi-pens and Benadryl are placed in child's classroom in a designated box and placed in cabinet with the RED CROSS symbol
- The Allergy Action Plan is posted inside the cabinet
- All children with an allergy have an Allergy Alert card
 - Child's photo
 - Child's first and last name
 - Child's classroom
 - Whether the allergy requires an Epi-Pen
 - What the allergy is to
 - Special Circumstances
- These cards are posted on every Look First Board and in common areas, i.e. Kleberg Hall and Outside Bathroom
- All staff are trained on how to administer an Epi-pen
- Every year staff are re-trained on the Allergy Action Procedure

Health

Your child's health is a matter of major importance to us. Licensing requires that precautions be taken to safeguard the health of all children enrolled. This includes excluding children from attendance who come to school sick or isolating children who become ill at school. It is the teacher's responsibility to question the parent at drop off if a child appears to be sick, and it is also the teacher's responsibility to ask a parent to take a child back home if the child is deemed not well enough to be at school. The School does not employ a school nurse; therefore, any first aid administered or medication given will be done by the child's teacher or the office personnel. Please see the specific requirements for administering medication in the section entitled "Medication," located in this handbook. The school contracts with a health consultant once a year. The health consultant observes program practices and written policies to ensure the health promotion and prevention of infection and injury.

Parents, please notify the school when your child is out sick. The school will make efforts to notify your child's classmates of any illness in the classroom.

The school's policy with regard to specific symptoms is as follows:

- Covid: 5 day isolation if positive and then can return if no fever is present.
- Diarrhea: Parents will be notified when the first episode of watery bowel movement occurs. Parents will be informed that if a second watery movement occurs during the school day, parents must pick up the child. Parents will be asked to pick up a child immediately if abdominal pain, fever or vomiting accompanies the first or second occurrence of diarrhea. To be certain that the diarrhea does not reoccur; children are to be excluded from the program for 24 hours from the time the diarrhea occurs. For example, if a child has had diarrhea during the previous day or evening, the child will not be allowed to attend school the following day, but must remain at home for 24 hours, free of diarrhea symptoms.
- Vomiting: If two or more episodes of vomiting occur within the previous 24 hours, the child shall be excluded from the program. If vomiting occurs during the school day, parents will be called and asked to pick up the child immediately. Gagging due to excessive crying does not constitute vomiting.
- Eye/Nose Drainage: If thick mucus or pus is draining from the eye or nose, a child is prevented from attending school. Green or yellow mucus may indicate an infection or allergy. If the doctor indicates that mucus is due to allergy and is not contagious, a note from the doctor must be brought to school in order for the child to attend school.
- Respiratory Symptoms: If a child exhibits difficult or rapid, shallow breathing or severe coughing, the child is prevented from attending school. If the child makes a high pitched croup or whooping sound after he/she coughs, and the child is unable to lie comfortably due to continuous cough, the child is prevented from attending school.

- Sore Throat: If the child complains of sore throat that is accompanied by a fever, the child is prevented from attending school.
- Fever: If the child has an oral, axillary, or tympanic temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher the child is prevented from attending school.
- Skin Rashes: If the child has undiagnosed skin rashes or sores, the child is prevented from attending school. If the child has persistent itching of skin or scalp, the child is prevented from attending school.
- Appearance or Behavior Changes: If the child looks or acts differently, is unusually tired, pale, lacking appetite, confused, irritable, or difficult to awaken, the child should remain at home for further observation.
- Lice: If a child contracts lice, they must be nit free before returning to school. There are businesses in our community who will provide this service.

IF YOUR CHILD BECOMES ILL AT SCHOOL –the following are the steps taken by the school: 1) the child is brought to the school office and a familiar person is assigned to watch over the child. 2) The child is kept comfortable and in a location where new individuals are not exposed 3) Parents are immediately called. Children who are sick must be taken home, as we do not have facilities to care for sick children. If neither parent can be reached, other persons listed on your enrollment forms will be called. It is very important that all telephone numbers and information be kept current, in case we need to call you.

IF YOUR CHILD IS INJURED AT SCHOOL – the teacher will treat the injury and send home an accident report, if the injury is minor. In the case of a more severe injury the appropriate first aid measure will be taken immediately to care for the child, the parents will be notified, and if necessary parents will be asked to pick up the child for further medical treatment. Emergencies will result in a call to 911. It is very important that all telephone numbers and emergency information be kept current so that parents can be reached at all times. If cell phone numbers have been provided to the school, please be sure cell phones are turned on while your child is attending school.

Medication

Prescription medication in the original prescription bottle with accurate label information (child's name, doctor's name, date, exact dosage, name of medication) will be administered to a child at school, along with the Authorization for Dispensing Medication form. Parents must bring the medication to the office and an administrator will assist with the form and correct procedure.

Over the counter medications must be age appropriate or be administered with a doctor's notice directing The School to do so, giving specific instructions. Over the counter medications are to be treated as if they were prescription medications, and checked into The School office for safekeeping.

No child shall have in their possession any medication, prescription or non-prescription, including in their pocket, lunch kit, water, milk, bottles, or backpack. Medication is stored in the school office, or in the school's refrigerator in a labeled

container. Teachers will administer medication from the school office. Empty prescription bottles must be picked up from the school office. Please do not mix your child's medication with food, bottles, juice, etc. This poses a danger to other children in the class who might inadvertently come in contact with the food or beverages the medicine is mixed with. Children's supplements must be in the original container and indicate the appropriate dosage.

Special Medical Devices

When a child needs a special medical device, i.e. breathing treatment, the device will be stored in the office and the same procedure for administering medication will be followed. The teacher and administrators will be trained by the parent on how to use the device, so someone is always present when the child is present.

Sunscreen/Ointments/Teething Gels/Bug Repellents

The use of sunscreen, ointments, teething gels, and bug repellents can only be administered with written instructions from the parents and can be kept in the classroom. The child's full name must be on the tube or bottle. Parents must send non-aerosol sprays. Teachers must follow the procedure on the Sunscreen, Bug Repellent or Ointment Permission Slip.

Hand washing

The most important thing teachers and children can do to prevent the spread of illness is to wash hands thoroughly and often. Teachers are given these guidelines regarding hand washing.

How To Wash Your Hands:

1. Rub your hands together vigorously for at least 20 seconds using warm running water and soap.
2. Wash under fingernails, between fingers, back of hands and wrists.
3. Rinse your hands well under running water.
4. Dry your hands with a single use paper towel.
5. For hand-held faucets turn off water using a paper towel instead of bare hands to avoid recontamination of clean hands.

When You Should Wash Your Hands:

1. When you arrive at the program.
2. After you change an undergarment or diaper.
3. After you handle items soiled with body fluids or wastes such as blood, drool, urine, stool or discharge from nose or eyes.
4. After handling garbage or cleaning.
5. After you handle a sick child.
6. Before you prepare food or serve food or feed an individual child.

7. Before you eat or drink.
8. After handling any pets or animals.
9. When moving from one group to another that involves contact with infants and toddlers/twos.

When You Should Wash The Children's Hands:

1. When they arrive at the program.
2. After they use the toilet or have their under garments changed.
3. After they have touched a child who may be sick or have handled soiled items.
4. Before they eat or drink.
5. After using the water/discovery table.
6. After handling any pets or animals.
7. After diaper change.

Safety

We strive to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment. We all share the responsibility for helping to keep The School safe and to avoid student injury or accident. Every entrance to the school is password protected with digital security locks. The code is given out at the beginning of every school year. Occasionally the code is updated. When this happens, parents are notified via email.

The school also subscribes to the Consumer Product Safety Commission recall notices, and will inform the families by posting notices on the parent bulletin board and Head of School newsletter. Anyone can subscribe to receive these notices at <https://www.cpsc.gov/Newsroom/Subscribe/>

The safety of children at The School is of the utmost importance. Procedures are in place for fire safety, severe weather, toxic fumes, intruders, injury to a child, release of children, playground safety, and national alerts.

- Fire Safety – Fire drills are conducted monthly and all classes participate. Every room in the school displays the emergency procedures regarding fire and notes the primary and secondary evacuation routes. The Church building is equipped with a fire/smoke alarm that notifies the City of Austin Fire Department when activated. There are fire extinguishers strategically placed around the building and teachers are trained in how to operate fire extinguishers. The school complies with all legal requirements regarding installation of smoke detectors, extinguishers, and alarms.
- Severe Weather – The school is required by licensing to conduct a severe weather drill every three months. Teachers are trained in what to do in case of a tornado or high winds. The school's policy is that children will be gathered in the church basement, away from windows or exterior doors until the danger has passed. In case of school closure due to a weather emergency, The School follows the directive of the Austin Independent School District. If AISD schools are closed due to flooding, ice, or any emergency, our school is closed, as well. In case of

- thunderstorms, teachers are to bring children inside and may not return outside until 30 minutes after the last sound of thunder was heard.
- Weather / Temperature Alerts / Air Quality– The school subscribes to <http://www.enviroflash.info/confirm.cfm> in order to receive daily emails regarding ozone levels, smog or other air pollutants. When levels are unhealthy, children’s time spent outdoors will be limited to 20 minutes at a time. When the air temperature is 90 and the heat index is between 91-97 degrees or the air temperature is 94 and the heat index is between 97-103 degrees, children’s time spent outdoors will be limited to 20 minutes at a time. Water bottles will accompany children outside and teachers will remind the children to stop and drink. When the air temperature is below freezing and the wind chill is below 32 degrees, children’s time spent outdoors will be limited to 20 minutes at a time. Children will wear coats, hats, and gloves.
 - Toxic Fumes – In the case that The School is notified that toxic fumes are present in dangerous levels in the outdoor air, the children will remain inside the building with windows and doors closed and the air conditioning off until the school is notified by authorities that the danger has passed.
 - Intruders – In the event that a person enters or attempts to enter the building with intent to do harm to the children or teachers, staff will follow established procedures for protection of the children. Procedure includes initiating a lockdown of all classrooms, calling the police, and covering the windows. If children are outside teachers will be notified through their cellular phones to move children to the closest classroom or building, and an administrator will call the police. Teachers can use their cellular telephone’s walkie talkie app to provide a communication link between the classrooms and the school office. The program’s Head of School and Admin. staff have the right to ask any person to leave the premises, and will call local authorities as well as Church personnel if necessary.
 - Injury to a Child – In the case a child has an injury that requires medical treatment parents will be notified and asked to pick up the child immediately. If parents cannot be reached, those listed on the child’s Enrollment Forms will be called to pick up the child. If the injury requires immediate treatment by a doctor, 911 will be called. The teachers will treat minor injuries and an accident report will be sent home with the child at the end of the day. First aid kits are kept in each classroom, the outside bathroom, and in the school office.
 - Release of Children – All persons who are authorized to pick up your child must be listed on the Enrollments Forms and will be kept on file in the school office and the child’s classroom. Only adults who have been authorized by the parent and listed on this form will be allowed to pick up a child from school. Any change in pick-up arrangements, temporary or permanent, should be given immediately to the child’s teacher and the school office. Permanent changes should be added to the Enrollment Forms. An Authorization to Release Form should be filled out if a person other than one on the permanent list will be picking up your child. Photo identification will be required of anyone picking up the child who is not known by the teacher.
 - Playground safety – Our playgrounds comply with all federal safety guidelines. Playgrounds are inspected on a regular basis, and when needed, repairs and changes are made. Children are taught the safety rules, which include keeping

- sand and mulch on the ground, walking up steps, taking turns, and climbing on the equipment safely. Children are grouped according to age when playing on the playgrounds. It is important that children wear appropriate footwear while playing on the playgrounds. No boots, sandals, or flip flops, please.
- National Alerts –The school has put in place guidelines that will be activated when the nation is on orange alert status or higher. If local authorities declare a shelter-in-place emergency due to release of dangerous contaminants into the atmosphere, the children and teachers will “shelter in place”. The building will be closed and will not reopen for any reason until local authorities have declared the danger passed. Do not come to the school to pick up your child during a shelter-in-place emergency; rather, seek shelter for yourself and rest assured that your child is well cared for and is safe at school. Children will remain with their teachers in the safe rooms until the danger has passed and civil defense has notified the community that it is safe to be outdoors. A full explanation of national emergency procedures is available on our website for parents’ information.
 - In the unlikely event that children must be evacuated from the church building for any reason, Genesis Presbyterian Church, 1507 Wilshire Boulevard, 512-478-2565 will be the place of relocation. Parents will be called to pick up children from there, and staff will remain with the children until all are picked up.

Eco-friendly environment

In order to be more eco-friendly, we advise parents not to leave idling cars in our parking lots. We also advise parents to send food in eco-friendly containers and avoid Styrofoam. We use a bio-friendly mosquito repellent in our creek bed as needed, and our contract with ABC Pest Control requires eco-friendly treatments of pests. If a pest treatment requires additional chemicals, the chemicals are not used in areas where children have direct contact.

The school’s garden is constructed with the use of untreated wood, and only organic, chemical free fertilizer is used.

The school also uses filtered water to re-fill water bottles.

Universal Precautions

Universal precautions will be used in handling all body fluids at the school to provide the best protection for everyone. Universal precautions consist of wearing disposable latex gloves when there is contact with blood and/or body fluids, mucous membranes, non-intact skin, or when handling items or surfaces soiled with blood or body fluids. Gloves must be changed after contact with each child. Hands must be washed immediately after gloves are removed. First Aid kits are located in the front office, the library, the outdoor bathroom, Kleberg Hall, and all classrooms. These kits must be used when cleaning up body fluids according to the instructions in or on the kit. The First Aid kit must be restocked immediately after use.

Pest Control

As part of our commitment to provide your child with a safe, pest-free learning environment, St. George's may periodically apply pesticides to help manage insects, weeds or pathogens. Pesticide applications are part of our integrated pest management (IPM) program, which relies largely on non-chemical forms of pest control. Pesticide applications on St. George's property are made only by trained and licensed technicians. Should you have questions about the school's pest management program or wish to be notified in advance of pesticide applications, you may contact our Head of School.

Live Pets and Animals

Because they play a valuable role in children's development, from time to time, classrooms might have safe, live "pets" such as gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs, mice, tropical/goldfish, birds, snails, frogs, tadpoles, spiders, In accordance with common sense and licensing regulations, children and staff will practice good hygiene and hand washing when pets or their "accessories" are handled. Some pets require a vet's check-up before entering the classroom. Children in The School may not have direct contact with chickens, ducks, reptiles (turtles, lizards, snakes), or amphibians (frogs, toads). Children may not bring their live pets from home into The School.

Child Abuse and Neglect

We provide annual training to all staff on recognizing the signs and reporting of child abuse or neglect. All employees have a legal duty to make a report to law enforcement or to Child Protective Services ("CPS") if they have reason to believe that a child has been or may be abused or neglected. CPS must be contacted when the abuser is believed to be a caretaker; law enforcement should be contacted when the abuser is believed to be someone other than a caretaker of the child. Professionals have a legal duty to make this report orally within 48 hours and to follow that with a written report. The Head of School should be informed, if a report is required. Professionals can receive sanctions against their certificates and any person can face criminal charges for knowingly failing to make a report of known or suspected child abuse or neglect. Identity will be protected when making a good faith report.

If a staff member is accused of abusing or neglecting a child in the program, a determination will be made as to whether or not that employee shall be placed on a paid or unpaid leave of absence during the investigation. In either case the accused employee will be removed from having direct contact with the child or any children in the program during the investigation. Both the child's right and employee's rights will be honored during the investigation.

The telephone number for the Child Abuse Hotline is 1-800-252-5400. For additional information regarding your reporting obligations, please see the Head of School.

III. Frequently Asked Questions

The following is a list of questions most frequently asked by parents, and answers to those questions. It is hoped that this section of the Parent Handbook will be used as a quick reference guide or call 512-452-6063.

What should I do if my child is sick or going to be absent?

Please call the school office and leave a message stating your child's name, the teacher's name and the nature of the absence. Please indicate if a doctor has seen the child so we might notify other classmates of the illness.

What should I do if I am going to be late picking up my child?

Call the school office and let the school know when you will be arriving. All children are brought to the school office to wait for late pick up. If you are going to be extremely late, the school office may need to call someone else on your pick up list to pick up the child, and we then will call you and notify you if we do so. Late charges are assessed even if the school is called ahead of time.

Who should I speak with regarding my bill or a financial matter?

The school has an Assistant Head of School who will answer all billing questions. If you would like to discuss making special payment arrangements or would like to request special help, please speak with the Head of School.

Where do I pay my tuition?

Please leave your payment in the box located in the school office, or mail it directly to the school, 4301 N. IH 35, Austin, Texas 78722. Please DO NOT send your child to school with tuition in hand, and please DO NOT hand tuition payment to the teachers. The School accepts checks and online bill pay.

How do I add an Extended Care option, or take my child out of either Early Birds or Fun Zone?

Please call the school office and speak to the Administrative Assistant. She will know whether there is space available for adding a day, and she will need to remove you from the roll if you are dropping. Please do not ask teachers if there is space to add children, as they are not familiar with the procedures for adding or subtracting children.

What do I do if I plan to have someone other than those listed on my form pick up my child?

Please fill out an Authorization to Release Form and hand it to the teacher. She will ask for photo identification when the person arrives to pick up your child. Forms are available in your child's room as well as the school office and on our website.

I want to add someone to my permanent pick up list. What should I do?

Please come to the school office and speak to the Administrative Assistant. She will add the appropriate names and notify teachers of the additions. You will need to initial the changes.

When can I register for the next school year? For the summer?

Registration is held in February for the following school year. Summer registration is in late February or early March. The school will notify parents well in advance of the registration days.

How can I reach my teacher during the day?

Simply call the school office and ask that the teacher return a call to you. She will call as soon as she has time available. Teachers will not answer texts during teaching hours.

How do I schedule an additional conference with my teacher?

All conferences are scheduled through the school office. You and the teacher will need to find a mutually agreeable time to meet. The Head of School is often available to conference on a day's notice and is happy to meet with parents as needed.

How do I express a complaint or concern?

Although every effort is taken to meet the needs of your child, sometimes a parent wants to lodge a complaint or share a concern. Since we are all human and fallible, mistakes can be made and misunderstandings may take place. It is suggested that parents follow these steps when voicing a concern about their child's class or if they have a question:

- Always ask the teacher first if you have a question about something that has taken place in class. They are often able to easily explain a circumstance since they are with the child during the school day. Sometimes young children will describe things that either did not happen or happened, but in a completely different way than described. Teachers are the first lines of questioning in almost all matters. Likewise, if you have a question about the curriculum, it's always best to ask the teacher first, since he/she is the best one to explain her goals and objectives. It is the goal of all teachers that you and your child are happy. Therefore they will do everything in their power to correct a situation, if need be.
- If you are not fully satisfied with the answers supplied by your child's teacher then you need to speak to the Head of School. She almost always will refer you first to the teacher if you have not already spoken with her, and then will investigate the matter herself. The HOS will always get back with the parent to put closure on the situation, if at all possible.
- During the course of investigating a parent's complaint or concern, the HOS will interview the parent as well as the teacher and any other parties involved. Parents are often concerned that if the teacher finds out they are complaining, they will somehow treat their child unfairly. In reality, the opposite happens! Teachers want parents to be happy, and children to be happy, and if one or the other is not, they strive to affect change so all will be satisfied.
- If neither the teacher nor the Head of School is able to provide you with a satisfactory conclusion to your concern, then you may take your concern to the Rector, if not satisfied then you can place your concern in writing to the school's board president. The board of directors has the final say in all matters, and they will render a decision and notify the complainant in writing.

Please see an explanation of the complaint procedure described in the section of this handbook titled Grievance Procedures.

How is the curriculum selected?

The curriculum is designed by the Head of School through the scope and sequence, and information gathered regarding the community the school serves. The teachers take the objectives and tailor them to meet the needs of each age group. Because the school is accredited by NAEYC, we use their guidelines in determining what is developmentally appropriate practice. Teachers have many professional early childhood curriculum guides available for their use, and they meet at least monthly with the Head of School to go over plans and share ideas. All teachers receive a minimum of 30 hours of in-service training each year, much of which is directly related to children's growth and development as well as curriculum content.

What should my child wear to school?

Your child should wear comfortable play clothes to school; especially clothes that parents are not concerned about getting soiled or paint splattered. Please do not allow your child to wear sandals or cowboy boots to school, as they are a tripping hazard. Also, shoes with slick soles are dangerous and are a slipping hazard in the classroom and on the playground. It is suggested that every child bring a change of clothing in his/her backpack just in case of an accident. Since the class will almost always go outside, remember to send your child in clothing appropriate for the weather.

What happens if my child gets sick or is injured at school?

If a child gets sick, the school office or your child's teacher will ask you to pick up your child. Please refer to the "Health" section of this handbook for further information. If your child is injured, the teacher will administer first aid and fill out an accident report. Occasionally an injury is severe enough that the teacher or the school office feels the parent should be called to pick up the child. If an injury is life threatening the school will call 911.

What security measures are in place to protect my child?

Teachers are the "eyes and ears" of the school and are the best deterrent to dangerous situations. They are trained in the procedures to safeguard your child in case of fire, dangerous weather, natural disaster or an intruder. The church has cameras in the front of the Wright House and on the Church building.

How do I sign up my child for extra-curricular activities, such as Soccer Shots, etc.?

All extra-curricular activities are registered through the Vendor. Registration forms are kept in the school office for your convenience. The school does not manage any extracurricular programming.

Will my child loop up to the next class when they have a birthday?

Your child will remain in the class they are enrolled for the entire school year and possibly the summer too.

What are the hours of operation for the school office?

The school office is open from 8:00AM to 5:30 PM every day Monday - Friday. Please leave a message if calling before or after the business hours, and someone will return a call as soon as they retrieve the message.

Can teachers babysit?

The school cannot recommend babysitters. All of our teachers are background checked and F.B.I fingerprint checked.

IV. Family Handbook Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understand the Parent Handbook and I agree to abide by its policies.

Parent's Signature/date

Child's Name (please print)

Parent's printed name

Please sign this form and return it to the School office.