



FAMILY HANDBOOK

2021-2022 School Year

PLEASE NOTE: Policies and procedures in the SLDS 21-22 Family Handbook COVID-19 Addendum supersede this handbook. Some activities, which would take place in a normal school year, may have been suspended for the duration of protective care during the pandemic. Address any questions to administrators or your child's teacher.

St. Luke's Day School
FAMILY HANDBOOK
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OUR PROGRAM

OUR MISSION

We are a Christ-centered early childhood program where teachers and parents teach and strengthen each child's emotional, social, physical, intellectual, and spiritual skills while we are all *playing and learning together*.

PHILOSOPHY/GOAL

The educational philosophy of St. Luke's Day School is to focus on research-based, enriching, developmentally appropriate activities so that each child may attain emotional, social, physical, intellectual, and spiritual strengths. Play is valued as a vehicle for learning.

St. Luke's Day School is committed to the development and enhancement of the whole child. In support of this we view the family as the main source of security and identity for the young child. It is our ultimate goal, therefore, to achieve a fellowship of Christian love and understanding between parent, child, and school.

As an important program goal, we create an early childhood education and care environment that fosters trust, collaboration, and inclusion.

CURRICULUM

The administrators, teachers, and parents of St. Luke's Day School share a common commitment to provide a secure and nurturing early childhood education program that fosters each child's independence, curiosity, and development of age-appropriate skills. Curriculum goals and objectives guide the teachers' ongoing assessment of the children's progress.

Our teachers develop individual relationships with children by providing care that is responsive, attentive, consistent, comforting, supportive, and culturally sensitive.

The position of the National Association for the Education of Young Children concerning developmentally appropriate practice is followed daily.

Developmentally appropriate practice follows three core considerations:

- Knowing about child development and learning;
- Knowing what is individually appropriate; and
- Knowing what is culturally important.
(During early childhood, the focus is primarily on family life and community)

The following elements are part of our daily program:

- Busy, noisy, happy, creative classrooms where play is valued as a primary vehicle for learning and advancement in all areas of development.
- Comfortable children relaxed and involved in a variety of activities.
- Encouragement of the spiritual development of love for God and love for one another.
- Daily schedules that provide a balance of individual/group activities, active/quiet play, large/small muscle exercises, and indoor/outdoor learning experiences.

- Self-initiated and teacher initiated “hands on” learning experiences to allow children to learn by doing.
- Age-appropriate classroom learning centers that include art, science/discovery, blocks, dramatic play, table games, math, writing, book corner, sensory table, chapel, and computer. These activities give children opportunities to enhance skills, make choices, solve problems, and experience autonomy while interacting with teachers and peers.
- “Circle Times” or “Together Times” are planned each day for participation in group activities such as listening to stories, singing songs, or sharing ideas while building vocabulary, hearing correct language, and developing concepts.
- Care is given to maintain good health, sound nutrition, and cleanliness practices.

The Innovations early childhood curriculum, as well as other up-to-date teaching resources, are used to provide a consistent focus for planning the children’s experiences. The curriculum directs the teachers’ development and intentional implementation of learning opportunities consistent with our goals and objectives.

Teachers get to know each family so that values, beliefs, experiences, and language are considered and respected in regards to classroom activities. Please let us know if English is your family’s second language. If you would like for your child to be provided opportunities to experience classroom communication in the language your family uses, the teachers will do their best to partner with you to establish key words that can be used at school.

The use of passive media such as television, DVD’s, audiotapes, and computer are limited to developmentally appropriate programming.

Ancillary Classes

St. Luke’s Day School offers the following ancillary classes which enhance individual classroom curriculum. Frequency is one or two times per week, depending on the number of days your child attends.

Music – all ages, Infants through Kaleidoscope TK

Motor (children’s physical education) – Twos through Kaleidoscope TK

Science – PreK and Kaleidoscope TK

Early Literacy Resource Teacher –Threes, PreK, TK consultant

Early Literacy Lab – PreK and Kaleidoscope TK

CLASS SPACES, WELCOMING LEARNING PLACES

At SLDS we believe that the physical classroom environment plays an important role in supporting growth and learning. In fact, we often refer to the classroom as the third teacher.

In 2012, we began an initiative to re-vision our classrooms based on our investigation of how the environment affects learning. Our well-established strategies have proved meaningful and exciting.

We’ve identified three important values to guide our decisions for ongoing environmental design in our classrooms:

- **Child-Centeredness** – thoughtful selection of materials, equipment, furnishings, and lessons that support our mission;
- **Visual Order** – uncluttered space to set the tone for appropriate play and learning and for peaceful interactions;

- **Natural Elements** – physical reflections of our Creator, God, who made all this beauty with great love for us!

Specific elements to observe in our classrooms include:

- Beautiful, calming aesthetics;
- Age appropriate furnishings; chairs that allow children to place their feet firmly on the floor;
- Few or no toys with product placement/advertising logos;
- Equipment, toys, and books that reflect the children’s home life and introduce them to various world cultures;
- Carefully selected furnishings and classroom materials that promote hands on, open-ended, sensory experiences;
- A setting in which children of differing abilities can progress with guidance toward increasing levels of autonomy, responsibility, empathy, and self-regulation.

NATURE EXPLORE OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS

St. Luke’s Day School outdoor playgrounds became certified Nature Explore Outdoor Classrooms in the fall of 2019.

SLDS joins the Nature Explore network in mission to connect children and families to the wonders of nature and the benefits of intentionally designed outdoor spaces for children. Nature Explore is a national nonprofit program of Dimensions Educational Research Foundation, which works collaboratively with a network of organizations throughout the nation. Their goal is to help nature become an integral and joyful part of children’s daily learning. Nature Explore provides research-based workshops for teachers and parents, design consultations, and resources created to support programs as they continue to create opportunities for nature education and play-based learning outdoors.

Certification Requirements Include:

- 1) Well-designed outdoor spaces meeting specific research-based criteria;
- 2) Staff development related to nature education; and
- 3) Family involvement that increases family awareness of the importance of nature education for young children and offers ideas to extend nature play and exploration at home.

The Value of Time in Nature

- Facilitates Social Development and Well-Being
- Improves Physical Fitness
- Supports Creativity and Imaginative Play
- Inspires Collaborative Play
- Reduces Violence and Bullying
- Reduces Stress
- Creates Empathy for Plants and Animals

Outdoor Classrooms Benefit Many Areas of Child Development

- Critical Thinking
- Problem Solving
- Science and Sensory

- Language and Literacy
- Math and Reasoning
- Visual-Spatial Thinking
- Construction and Engineering

Learn more at <https://natureexplore.org>.

PROMOTING ACADEMIC READINESS

We believe that early academics are taught and learned through a play-based curriculum. Here academic content isn't taught through rote memorization and random worksheets; academic instruction is meaningfully constructed giving young children foundational knowledge to insure academic success as they grow.

Play and academics are sometimes put at odds by well-meaning adults. Play-based learning can be misunderstood as feel-good fun while academic-based learning is considered real learning. In fact, in a play-based setting, concepts are introduced in a meaningful, hands-on context where children are not simply taught how to answer, but actually taught how to problem solve and think!

To learn more about our approach to early literacy visit Rice University's School Literacy and Culture project's website at literacy.rice.edu. St. Luke's Day School has had a long and productive history with this organization using their storytelling and story acting approach. While we maintain that emergent literacy begins in our youngest classes, **the SLDS Early Literacy Lab** was initiated in 2016 specifically to support the Rice School Literacy and Culture approach with Threes, PreK and Kaleidoscope TK. The mission of the ELL, *cultivating emergent reading and writing skills through dynamic early literacy activities*, is reflected in intentional practice.

ASSESSMENT OF CHILD PROGRESS

Assessment is the process of observing, recording, and otherwise documenting what children do and how they do it as a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child. Our teachers have received training from the Director and Program Coordinators to make informal assessments throughout the school day as children participate in classroom activities. Specialists are hired for more formal assessments such as speech, language, hearing, and vision screening.

Teachers use assessment to identify the children's interests and needs, to describe the developmental progress and learning of each child, to improve the curriculum and adapt teaching practices, to change the environment, to plan program improvements, and to communicate progress to parents.

We use several tools and measures to assess the children's progress:

- First, we ask that you help us know your child through the "Introduce Us" form and the "Getting to Know You" Fall Parent Conference.
- At the Fall Parent Conference, teachers and parents discuss goals for each child's school year.
- Over the course of the year, our teachers will complete an Individual Assessment for each child. This assessment includes attributes from the social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual domains that are related to each child's chronological age at the beginning of the school year. Parents are given a bulleted version of the assessment document at the Fall Parent Conference.

- Teachers also keep anecdotal records of classroom observations to support individual assessment and lesson planning.
- Photo documentation is used extensively.
- Our PreK children receive speech, language, hearing, and vision screening as well as the Gesell screening of Kindergarten readiness. Parents receive summaries of these reports and may see the full assessment upon request.
- Observations from home shared by the child's parents.

Assessment information is reported formally to parents three times during the school year and once more during the summer for Luke's Place year-round families. Progress reports are given in person at the Fall and Spring Parent/Teacher Conferences. Written documentation is sent home at mid-year for younger classes and the PreK/TK teachers hold an additional mid-year conference in person. At the Spring Parent/Teacher Conference, teachers and parents discuss the child's progress during the school year as well as future learning opportunities. An individual portfolio is created for each child and given to the parents at this time. Students in our year-round Luke's Place program receive a final assessment report in August.

The classroom teachers, Director, and/or Assessment Coordinator meet with parents when our observations show that further developmental screening or referral for diagnostic testing is indicated. The Day School maintains a current referral list of specialists that have a positive history with our school or are highly recommended by Day School families.

All assessments are confidential and are kept secure by the classroom teachers or Day School office staff. Assessments will be shared with other professionals as requested in writing by the child's parents or legal guardians.

Should the family determine that their child will work with a relevant specialist, we ask that the school be informed. We would like to establish regular opportunities to communicate with the parents and specialists to plan appropriate learning activities and support the child's progress.

We do our best to communicate with families about their child's assessments in ways that are sensitive to family values, culture, identity, and home language.

STAFF

Quality, continuity, and longevity of staff are important parts of our early childhood program. Our salary schedule and employee benefits plan are given priority in the budget to ensure that we have the best staff available to care for your children.

Qualifications for classroom teachers include a degree in Early Childhood or a related field, or a current Child Development Associate Certification, and experience in early childhood education.

Other support staff may have the same qualifications or have a plan of continuing education, plus practical experience working with young children.

Continuing education is a high priority for our staff. All staff members receive at least 24 hours of training each year, including monthly staff meetings, age-level coordination meetings, and a variety of seminars and workshops. Many of our teachers and staff are members of and participate in local, regional, and national levels of professional associations for the education of young children thanks in part to the generous fundraising efforts of our Day School community.

Our administrators and teachers are often asked to present workshops to share their experience and expertise.

We strive to develop skills and knowledge to work effectively with diverse families. Our staff uses information about families to adapt the program environment, curriculum, and teaching methods to meet the needs of the children and families we serve.

All teachers are certified in Basic First Aid and CPR.

The following teacher/child ratios for each age group help ensure a quality program:

Lambs	1:3 ratio	Twos	
Bunnies/Penguins/Honeybees	1:5 ratio	2 years	1:6 ratio
Kangaroos		Threes	
6-11 Months	1:3 ratio	3 years	1:8 ratio
Bears/Lions/Ponies		Pre-K	1:9 ratio
12-23 Months	1:5 ratio	Kaleidoscope TK	1:10 ratio

Variations in group sizes and ratios are acceptable within accreditation guidelines in cases to be determined by the Director.

*At the discretion of the Director, teachers may be in the process of completing a degree or CDA certification. These teachers are assigned a mentor.

LINKING WITH THE COMMUNITY

The Day School administrative staff maintains a current list of child and family support services available in the community. We are happy to share this information with families and assist in locating, contacting, and using community resources that support child and family well-being and development. Examples include parent education programs, early intervention-special education screening and assessment services, health, and child development information.

We maintain professional relationships with agencies, consultants, and organizations in the community that further our capacity to meet the needs and interests of the children and families we serve. A referral list of local consultants is available in the Day School office. The list includes consultants recommended by our Day School families and staff. The Director and Program Coordinators are available as needed to discuss these community resources and referrals.

Please help us stay informed of community events sponsored by local organizations, such as museum exhibits, concerts, storytelling, and theater for families. Whenever possible we will share this information with our Day School families.

TUITION AND OTHER FEES

Tuition and fees are due on the following schedule:

At enrollment:	Annual Registration Fee and September 2021 Advance tuition
5/1/2021:	May 2022 Advance tuition for SLDS Part-day program
8/1/2021:	August 2021 Advance tuition for Luke's Place Full-day program
9/1/2021:	Annual Activity/Supply Fee

10/1/2021– 4/1/2022: Monthly Tuition for SLDS Part-day program

10/1/2021– 7/1/2022: Monthly Tuition for Luke’s Place Full-day program

Tuition payments are due the first of each month. Tuition payment information for the year is distributed at Parent Orientation; we do not issue monthly invoices.

There are four ways to pay tuition: ACH transaction from bank account, credit card, online payment (through your bank), or personal check or money order. We do not accept cash for tuition. Checks should be made payable to “St. Luke’s Day School.”

Parents choosing to pay via ACH or credit submitted a payment page at enrollment. If you wish to change your payment type during the school year, please contact the office. ACH and credit card payments will be run automatically on or about the first of each month.

Additional important information:

- A late charge of twenty dollars (\$20) will be assessed for tuition paid after the **fifth** of the month **and** for returned checks.
- St. Luke’s Day School is intended to be a nine- or twelve-month commitment, and each payment represents one-ninth or one-twelfth of a year. **Credit is not given for a child’s absence or days the school is not in session.**
- Tuition is defined as payment for the child’s assigned class. Advance payments are **not refundable**. This includes the registration fee, activity fee, first and last month’s tuition (May for Part-day and August for Luke’s Place), which were paid before the start of the school year.

Questions about tuition may be addressed to the Office and Finance Manager. If it becomes difficult to meet the scheduled payment plan, please make an appointment to see the Director to arrange a more workable payment plan.

Receipts

Parents needing receipts for tuition payments should send a request to sscott@stlukesmethodist.org with “Monthly Receipts” in the subject line. Receipts will be emailed monthly.

Late Payment Policy of St. Luke’s United Methodist Church

Our goal as a Christ-centered organization is to assist individuals who are in need while maintaining a viable, service-based organization.

This policy applies to any and all students enrolled in our Weekday programs including Bridges Academy, St. Luke’s Day School, After School Care, St. Luke’s All Day, and any other tuition-based programs offered.

Tuition is due on the designated due date of the program. It is considered late five days after the due date and appropriate late fees may be assessed at that time. If tuition is not paid, the family or individual will then be contacted by the Church. If approved payment arrangements are not made, after 90 days of non-payment, services may be terminated. The family or individual will not be permitted to enroll in any of St. Luke’s tuition-based programs until past due payment is made.

ENROLLMENT

All forms necessary for enrollment must be completed and received in the office a minimum of two business days prior to the child being admitted to class. There are no exceptions. Forms include:

- Online Enrollment Form (submitted online)
- Medical Information Form
- Immunization Record
- Discipline and Guidance

Enrollment procedures and forms may be found on the school's website and are included in the registration information available in January. Parents will be notified of school policy changes prior to the annual enrollment period.

ADMISSION OF SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

Realizing the unique qualities of all children, St. Luke's enrolls children with identified special needs under the following guidelines:

- Parents of such children must inform the school of the child's abilities and limitations prior to enrollment by meeting with the Director and/or the Assessment Coordinator to review all previous testing and evaluation information.
- When enrollment is granted, a probationary period will be established. The probationary period will be followed by a review of the child's participation in the program.
- Likewise, if a child's special needs are determined after enrollment, the parents are expected to inform the Director and/or the Assessment Coordinator and work together as a team to provide the best environment for the child.

St. Luke's reserves the right to remove the child from the program if the program does not meet his or her needs or if the child's behavior is detrimental to the class.

WITHDRAWAL

If it becomes necessary to withdraw a child from the school, the parents should inform the Registrar, **in writing, a minimum of 30 days before the date of withdrawal**. Parents will be responsible for payment of tuition for the month following date of notification. The school needs time to fill openings so we can continue to meet our expenses. Advance tuition deposits that have been paid are forfeited and non-transferable.

PROBLEM RESOLUTION

If a situation arises that causes concern either between the teacher and the child, or between the teacher and the parents, we suggest the following procedure:

- The parent(s) should schedule a conference with the teacher so the concern can be discussed and resolved. A discussion, in private, is generally the easiest and most effective way of dealing with matters of concern.
- If, after the conference, the parent(s) feel the situation is still unresolved, the parent(s) should contact the Program Coordinator.
- The Program Coordinator will review the concern, talk with all parties involved, review policy, and take additional action, if needed, to resolve the issue.
- If further discussion is deemed necessary, parents are invited to make an appointment with the Director of Day School.

It is our goal to be in partnership with families. We recognize that occasionally there is a need for frank discussion, and we aim to listen to all concerns. The Director of Day School has an open-door policy; parents are welcome to meet with her directly. Respectful and appropriate conversation and behavior will guide our meetings. We reserve the right to terminate any meeting that becomes hostile.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

We continually evaluate our program to make sure we are doing our best to assure children's good progress and learning as well as family and staff involvement and satisfaction. During the school year families are asked to participate in regular program evaluations. The results of the surveys are reported routinely. An extensive staff program review is also carried out annually. The SLDS Leadership Team uses this information to review our policies and procedures, to assess program quality, to make improvements, and to set program goals.

The Parent Advisory Council meets regularly during the nine-month school year. The Director reports on program activities and seeks information and ideas from this parent leadership group regarding program planning and on-going program operations.

Additionally, the Day School Director and Program Coordinators meet weekly with the Children's Ministry Team of St. Luke's United Methodist Church to coordinate and evaluate activities and practices that benefit our entire children's ministry efforts at St. Luke's. The Director makes sure that all Day School programming is approved, evaluated, and implemented in accordance with the policies and procedures of the church.

Please feel free to make an appointment to see the Director and/or Program Coordinators to share your ideas or concerns as they arise.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF CHILDREN'S RECORDS

Confidentiality is very important here at St. Luke's Day School. Children's permanent files are secured in the Day School office and are accessed only by office personnel (director, program coordinator, registrar, and office manager) and the child's teachers. The teachers also keep enrollment records with parent's contact information, along with ongoing assessment tools such individual assessments and portfolio documentation in a secure place in the classroom.

Regarding regulations governing access to files and family rights, the Texas Attorney General Opinion No. JC-0538 states the following: Generally, all student records are available to parents. Only under very narrow and unusual circumstances may a minor child's school counseling records be withheld from a parent. Before sharing information about a child with other relevant providers, agencies, or other programs, school staff obtain written consent from the family.

DAY TO DAY

ADDRESSING YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

Please remember that all teachers at St. Luke's Day School should be addressed using their **last name**. Even though some names may be difficult to pronounce, we ask that you help us uphold this respectful tradition.

WHAT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

Infants and Toddlers

Each child should bring a nutritious snack for mid-morning and a lunch with a drink for the noon meal. All foods should be ready to eat - fruit peeled and cut up, etc. Milk or formula should be sent in a thermos. Teachers will transfer to the bottle as needed. Send only plastic bottles. Glass containers, except for baby food jars, are not allowed.

Send an extra set of clothes and a minimum of 4 diapers in your child's diaper bag. Full-day infants and toddlers need a minimum of 6-8 diapers. **Put your child's name on everything he/she brings, including diapers.**

Twos through Kaleidoscope TK

Parents of children enrolled in Twos through PreK classes must send items for school in their child's **St. Luke's school bag**. Totes, rolling luggage bags, and backpacks **are not allowed** due to space limitations. Lunch boxes may be carried separately. Kaleidoscope students only are allowed personal backpacks.

Please send a nutritious mid-morning snack, labeled with the child's name, and a lunch of a carbohydrate, fruit and/or vegetable, protein, juice, milk, or water. All foods should be ready to eat. No candy, soft drinks, or glass containers, please. See *Healthy Lunch Suggestions*.

Please send an extra set of clothes, a blanket for rest time, and a minimum of four diapers for children who are not toilet trained. Little ones learning to use the toilet need extra underwear, shoes, and socks in addition to the extra set of clothes. *The Potty Training Handbook* for home and school is included in the Twos Department packet, and is available for all families (see page 23 for more information).

We ask that toys be left at home. Exceptions include:

- toys that are needed in the opening days of school to help ease a child's transition from home to school
- items brought for Show and Tell and books or educational items that are suitable for curriculum
- naptime loveys

Please mark any and all items brought to school carefully with the child's name. We cannot be responsible for lost items.

Rest Mats

All children are encouraged to rest or relax for a short time after lunch. Mats are provided for children in Infant/Toddler classes. For Twos - Kaleidoscope, rest mats can be purchased at our online store or in the Day School Office. State Licensing regulations for storage, disinfecting, and fire safety require the

use of this specific rest mat. Please do not send roll up mats, cloth mats, or sleeping bags as they are not allowed at school.

Cribs

In infant classrooms, cribs are provided for each child. Each infant is assigned a crib and sleeps in the same crib every day.

Parents bring a tightly fitted sheet (port-a-crib size) and may provide a non-swaddling sleep sack. Licensing regulations state that soft or loose bedding such as blankets, sleep positioning devices, stuffed toys, quilts, pillows, bumper pads, and comforters **must not be used** in cribs for children younger than 12 months of age.

In our full-day Luke's Place rooms, the bed linens are sent home every Friday or when soiled. Mattresses and cribs are sanitized every Friday and Monday or as needed.

In our part-day program, the linens are sent home at the end of the child's week or placed in the child's bag before the end of the week for laundering as needed. Cribs are sanitized Monday morning, and Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons.

SLDS School Bag

All children in our Twos through PreK classes will be issued an SLDS school bag for personal belongings that come to school each day. In addition to the bag a small lunch kit will be permitted. A luggage tag with each child's name is provided for identification. If your child's school bag or ID tag is lost, replacements may be purchased in the school office.

WHAT NOT TO BRING TO SCHOOL

No pretend guns, war toys, or other toys of destruction are allowed. These items are prohibited in our school. Other prohibited items include money, electronic devices, valuable jewelry, makeup, candy, and gum. Children may not bring backpacks (except Kaleidoscope TK), rolling suitcases, or other totes for personal belongings. The parents whose children wear pierced earrings, and attend a Twos or younger class, may be asked to remove the earrings on school days.

Prohibited items will be secured by the teacher and returned to the parent at the end of the day.

Balloons and Candles

The Day School does not allow the use of latex balloons or candles during classroom parties or holiday celebrations. Balloons are a choking hazard and can be extremely dangerous to children. Candles are considered a fire hazard.

Mylar balloons may be used as decoration at large school functions only, such as the Book Fair or the Spring Picnic, where they are out of the reach of children.

WHAT TO WEAR

To protect from injury and ensure comfortable playtime, children should wear washable play clothes. We recommend closed-toed, rubber-soled shoes (cowboy boots and sandals are unsafe in the outdoor classrooms). Groups play outside all year. Please dress your child appropriately, remembering to wear sun-protective clothing and layer for warmth during the winter. Hats are welcomed and must be labeled with the child's name. We teach the children that a hat is only worn by the child to whom it belongs.

PROTECTING FROM SUN EXPOSURE AND INSECT-BORNE DISEASE

Protection from overexposure to the sun is an important consideration for the children. The children's daily schedule includes outdoor time even during the warmer months. While our outdoor classrooms have shaded areas, we also suggest that you apply sunscreen for your children before school. Our teachers will encourage the children to wear hats if you choose to send them. Please label the hat clearly with your child's name.

The Day School has a mosquito extermination system to cover our outdoor play areas. This system is water and plant based, will not harm friendly insects, and is safe for children. It is administered at dawn, dusk, and as needed when the children are not outdoors. If you wish to take added precautions, we ask that you apply repellent before school.

If your child is in our part-day program, please do not send sunscreen or insect repellent to be self-administered or for the teachers to apply to your child. Families with children in our extended day Luke's Place classes may send sunscreen or insect repellent, in lotion form only, to be re-administered in the late afternoon. Permission slips, available in the Luke's Place classrooms, must be signed before the teachers can apply these products.

ARRIVAL

Proper Entrance to the Building; Secure Access

Parents should park in the main parking lot south of the church and enter the building through the Activity Center entrance only. St. Luke's UMC maintains a secure access system at entrances to the children's wings on campus. All doors on the Day School (west) side of the campus and to the Johnson building will remain locked during school hours—7:15 a.m. to 6 p.m.—with the exception of brief periods at high traffic drop-off and pick-up times.

Do not park on the Edloe side of the building expecting entrance to the school through the outdoor classroom or the Edloe door. Our teachers have been instructed not to open the outdoor classroom gates unless they must be used for **emergency exit**. Likewise, those seeking to enter at the Edloe door will be asked to go to the south parking lot and use the Activity Center entrance.

Luke's Place (LP) Full-day Class Participants

Arrival begins at 7:30 a.m. Your child should be taken to their Big Luke's Place or Little Luke's Place classroom and signed in at the door. If your child's core teacher is not present at drop-off, any special instructions for the day should be in writing for best communication.

SLDS Part-day (PD) 9-Month Program Class Participants

Bring your child to his/her classroom between 9 and 9:15 a.m. Be sure to sign in daily. **No child will be accepted before 9 a.m. as teachers are preparing for the day.** If you arrive early, you will be asked to stay with your child outside the room until the teacher is ready. Any special instructions for the day should be written down in advance and handed to the teacher at the door.

All arrival and dismissal procedures are modified during protective practice. See addendum.

Late Arrival

Teachers report that children who arrive late (after 9 a.m. in both full-day and part-day classes) often have difficulty assimilating into the group. Older children may miss greeting rituals and instructions for the day. You can help us ensure the best possible beginning for your child's day by arriving by 9 a.m. We understand that conflicts may arise and appreciate contact with your child's teacher regarding special plans for the day.

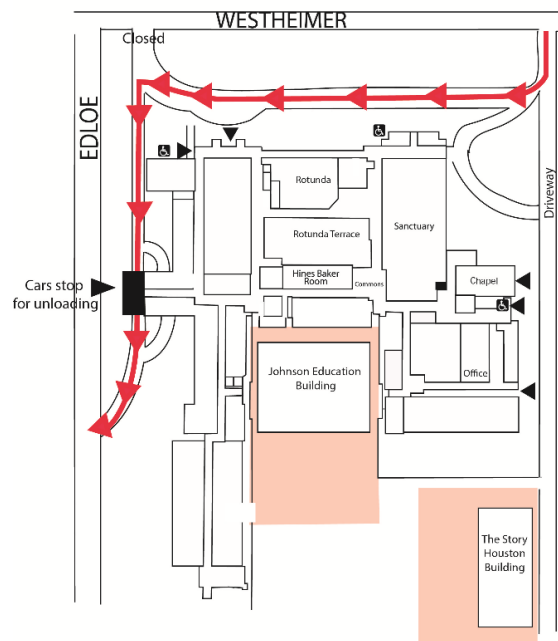
Children enrolled in our Infant/Toddler and Two Year Old programs, along with Threes and older who are not participating in Morning Drop-off (see below), must be escorted by an adult to the classrooms, signed in, and left with the supervising teachers.

Morning Carline Drop-off

Morning carline drop-off starts in mid-September. Children in our Threes, PreK, and Kaleidoscope TK classes may be dropped off at the Edloe drive porte-cochere between 8:50 and 9:05 a.m. Staff members will escort the children to their rooms. Please see the annual calendar for the date Morning Drop-off begins.

See the map below for location and traffic flow. In order to keep the Edloe drive open for cars exiting the Church property, do not line up for carline before 8:45 or after 9 a.m. Please keep your children buckled in their seats. A staff member will help children get out of the car.

Children three and older with special needs are encouraged to join their peers in Morning Drop Off. Parents are requested to discuss the procedure with their child's teacher and go over the plan for the morning with their child, as well. We want every child to be safe and we will inform the parents if there is an indication that their child may not be ready to join morning drop off.



Other Important Arrival Information

Please **slow down** and drive cautiously through the parking lot. Note our Parking Lot Safety guidelines (see page 27) and follow them.

Support your child's emerging independence during the arrival routine by having him carry his own lunch kit and school bag, hang up his own coat, and put away personal items in his cubby. Similar practices should be observed at pick-up time as well.

We also require that children's hands are washed with running water upon arrival to the classroom. The use of hand sanitizer does not replace hand washing.

Due to licensing regulations and the many public events scheduled at St. Luke's, we ask that you keep your children with you as you enter and exit the classrooms and make your way through the building. Please do not let them lag behind or run ahead out of your sight.

DISMISSAL

At dismissal all children are picked up in their classrooms. Before leaving, make sure the teacher is aware that you are taking your child out of the room and sign your child out daily. Children have communication folders that are placed by the classroom door at the end of each day. Please check these daily for information from your child's classroom teacher.

A child may only be released to a parent or other authorized individuals listed in our records. If a person who is on the pick-up list but unknown to staff comes to pick up a child, we will ask for photo identification. If you need to make a change to your Authorization to Pick Up form, please contact the Day School office.

When arrangements are made for your child to go home with a friend, a note to the child's teacher is required.

Parents are expected to pick up their child on time. Pick up times are as follows:

- SLDS Part-day classes: 2:10 - 2:30 p.m.
- Luke's Place Full-day classes: by 5:30 p.m.

Please note our Late Fee policy: If you know that you are going to be detained, please notify the Day School immediately so that we can reassure your child. Teachers are instructed to take children to the office after the expected pick-up time has ended (2:30 p.m. or 5:30 p.m.). There is an overtime charge per child of **\$1.00 per minute**, which will be billed to your account. Your child will be waiting for you in the Day School office. Children who have been picked up late three or more times may be asked to leave the program.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION and CHAPEL TIME

St. Luke's Day School is a ministry of St. Luke's United Methodist Church and therefore Christian Education is seen as a natural and important part of the daily program. Children will pray before meals, sing songs to God, celebrate major holidays of the church year, and hear religious stories suitable for their age. Children of all faiths and cultural backgrounds are welcome at our school.

Children enrolled in our Twos, Threes, PreK, and Kaleidoscope TK classes will participate in our weekly children's chapel services. Chapel time for children in the two-year-old program follows Chapel for Threes-TK. Kaleidoscope children have a special role as chapel helpers on the day their class attends. The children experience a brief worship service where they sing songs, hear a story from the Bible, and

share a birthday blessing for all of the children celebrating birthdays during that week. Parents are invited to join us.

Chapel Etiquette

In order for our chapel services to be a meaningful time for the children we have created chapel etiquette guidelines:

- School begins at 9 a.m. Please be on time so that your child can come to chapel with classmates.
- If chapel has begun, do not send your child in. The chapel usher will open the door in time for late arrivals to join the birthday celebration and music.
- Strollers and large bags must be left outside the chapel. Parents who arrive late must deliver their children's belongings to the classrooms.
- Parents are asked to model chapel manners for their children. Enter quietly, participate joyfully in the service, listen respectfully without talking, and remain for the entire service.
- Birthdays are celebrated each week. Those with birthdays Sunday through Saturday of the current week are honored. Summer birthdays are recognized in May. You are welcome to attend chapel for your child's special birthday blessing.
- When guests attend chapel, we request that they sit on the benches at the back so that children can see the worship leaders.

Chapel Sharing Days and Service Projects

There are opportunities throughout the year for our children to learn about caring for others. Age-appropriate Chapel Sharing Days are planned, including canned food donations at Thanksgiving, a special Christmas donation, canned soup ("Souper Bowl") in January, and a book donation later in the spring. Various community agencies benefit from these donations. Additionally, each PreK/TK class selects their own service project to initiate during the school year.

DISCIPLINE/GUIDANCE*

Behavioral guidance is handled in a very positive way. We are committed to helping children learn to express and manage their feelings, cooperate with other children, and negotiate their own conflicts by providing guidance that is consistent with each child's level of development.

Teachers need to be informed of any special circumstances at home that may contribute to a child's behavior, such as a move, a new sibling, etc.

Teachers carefully observe children who have challenging behavior. They identify events, activities, interactions, and other factors at school or at home that may predict challenging behavior and/or may contribute to the child's use of challenging behavior. When interventions are necessary, they will be clearly defined and consistently maintained. Techniques are:

- 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.

We rely on positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Some of our techniques include:

- Using encouragement and appropriate praise of good behavior instead of focusing on unacceptable behavior;

- Communicating behavioral expectations in clear, positive statements;
- Redirecting behavior by diverting attention to constructive pursuits;
- Compromising or arbitrating differences and encouraging children to seek alternatives; and
- Using brief supervised separation from the group when appropriate for the child's age and stage of development after which a reassuring adult helps the child re-enter the classroom activity.

There will be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline are prohibited:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment including hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
- Putting anything in a child's mouth;
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed;
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

Serious behavior problems are referred to the Director. For children with persistently challenging behavior our expectation is for teachers, families, and other professionals to work as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success.

**Additionally, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Child Care Licensing, provides a Discipline and Guidance form that is required to be signed by parents and placed in each child's file.*

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Here Trips

Special events are provided during the school day, in lieu of field trips, to enhance units of study and stimulate each child's awareness of the world. Here Trips are typically attended by children in our Threes, PreK, and Kaleidoscope classes.

Music Live

The Fine Arts Department of St. Luke's UMC and other musicians in our community enrich our program by providing musical performances throughout the school year. Children experience live voice, organ, piano and other performances in small group settings that are specifically designed for them.

Water Activities

The children will participate in messy day play that may include water activities during the warm weather months. Guidelines from the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services are used to determine the number of children one teacher may supervise during this kind of water play. The number is based on the age of the youngest child in the group. Sprinkler play does not require additional teachers. Children are carefully supervised during water play.

Animals

From time to time, child-friendly animals may come to school for a visit. Parents will be notified in writing beforehand and care will be given to ensure that the animals do not create unsafe or unsanitary conditions. Teachers and children will practice good hygiene and hand washing after handling or coming in contact with an animal and/or items used by an animal, such as water bowls, food bowls, and cages. Teaching staff supervise all interactions between children and animals and instruct children on safe behavior when in close proximity to animals. Children will not handle animals that show any sign of illness.

THE ROLE OF PARENTS

ORIENTATION

Parents play an important role in our school. You are asked to become familiar with the procedures in this handbook.

An important Parent Orientation is held at the beginning of each school year to provide further information and to answer parents' questions about their children's program. Parents receive an overview of classroom procedures from the teacher and a classroom information packet.

An opportunity is also given for children and parents to visit the teachers in the classroom before school starts. As the first weeks of school unfold, the teachers are happy to answer any further questions about each child's transition to school. If you have a question, please let your child's teacher know that you would like a call and offer a good time to reach you.

PARENT COMMUNICATION

Teachers and administrators work in partnership with families, establishing and maintaining regular, on-going, two-way communication. A variety of formal and informal methods are used to communicate with families about the program philosophy and curriculum objectives. We want to support each family's educational goals for the children and offer a vast array of strategies that parents can use to promote young children's learning.

We encourage each family to regularly contribute to decisions about goals for their child and plans for school activities and services. Your suggestions, comments, and goals are important; please share them with us. We are here to help with any issues that may arise, including routine separation anxiety, special needs, food allergies, and daily care issues. We appreciate your financial and moral support and believe that partnering with parents contributes to top quality programming.

Our teaching staff communicates with families on a daily basis regarding the children's activities and developmental milestones, shared care-giving issues, and other information that affects the well-being and development of the children. If something requires more attention than an informal conversation at drop-off and pick-up time, parents are encouraged to call the school and set a time to meet with the teacher.

Infants, Toddlers, and Twos receive written daily reports informing parents of nap times, food intake, diaper changes, daily activities, and developmental milestones. Lesson plans and daily schedules are posted digitally and are inside the classroom Parent Communication notebooks for your information.

A "Today We" notice is posted outside each classroom and digitally every day. This brief overview of the daily activities provides great information for parents and ideas for car talk on the way home. Other important notices are posted inside each classroom or placed in a child's cubby or hanging folder file. Please read them as they are usually of a timely nature.

Each SLDS class has a Shutterfly Share Site to post a monthly class calendar, class news, and photos. All class sign-ups are found on this site, including parent-teacher conferences, party helpers, and other volunteer opportunities. These sites are the primary source of classroom communication and are maintained and updated regularly by the classroom teachers and room parents.

Additionally, supplemental notes, St. Luke's Day School on Instagram, printed copies of communications in the classroom Parent Communication notebook, and E-Spirit email updates are offered to keep you informed. A school calendar is provided at the beginning of the school year; you will be notified immediately of any changes. The calendar page on our website at www.stlukesdayschool.org is also a source of more detailed information about school events; you may refer to it at your convenience. Please let us know if translation or interpretation of communications in a language other than English is needed.

Direct conversations in person or by phone, and SLDS email, are the preferred method of communication for parents and teachers. **Teachers are prohibited from using cell phones or other means of electronic communication while supervising children.** We ask parents not text teachers during the school day, as their response time is very limited and unpredictable.

By enrolling your child at SLDS you consent that your child's image may be seen on classroom Shutterfly pages by other parents or persons with access to these password-protected sites. We continue our practice of avoiding unobscured, forward-facing views of children's faces on the public SLDS website or Instagram without explicit permission.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

St. Luke's Day School offers parent/teacher conferences as a way for parents and teachers to share observations, review educational and behavioral goals, and talk about the formal and informal ways we assess each child's progress. We offer different attendance options here at SLDS and provide a variety of parent/teacher conferences to fit the needs of all our children, whether in LP full-day or SLDS part-day care. Conferences are planned as follows:

- The SLDS Part-day program for infants to threes have fall and spring conferences; mid-year report mailed home in February;
- The Luke's Place Full-day program (Little Luke's Place) infants to (Big Luke's Place) threes have fall and spring conferences; end-of-year report sent home in August;
- SLDS PD PreK/TK program has fall, mid-year, and spring conferences;
- LP Full-day (Big Luke's Place) PreK has fall, mid-year, and spring conferences, and an end of year report sent home in August.

At each spring conference (both part-day and full-day), parents will receive a **student portfolio** that reflects their child's growth and developmental progress during the school year from September through May. In addition, you are encouraged to make an appointment with your child's teacher, Program Coordinator, or the school's Director any time you have a question, concern, or idea to share.

Transition to Your Child's Next School

Please let us assist you when the time comes to transition to your child's next school. Our administrative staff regularly communicates with other early childhood programs and elementary schools to help our families prepare for and manage their children's transitions between programs. We are available to provide basic general information on enrollment procedures and practices, visiting opportunities, and school options.

As families take steps to go to their next school, teacher recommendations are often part of the application process. **These forms should be brought or emailed directly to the Day School main office by December 1 or a minimum of two weeks before the due date.** We track the forms to ensure that each recommendation is handled in a careful and timely manner. There are several steps to the process; teachers and administrators need time to thoroughly complete and approve each recommendation

before sending it to the school to which your child is applying. Once emailed to the school, a copy of the form will be kept in your child's file in the office.

Change in Marital Status

Please notify the office if there is a change in marital status prior to or during the school year. In addition to supporting your child during the process, we need pertinent documentation including custody and visitation agreements. Documentation must be updated as changes occur.

Change in Contact Information

Parents **must** advise the office of any change of residence, email address, or phone numbers, including cell and work phones. It is critical that we be able to reach you, especially in the case of an emergency.

Requests for SLDS Staff to Provide After Hours Child Care

SLDS does not arrange for or endorse our staff members to care for children outside of school hours. Any agreement parents and staff members make to do so is not in association with our program. SLDS teachers are restricted from after-hours care for children who are currently enrolled in their classrooms. All staff are restricted from transporting children, other than their own family relations, to and from school.

PARENT ENRICHMENT AND EDUCATION

Throughout the year, the Parenting Center at St. Luke's plans a variety of parent education programs sponsored by St. Luke's Day School (PEP Talks), Children's Ministries, and the Nick Finnegan Counseling Center. Attendance is strongly encouraged as we provide opportunities to learn from many of the most outstanding local and national authorities in this field. All Parenting Center programs are open to the community and families are encouraged to bring guests.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents in the Classroom

Parents of children enrolled in our program are welcome at the school at any time and are encouraged to participate in a variety of ways.

Parents are invited to share hobbies, careers, cultural celebrations, or other interests with children in the classrooms.

Parent Volunteer Registration

In conjunction with the Safe Sanctuary program of the United Methodist Church, all volunteers at St. Luke's Day School must be registered and approved. The registration process involves reading the Safe Sanctuary policy, completing the application and submitting a photocopy of a driver's license or passport. Please register online at stlukesmethodist.org/safe-sanctuary. A criminal background check will be performed. Registered volunteers must repeat a renewal application annually.

Registered school volunteers are also authorized for church opportunities; the additional step of completing the Safe Sanctuary quiz may be required.

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES

St. Luke's Day School has an active Parent Advisory Council that enhances the quality of our educational program. Each parent is asked to participate in one of our committees by filling out a volunteer form on the Day School website. Volunteering provides an opportunity for Day School parents to become better acquainted and to lend their special talents to supporting the school. Any amount of time is appreciated. There are opportunities for take-home projects, and activities happen during the evenings as well as day time hours.

The committees are:

- Birthday Book Club
- Book Bags
- Book Fair
- Book Worms
- Fund Jobs
- Hospitality
- Library
- Busy Parents Liaison
- Parenting Center
- Pictures/Screening
- Room Parents
- Spring Picnic
- Teacher Appreciation
- Transportation Day/Here Trips

ADULT CONDUCT

We expect parents, grandparents, nannies, and other adults to join us in appropriate and respectful conduct at all times; the following actions while on our campus will result in either a meeting with the Director or Assistant Director or immediate dismissal from the program:

- Harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child;
- Threatening, harassing, or demonstrating disrespectful behavior (speech or gestures, verbal or written) to staff, parents, children, or other guests on our campus;
- Making negative or disparaging comments regarding the school, and/or disregarding proper procedures for grievances and conflict resolution;
- Disregarding policies designated to provide safety and security on our campus.

CHILD CARE LICENSING INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

A copy of the minimum standards and the school's most recent licensing inspection report are available for review in the office. For more information about child-care regulations and other services for children, see the Texas Health & Human Services website: www.hhs.texas.gov or call the state office at 512-438-4800.

St. Luke's Day School is a gang-free zone. In compliance with Chapter 42 of the Texas Human Resource Code, more information on designated gang-free zones is available in the office.

SECURITY, HEALTH & SAFETY

A PLAN FOR EVERY CHILD FOR EVERY DAY

Children are under adult supervision at all times. There is specific accountability for each child by one or more staff members. Systems are in place for accounting for children's whereabouts at regular intervals, especially during transition.

In conjunction with the Safe Sanctuary program of the United Methodist Church, all volunteers at St. Luke's Day School must be registered, and volunteers and visitors must sign in and get a nametag in the Day School office upon entering the building.

Our staff is well trained in cleaning, sanitation, and safety procedures that help protect the children and staff from illness and injuries. Our goals are to promote and protect children's health, ensure the children's nutritional well-being, control the spread of infectious disease to the best of our abilities, and maintain a healthy environment.

Children are taught good health and safety procedures. According to age and ability, each child is encouraged to practice health and safety procedures independent of adult help.

Our goal is to minimize the number of group and staff changes the children experience during the day. The purpose of this is to maintain continuity of relationships between the teachers and the individual children as well as groups of children. In our LP full-day program, the two Lead Teachers are with the children from 9 a.m. to 3:30p.m. Typically the opening and closing Lead Teacher works with a Support Teacher from 7-9 a.m. and from 3:30-6 p.m. In our SLDS part-day program, the Lead Teachers are in the classrooms for the scheduled day of 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. (M-F). Support Teachers are well-trained and valued SLDS team members. They may also be assigned for giving breaks or planning time to the Lead Teachers in both full-day and part-day classes.

Under normal circumstances, children stay with the same teachers from September to May in our SLDS Part-day program and September through August in our LP Full-day program.

SHOE REMOVAL in INFANT/YOUNG TODDLER ROOMS

In order to better protect our non-mobile and newly crawling infants in our Lambs and Kangaroos classes, we have a plan regarding walking on classroom surfaces that infants and young toddlers use specifically for play. Adults and children will remove, replace, or cover with clean foot coverings any shoes that they have worn outside that play area. If our babies, families, or teachers are barefooted in such areas, their feet are visibly clean.

ILLNESS POLICY

Staff are alert to the health of each child. Upon arrival and throughout the day, teachers observe children for behavior changes or signs of illness. Individual medical problems and accidents are recorded and reported to staff and families.

An ill child needs to be at home. The following symptoms are to be used to determine when a child should not be brought to school:

- The child is unable to participate comfortably in all activities;
- The child has a greater need for care than teachers can provide while caring for other children;

- The child has one of the following:
 - An ear (tympanic) temperature of 100° or greater
 - Uncontrolled diarrhea
 - Two or more vomiting episodes
 - Excessive coughing
 - Rash with fever
 - Mouth sores with drooling
 - Behavior changes or other signs that the child may be severely ill.

If a child becomes ill during the day, we will care for that child until the parent or authorized adult can arrive. **All parents must have emergency plans established to care for ill children. Children must be fever/symptom free without medication for 24 hours or one program day, whichever is longer, before returning to school.**

Notices will be emailed from the Day School office concerning children who have been exposed to communicable diseases. Please notify the school at once if your child has a communicable disease or has been exposed to one (Communicable Disease list is available in the office and upon request).

Our school has cooperative arrangements with the Houston Health Department to audit children's immunization records, keep current on relevant health information, and as a resource should an outbreak of communicable disease occur. We are inspected by the health department annually.

Hand washing is our number one defense for preventing the spread of illness. Children and teachers wash hands upon arrival to school, after diapering or using the toilet, before meals and snacks, after playing in water that is shared by two or more people, after handling any visiting pets, after outdoor play, and other times as necessary. The teachers assist the children as needed and work toward each child learning to do this independently. As a final step in hand washing and prevention of the spread of germs, we teach the children to turn off the water faucet with a paper towel. We appreciate your support of these practices at home.

ALLERGIES

Parents of children with severe allergies should request an Allergy Action Plan form from the Day School office. Copies of the completed form will be kept in the classroom and the office. We also request consent to post information about each child's allergy so that it is a visible reminder to all who interact with these children during the program day. An allergy alert sign will be posted at the classroom door. All common areas, such as outdoor classrooms, Children's Chapel, and hallways, are allergy alert areas. Parents and staff must strive to prevent these areas from becoming contaminated.

Due to the severity of some food allergies, such as peanuts and tree nuts, we will prohibit all classmates from bringing food items that are life threatening to an individual child. In such cases we appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

TOILET TRAINING

When your child is ready, we would like to offer our support for this important developmental milestone. We have created a *Potty Training Handbook* for your reference and look forward to celebrating each child's success. While there are many approaches to toilet training, we have found that the tips and hints we suggest work very well for children who participate in a group setting. It is important for teachers and parents to work closely together for the success of each child.

Before you begin the process, we ask that you read the handbook to become familiar with the ways we can work together to help your child be successful at school.

At the beginning of the school year, copies of the *Potty Training Handbook* are distributed to parents of children enrolled in older toddler and two-year-old classes. Additional copies are available upon request in the Day School office.

MEDICAL/DENTAL EMERGENCIES

In the case of illness or injury during school hours, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Office staff will attempt to contact one or both parents.
2. If parents cannot be reached, designated persons in the child's file will be contacted.
3. Parents will be notified immediately if it is suspected that a child has sustained a concussion.
4. If a child needs urgent medical attention, an administrator will call 911.
5. In the event a parent or guardian is not present and cannot be reached, St. Luke's Day School will follow the recommendation of 911 emergency personnel for treatment and/or transport to the emergency room. All expenses incurred are the responsibility of the parents.

MEDICATIONS

According to state licensing regulations, all medication administered by St. Luke's Day School staff must meet the following guidelines:

- If prescription medication, it must be in the original container labeled with the child's full name, name of clinician, expiration date, and manufacturer's instructions.
- The medication can only be given according to the labeled directions. If you are sending an over-the-counter medication, it must have your child's age/age range printed on the bottle.
- If the over-the-counter medication does not have administering directions for your child's age, you must bring in a doctor's note or have one faxed to the school with the specific administering directions relative to your child's age.

All medications **must** be brought to the Day School main office and parents will fill out a medication dosage form that gives written permission for Day School staff to administer the medication. Two staff members will administer the medication according to the directions at the designated time. Please bring a dispensing spoon, cup, or dropper along with the medication. Be sure the dispenser is marked properly for the prescribed dosage (for example, if dosage is 1.875 ml, we cannot use a dispenser that is marked 1.25 ml and 2.5 ml).

Do not send any medication in your child's school bag or lunch kit. To do so would compromise the safety of the other children in the class.

Medication with expired dates will be discarded.

IMMUNIZATIONS AND WELL CHECKS

As required by the Texas Department of State Health Service, all students must have proper immunizations to attend St. Luke's Day School. The immunization schedule may be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/schedules/easy-to-read/child-shell-easyread.html>.

Texas Health and Human Services requires that children receive regular well-checks with their pediatrician on the following schedule: 2 months, 4 months, 6 months, 9 months, 12 months, 15 months, 18 months, and annually age 2 and up.

The school is required to maintain up-to-date well-check and immunization records on every student throughout the school year. **Following each well-check that occurs during the school year, please submit to the office a completed a Medical Information form along with updated immunizations.** This form may be found in the office or on our website.

HEARING AND VISION SCREENING REQUIREMENTS

Licensing requires that children four years of age and older, by September 1, must have vision and hearing screenings. These screenings take place in September and are included in the Activity/Supply Fee paid at the beginning of the school year.

CLOSING DUE TO WEATHER

It is possible that we may have to close due to bad weather conditions. Unless you are specifically notified otherwise, will be closed when HISD makes the decision to close. Listen to local news media for word of HISD's, and therefore, our decision to close.

We reserve the right to close school even when HISD does not if conditions in the church area become treacherous for children and their families. In this event, you will be informed as quickly as possible via opting in to our One Call Now text messages and checking the SL website updates and/or E-Spirit emails.

Parents are given information regarding our text alert system and may choose to participate or not. Text alerts are sent in case of school closing, emergencies, or helpful information to know in the most time-sensitive manner.

SECURITY

St. Luke's United Methodist Church employs contract security personnel who maintain a presence at the Activity Center entrance and routinely patrol the campus building and grounds. In the parking lot, the security officer is primarily concerned with the safety of parents and children. We also maintain secure access procedures for the children's areas of the SLUMC campus. (see arrival information on page 12 for further details)

PARKING LOT SAFETY

For the safety of all of our children, we ask that everyone observe the following safety rules at all times:

- **The speed limit in the parking lot is 5 m.p.h. at all times.**
- **Do not use cell phones (including Bluetooth) for talking or texting while driving or walking in the parking lot!** Please adhere to this important rule so that your complete attention will be focused on the safety of your child and others in our parking lot while you are driving!
- **Do not park in the porte-cocheres or along any curbs in the parking lot.**

- **There is no parking in the coned parking areas at any time during the school day.** The cones create a safe traffic pattern and increased visibility of children and adults as they cross through the parking lot to the building.
- **Please park in the main parking lot.** Parking on the Edloe side of the building and picking children up from the outdoor classroom is a safety hazard and is not allowed.

Please do not leave any valuables in your car at any time. St. Luke's, along with other churches and schools in the area, is subject to car break-ins from time to time.

EMERGENCY DRILLS

In accordance with State Child-care Licensing regulations, the school practices the following emergency preparedness drills: Fire Drills (monthly), Severe Weather Drills (quarterly). Additionally, administrators review intruder and lockdown procedures with teachers annually and as needed.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLAN

Certain emergency circumstances might lead the School to release students quickly and safely to their homes. Parents will be notified of an emergency dismissal through the following communication network: a text alert, an E-Spirit group e-mail notification, a recorded message on the School's main telephone line, as well as, notification on the School website if time permits the website update. In the event of an emergency dismissal the School will release a student directly to the parent(s) or to others authorized by the parent(s) as per the child's current release form.

Should extreme circumstances require the evacuation of our campus, St. Luke's Day School maintains a reciprocal agreement with St. John's School (2401 Claremont Lane, 713-850-0222) and River Oaks Baptist School (2300 Willowick, 713-623-6938). In some scenarios, children could be evacuated across Edloe Street from our main campus to other property that is owned by SLUMC. Parents will be notified regarding the pickup location for children.

Emergency contact information for each child is issued to the classroom teachers at the beginning of each school year. Parents must advise the office of any changes so we may contact you in case of emergency.

During emergency evacuation, teachers are responsible for their assigned group of children. We will transport children via church vans, private automobile, or on foot, with assistance from all school and church staff. Children under 24 months, those with limited mobility, or otherwise needing assistance will be transported via evacuation crib, buggy, or may be carried by an adult.

SHELTER IN PLACE in case of community disaster

We have a **Shelter in Place** plan in the event of a biological or chemical emergency in our city. **We will lock down the building for the safety of the children.**

In the event of an actual chemical/biological emergency, the children will be moved to a designated area of our building. Once we have accounted for each child and staff member, this area will be secured and not opened until we receive an all clear from the proper authorities.

Should an emergency occur, we urge all parents to follow instructions given by the local authorities. If you arrive at St. Luke's after the children are secured in the building, there will be instructions posted giving you directions to a safe place in our building where you may wait for your child to be released.

LOCKOUT/LOCKDOWN

In the event that we are alerted of a dangerous situation in our area, St. Luke's will implement a Lockout response. During a Lockout all students are recovered from outside the building, and our security team locks all outside doors. This would be implemented when there is a threat or hazard outside of the building. Criminal activity, dangerous events in the community, or even a vicious dog on the outdoor classroom would be examples of a Lockout response. Students and teachers remain in their locked classrooms with window blinds closed until the all clear is given. While the Lockout response calls for greater staff situational awareness, it allows for classroom activities to continue with as little interruption or distraction as possible.

In the case of an unwelcome intruder or imminently dangerous situation, teachers are trained in Lockdown response. This is a classroom-based protocol that requires not only locking the classroom door and closing blinds, but also turning off the lights, placing students out of sight of any corridor windows, and blocking entrance doors as able. During Lockdown teachers help students to remain quiet. Lockdown does not mandate locking outside doors. There are several reasons for not locking perimeter doors during a Lockdown. Risk is increased to students or staff in exposed areas attempting to lock outside doors. Locking outside doors inhibits entry of first responders and increases risk as responders attempt to breach doors.

In either Lockout or Lockdown, parents will be notified in a timely manner via our emergency texting system, email, or by a phone call as the situation warrants. **Please remember that our first priority during any emergency situation is the safety of the children.**

LUNCHES AND SNACKS AT SCHOOL

Snacks and lunches are brought from home daily. We want to work with you to make sure that all food served at our school meets the USDA's food guidelines. The latest information can be found at the United States Department of Agriculture Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion at <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/default.html>.

To ensure the safety of food brought from home, all foods and beverages should be **labeled with your child's name**. Almost all lunches can be kept cold with an ice pack, kept hot in a thermos, or served room temperature. We are unable to heat any lunches.

Parents are requested to bring food cut into small, bite sized pieces, which are the appropriate size for the child's ability to chew and swallow. If the food is not the correct size, then the staff will cut foods into pieces no larger than ¼ inch square for infants and ½ inch square for toddler/twos, according to each child's chewing and swallowing capability. Teachers will inform parents if the food needs to be cut smaller for future preparation.

Extra snacks are kept on hand if needed.

For all infants and for children with disabilities who have special feeding needs, teachers keep a daily record of the type and quantity of food the child consumes and provide families with that information.

We support infant breast feeding and will coordinate the feedings and servings of expressed milk with the infant’s mother as requested. St. Luke’s has a comfortable Nursing Nook that may be used if desired.

The school serves afternoon snacks to children enrolled in our Luke’s Place program and a snack calendar is posted in those classrooms. We are restricted to pre-packaged snacks and approved single servings of fruits and vegetables.

Due to food allergies and family preferences for dietary matters, we ask that families do not send food items as “special treats” for the entire class.

Choking Hazards

If not properly prepared, some snacks and foods are choking hazards for children under the age of four. Others should never be served to children under four for safety reasons. Please make sure the snacks and lunches you send to school meet the following guidelines:

Choking Hazard Chart				
	Infants/Toddlers	Two Year Olds	Three year olds	Four year olds
Choking hazards Dried fruit (raisins, apricots, etc.), nuts of any type, sticky foods (gummy fruits, Fruit by the Foot, etc.), popcorn, raw peas, hard candy, marshmallows	DO NOT SEND	DO NOT SEND	DO NOT SEND	
Hard/crunchy fruits & vegetables (e.g. apples, carrots, celery, etc.)	Cut in ¼” dice	Cut in ½” dice	Cut into small bites	
Round foods (e.g. grapes, cherry tomatoes, hot dogs, string cheese, etc.)	Cut lengthwise then cut in ¼” dice	Cut lengthwise then cut in ½” dice	Cut lengthwise then cut into small bites	
Goosey foods (e.g. nut butter, cream cheese, etc.)	Spread very thinly; no spoonfuls	Spread very thinly; no spoonfuls	Spread thinly; no spoonfuls	Spread thinly; no spoonfuls

HEALTHY LUNCH SUGGESTIONS

Five Lunch Planning Principles:

- Strive for Balance
- Emphasize Variety
- Add Contrast
- Think About Color
- Consider Eye Appeal

Here are ideas we've collected from teachers and parents (refer to choking hazards chart above):

Deli Lunch

(please avoid high-sodium, high-fat Lunchables)

rolled or sliced lunch meat/turkey pepperoni
slices/mini-sausages (cut)
cubed or sliced cheese
sliced pickle
a few baked chips or whole wheat crackers
kiwi slices

Pizza Dip Lunch

whole wheat crackers or pita bread pieces
turkey pepperoni slices
broccoli florets
pizza sauce for dipping

Leftover Pizza

serve it cold!
lettuce wedge
fruit cup

Tortilla Wrap

(possibilities are endless)

refried beans
diced chicken
sour cream
cheese
diced tomatoes
a few tortilla chips with mild salsa for dipping

Stew, Soup, or Chili

(serve in a thermos)
broccoli cheese, chicken & stars, turkey chili
whole wheat crackers
cheese cubes
Jell-o with fruit

Cold Pasta Salad *(use fun pasta shapes)*

cubed cheese
veggies of choice
diced chicken or shrimp
Italian dressing
orange slices

Mac & Cheese Plus

mac & cheese (served cold or in thermos)
diced chicken or ham
applesauce
crackers

Chef Salad

lettuce of choice
diced meats
shredded cheeses
veggies
salad dressing

Veggie Dip Lunch

cottage cheese and ranch dressing mixture
cucumber slices
bell pepper slices
halved cherry tomatoes
cut up veggies of choice
breadsticks

Fruit Dip Lunch

cream cheese and applesauce (equal parts) or
cottage cheese and applesauce
apple slices
strawberries
banana chunks
kiwi slices
whole wheat crackers

Breakfast for Lunch

hard-boiled egg
turkey bacon
roll or muffin
fresh fruit

Sushi Style Sandwich

roll crust less slice of bread around sliced cheese
& thinly sliced lunchmeat
cut into round 'California roll' slices
mayonnaise or mustard for dipping
strawberries or mixed berries

Additional alternative ideas:**Meat / Protein**

(cut up for younger children, if needed)

roasted chicken or turkey
beef stew meat
beef brisket
shrimp, broiled or canned
kidney, pinto, or white beans
tuna or veggie patty

Vegetables

(many may be cooked and enjoyed cold)

asparagus
beans, green or yellow, cooked
cabbage, red or green, cooked
carrots, cooked
sweet peppers, red, yellow, orange
pumpkin, cooked, mashed
squash, cooked or raw
snow peas
sweet potato, cooked, cubed
coleslaw

Thermos Thoughts

soup,
spaghetti,
baked beans,
macaroni and cheese,
leftovers,
black-eyed peas and ham chunks,
pasta

Fruits

cantaloupe, honeydew, or watermelon
nectarine
papaya
blueberries
kiwi
peach, pear, plum
apricot halves in light syrup

Grains / Breads

bagel: soft, sliced mini, plain, whole-wheat
cereal: ready to eat, with or without milk
muffin: bran, blueberry
noodles, cooked
pita bread
graham crackers

Dairy

ricotta cheese
cottage cheese
yogurt
milk

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

As a rough guide for lunch serving sizes try these amounts from the US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service:

Food Group	1-2 years	3-5 years	6-12 years
Vegetable, Fruit, or Juice			
Serve two different vegetables and/or fruits to equal	¼ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
Grains and Breads			
Serve a bread or bread alternate and/or cereal:			
Bread, enriched or whole-grain	½ slice	½ slice	1 slice
Cereal	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Cooked pasta or noodle products	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Meat / Protein			
Meat, poultry, or fish (cooked lean meat without bone)	1 oz	1-1/2 oz	2 oz
Cheese	1oz	1-1/2 oz	2 oz
Egg (large)	½	¾	1
Cooked dry beans or peas	¼ cup	3/8 cup	1/2cup
Yogurt, plain or sweetened	4 oz.	6 oz	8 oz

EXTRAS

CHILDREN'S SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT AT ST. LUKE'S UMC

St. Luke's United Methodist Church offers a variety of other enriching spiritual experiences for young children including Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and Children's Choirs. All children and their families are cordially invited to attend. Please contact the St. Luke's UMC website www.stlukesmethodist.org, the Church office, or the School office for more information.

HOLIDAY PARTIES

We find many reasons to have special celebrations throughout the year. Some are school-wide or age-level specific, such as Transportation Day or PreK/TK Thanksgiving Feast, and all parents are invited. Others are classroom holiday parties. Our primary aim is to keep the focus of each party on the children. Parents are encouraged to participate while keeping this goal in mind. Please help us make sure the children do not become overwhelmed or overstimulated by following these classroom party guidelines:

- work with the teachers to keep party preparations simple,
- instead of attending all parties, choose two or three to alleviate overcrowding,
- make alternative arrangements for care of older or younger siblings.

Age Level Parties and Special Events

Infants/Toddlers	Parties: Christmas, Easter Egg Hunt/Party, End of Year
Twos	Parties: Halloween (no costumes), Christmas, Easter Egg Hunt/Party, End of Year Special Event: Dad's Valentine Breakfast (no children's party or cards)
Threes	Parties: Halloween (wear costume on Parade Day only), Christmas, Valentine's (no card exchange), Easter Egg Hunt/Party, End of Year Special Event: Dad's Rodeo Breakfast (February)
PreK	Halloween (wear costume on Parade Day only), Christmas, Valentine's (card exchange), Easter Egg Hunt/Party Special Events: Thanksgiving Feast, Kite Flying with Dad, Mother's Day Tea, End of Year PreK Capers
Kaleidoscope TK	Parties: Halloween (wear costume on Parade Day only), Christmas, Valentine's (card exchange), Easter Egg Hunt/Party Special Events: Thanksgiving Feast, Nativity Play family preview, Kite Flying with Dad, Mother's Day Tea, End of Year Kaleidoscope Celebration and Field Day
School-Wide	Special Events: Halloween Parade, Christmas Sing-Along, and Transportation Day

BIRTHDAYS

A birthday is an important event in the life of every child, and it is a joy to celebrate with him or her. Children in two-year-old classes and older are recognized at chapel with a special blessing. All children will be honored in their classrooms.

Since a child's birthday holds great meaning, we want to focus on this special event with specific goals in mind:

- Promoting self-worth and confidence by recognizing that each child in our school is a wonderfully made child of God;
- Supporting a classroom community where all children and adults feel welcomed and honored;
- Providing an excellent opportunity to extend learning in a natural and meaningful way.

Keeping these goals in mind, **we have eliminated the school birthday party** (treats from home at snack time) and **have created a more comprehensive celebration!** On each child's special day, or designated day if the birthday falls on a weekend or other time when school is not in session, the child will hold a place of honor as described here.

Circle time will include highlighting the child in a special way that is appropriate to each age group. Throughout the day the child will be valued as a VIP through holding special jobs, being given places of honor during transitions and meals, and various other ways that are relevant to each class!

Additionally, each classroom will include birthday panels that celebrate the uniqueness of each individual child through a self-portrait or photograph. Each child will be involved in creating or decorating his own birthday panel, as able depending on the age group. The birthday panels will be given to the children at the end of the school year as a special keepsake of the child's classroom experience.

Please respect this plan by saving cookies, cupcakes, or other traditional birthday foods for your child's celebration at home. Do not bring these to school on your child's birthday. We want to save families the time and expense it takes to provide birthday party food and paper goods at school. An extra benefit is that we have cut down on the number of times children are exposed to sugary treats that some families wish to avoid. We promise that our birthday plan will honor your child in a special way!

Also please note that invitations to birthday parties may **not** be distributed at school. Guest lists are often appropriately limited to a smaller number than is in the class. Please be sensitive to each child's feelings by delivering the invitations away from school.

Birthday Book Club

To help our library collection grow, parents may make a donation to purchase a book in honor of their child's birthday or half-birthday. The hardcover fiction and non-fiction books are age appropriate and pre-selected to meet the needs of the library. The honoree will be the first to check out the book, which will be delivered to the classroom. While the book must be returned to the library within two weeks, the child will receive a keepsake bookmark. Birthday Book Club orders may be made on the SLDS website.

SCHOOL PICTURES

School photographs, both individual and class, are taken each year. Parents will receive one copy of their child's class picture. Individual pictures and additional class pictures may be purchased. See schedule below:

Threes Classes through Kaleidoscope TK – Individual portraits and class pictures in fall;

Infant/Toddler and Twos Classes – Individual portraits in spring and class pictures in fall.

Black and white face shots of our children are offered annually as a part of our SLDS Spring Picnic fundraiser. These are taken by parents, teachers, and volunteers who donate their time and talent to the project. We take great care to include every child in the school and apologize in advance if absence or other interference prohibits your child's photo from being taken.

CHILDREN'S ENRICHMENT CLASSES

St. Luke's offers optional Ballet, Tae Kwon Do, and Soccer Shots enrichment classes. The minimum age requirements are 3 (as of September 1) for ballet and Soccer Shots, and 3½ (as of September 1) for Tae Kwon Do. Priority registration is offered to children enrolled in Luke's Place Full-day classes; enrollment is opened to SLDS part-day students if space permits. Forms for ballet and Tae Kwon Do may be obtained on the school website; sign up for Soccer Shots on their website, www.soccershots.org. Children must be enrolled in Threes or PreK classes to be eligible for Enrichment Classes.

SongPlay! is an early childhood parent/child interactive music class offered by SLUMC Children's Ministry for infants through preschoolers. For more information, contact their office.

TEACHER GIFTS

Many of our families wish to honor our staff members on occasions like Christmas, birthdays or the end of the school year. Room Parents receive guidelines regarding such gifts for teachers. We respectfully ask that parents follow our guidelines with care and do not exceed the recommendations. Our staff appreciates your kind words and volunteer commitments in support of our school. **Extravagant gifts are not necessary and may cause some families to feel excluded or pressured to give beyond their means.** Thank you for your thoughtful consideration about this sensitive matter.

DONATIONS OF BOOKS AND TOYS

We appreciate the donation of toys and books that your children have outgrown! To donate such items, please see our Resource Coordinator. All products must be approved for safety and suitability for group usage using the guidelines of the Consumer Product Safety Commission before they are placed into classroom inventory by St. Luke's Day School. Books and toys in good, safe condition that cannot be used by the school will be forwarded to the Christian Community Service Center.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR FINANCIAL GIVING

St. Luke's Day School has two major fundraisers each school year. Our annual Book Fair takes place in late fall and primarily supports our library, staff development, and children's scholarships. The Spring Picnic occurs towards the end of the school year and chiefly supports identified areas of major

improvement, as well as classroom resources and children's scholarships. Past spring events have funded new outdoor classroom equipment and design, our classroom environments initiative, and our new children's library.

Parents also enjoy donating to the Teacher Appreciation fund and Support Staff Christmas and End-of-Year Recognition. Opportunities to contribute are identified through our Parent Advisory Council notices. The Teacher Appreciation fund provides lunch for monthly staff meetings and tokens of appreciation for the SLDS staff. The Support Staff donations are divided between Support and Ancillary Teachers who do not have regular classroom assignments.

Read the PAC Fund-jobs information to find out other ways our parents can take part in initiatives that support the school.

ENROLLMENT

REGISTRATION

Registration for the next school year occurs in late January and early February. Registration processing takes place in the following order of priority: returning students, new siblings of returning students, new applicants whose parents are church members, and finally, new applicants from the community.

For the currently enrolled children and their new siblings, applications will be available online in early January. Parents have two to three weeks to submit a completed application along with the Registration Fee and September tuition. The order of application processing is determined by a drawing; please refer to the school calendar for registration dates and deadlines. **We cannot guarantee your first choice**, or that all children will be initially accepted in the program. Siblings and new church members may be placed on the waiting list. If a class is full, the child will be placed in the second or third choice class and put on a waiting list for the first choice. **Registration Fees and September tuition are not refundable once the child is accepted in the program. Last month tuition (May for the SLDS Part-day 9-month program and August for Luke's Place Full-day 12-month program) and Activity/Supply Fees are not refundable once paid.**

Concerning Teacher Requests

Communication between parents, teachers, and administrators is critical for the optimal placement of each child in our program. We welcome parents' written comments about the type of teaching style they feel is best suited for their children. Names of specific teachers will not be considered as there are no guarantees that a teacher will be given the same assignment each year. We also cannot promise to honor requests for friends to be placed together. Written comments should be submitted to the Day School office separately from applications or other forms.

PROGRAM OPTIONS

Two convenient program schedules fall under the umbrella of St. Luke's Day School; nine-month, school year programs called SLDS Part-day and Kaleidoscope TK, and the year-round Luke's Place Full-day.

SLDS Part-day 9-Month Program & Kaleidoscope TK

Children from 6 months – 5 years (by September 1) may be enrolled in our SLDS Part-day program, which runs from September to May.

Infant and Toddler classes meet two or three days per week, Twos classes meet two, three, or five days per week, Threes and PreK classes meet three or five days per week, and Kaleidoscope Transitional Kindergarten meets five days per week.

Daily hours are from 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Monday - Friday.

Luke's Place Full-day 12-Month Program

Luke's Place is made up of Little Luke's Place, for infants, toddlers and two-year-olds, and Big Luke's Place, for Threes, and PreK students. All classes are self-contained. The program runs year-round, September-August, and tuition is a flat monthly fee. Daily hours are 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Please refer to the annual calendar located on our website for days that the LP program is closed.

Kaleidoscope TK Extended Care

Children enrolled in the Day School Kaleidoscope TK extended hours (M-F 7:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.) needing extended care for the afternoon may enroll in the St. Luke's After School program. Visit their website, StLukesAfterSchool.org, for information and registration.

SUMMER AT ST. LUKE'S

In addition to the continuation of our LP full-day program, SLDS part-day summer camp sessions are available. Camp typically runs 10 weeks and is divided into two-week sessions. Registration takes place in March. Programs are as follows (ages are as of September 1 of the upcoming year):

- **Summer Ones** – Age 18-23 Months by September 1
Children may attend one or two days per week.
Regular Infant/Toddler curriculum.
- **Summer Twos** – Age 2 by September 1
Designed to ease the transition between the Infant/Toddler and the two-year-old programs. Children will be introduced to a broad range of experiences with hands-on activities, music and singing, stories, and sensory activities integrated into an age-appropriate themed curriculum.
- **Summer Camp** – Age 3 by September 1 through entering Kindergarten
Each summer we choose a theme, which is explored in depth during weekly sessions. Children experience the adventure of learning through fun, age-appropriate activities. Past summer themes include “Wild about Books,” “Ocean Adventures,” “Let’s Go into the Woods,” and “Our Place in Space.”

POLICY UPDATES

The school reserves the right to change any of the policies included in this handbook at any time. In addition, new policies may be developed as needed. Written notification of changes and updates to policies will be given to parents.

Thank you for choosing St. Luke's Day School.

**May your children's days here be
joyful and enriching
as we *play and learn together!***