

# PARENTS

## FAMILY HANDBOOK

Please read the Family Handbook (separate link) carefully as many important aspects of our work with the families are described there. You are expected to know and follow all the guidelines we have outlined for the parents.

## ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS

### Why are relationships important to quality?

Relationships with each child's family matter! Remember that we work in partnership with parents and family members. Engage in productive, sensitive, and informative dialogue with families to:

- show families that they are valued partners in the education and care of their child/children;
- learn details of a child's home life that will help you better meet the child's needs and interests – race, religion, culture, home language, and family structure;
- pay attention to and use information obtained through discussion with families as you teach and interact with individual children;
- ensure a smooth transition between home and school with special sensitivity to reassure family members who are concerned about leaving children in non-family childcare;
- know and respond to family concerns or questions with curiosity and openness rather than defensiveness or dismissal.

## Parent Orientation

The beginning of each school year is a critical time to get parents and children off to the best start for a successful experience in your class. Detailed procedures for Class Welcome Pages, Visitation Days, Parent Orientation, launching class Shutterfly Share Sites, and Welcoming Calls are issued each year. Familiarize yourself with the many ways we share information about classroom expectations, routines, and rules.

Remember to continue to inform parents regarding classroom issues as needed throughout the year.

## PARENT CONFERENCES

### Conference Schedule

#### Fall: (generally scheduled in October)

Purpose: Getting to know you  
Goal setting  
Laying the groundwork for collaborating in the child's best interest throughout the school year

- Parents will help the teachers "get to know" each child by discussing their thoughts on the child's development, family history, goals for the school year, and other information that will be beneficial to the child's school experience and to the teacher.

- Teachers will share information about the child’s adjustment to school and broad goals for the school year. This is also a good time to review the daily school routine.
- Teachers and parents discuss how the family and the staff handle different aspects of child-rearing, such as discipline, feeding, toileting, and other pertinent issues.
- Remember that this conference is a time to listen as well as talk – a time to establish a relationship of trust with the parents.

### **Mid Year (PreK only)**

Purpose: Progress review  
Applications for Kindergarten; student’s next steps

- Parents and teachers discuss the child’s progress considering PreK is the last year at SLDS for most of the children.

### **Spring: (generally scheduled in April)**

Purpose: Progress review  
Plan for upcoming year

- Parents and teachers will discuss the cognitive, social, emotional, spiritual, and physical development of the child as seen over the course of the school year.
- Parents and teachers will discuss the plans for the summer and upcoming year so that the child will have a smooth transition from one class to the next. The Director or Program Coordinators will be called in for consultation when necessary.

### **Ongoing:**

In addition to these scheduled conferences, parents are encouraged to make an appointment with his/her child’s teacher or the school’s director or assistant director any time they have a question, concern, or idea to share.

A brief, mid-year update on children in part-day Infants-Threes classes is mailed to each family in January or early February, and an end-of-year conference report for all Luke’s Place children is given to parents in August.

### **Hints for Productive Conferences**

- New for 21-22: Conference format may be in-person, virtual (i.e. Zoom or FaceTime), or over the phone.
- Provide a digital conference sign-up on your Shutterfly Share Site at least 10 days prior to conferences. If a parent has a scheduling conflict during your conference times, make special arrangements to meet at another time. If classroom coverage is needed, seek approval from the Staff Systems Coordinator and secure a room booking with the Registrar before confirming the new conference time with the parent.
- Schedule a pre-conference meeting with the Director, Program Coordinator, and/or Assessment Coordinator regarding children who may have need of development support or any other major concern you may have about a child.
- Always aim to begin and end conferences on a positive note.
- Parent teacher conference forms are provided for all conferences. Make sure one is completed, printed, and signed at the end of each conference. Digital signatures are acceptable. Originals are filed in the child’s folder at the end of the school year.
- Parenting articles are available for certain developmental milestones – potty training, going to big school, language development, etc. These may be helpful to you in your discussions with the

parents or you may want simply to take advantage of this opportunity to encourage parenting education. See the Director or Program Coordinators for help locating appropriate articles for your age group; all articles must be cleared by the Director before distribution to parents.

- Be prepared!

## **SUGGESTIONS TO OFFER FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

### **Support**

Parents may: (apply COVID-19 restrictions as necessary)

- Offer to help the teachers by preparing materials for classroom activities. Simple things can be done at home. For example, gather dress-ups or other props to change the dramatic play center, or bring the ingredients for a class cooking project (**dress-up and cooking projects are on-hold during protective practice**).
- Participate in volunteer activities that support the program, like the annual Book Fair.
- Talk to the teachers everyday – keep the lines of communication open.
- Attend all parent conference opportunities to share hopes and goals and listen to what the teachers have learned about the child.
- Volunteer to read stories to the children before pick-up (**parent readers are on-hold during protective practice**).
- Provide food/decorations/party favors for class parties (signup sheets on Shutterfly Share Sites)

### **Parent Enrichment**

- Invite to a parenting education session (SLDS PEP Talks).
- Offer educational practices to try at home.
- Highlight information about child development and education, as well as school news.

### **Organizational Roles**

- Invite a parent or two to serve as the class room parent/s. The teachers will ask one or two parents to assist in communicating with the other parents in the class about school functions.
- Encourage sign-ups to organize a class party or volunteer to help at other events.
- Join a PAC committee to help organize a school-wide event or area of school enrichment.
- Make phone calls as needed for the teacher or the room parent.

### **Follow Up At Home**

- Encourage each parent to take time to talk to the child about his day at school.
- Encourage participation in school events and other community activities that support the school experience.
- Emphasize the value of reading to the child every day,

## **PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

### **Job Descriptions / Information**

**Chairman:** Oversees council; works closely with the Director.

### **Birthday Book Club:**

Coordinates the Birthday Book Club program. Processes order forms, works with parents to choose each

child's book, attaches book plates, deliver books (already checked out to the child) to the classroom on the child's birthday.

**Book Bags:**

Oversees the creation, distribution, and maintenance of the PreK book bags.

**Book Fair:**

Oversees the planning and execution of our annual Book Fair, which takes place in late fall, usually the week after Thanksgiving. A large committee, with chairmen for different areas, works on the Book Fair. In addition to a wonderful selection of books, there is a donation table (books donated to the St. Luke's library), photos with Santa, special events, and children's activities in the evenings. Class projects are auctioned off in non-gala years (see Fundraisers below).

The Book Fair committee depends on support from teachers to help make this event successful. The teachers are asked to attend at least one night of Book Fair so they can be available to parent shoppers for book recommendations. All teachers are required to attend the night of the school-wide open house (Grandparents' Night).

Funds raised at the Book Fair are used for the purchase of books for the children's library, classroom materials, and staff development.

**Church Liaison/Secretary:**

A Church member who attends the Children's Ministries Council meetings, and is a "voice" for the Day School. This member also takes minutes at the PAC meetings and emails meeting notices.

**Fund Jobs:**

Organizes the small fundraising projects. Distributes information for supporting the school via grocery rebate programs (such as Kroger and Randall's), Box Tops for Education, and researches other small fundraising opportunities.

**Transportation Day/Here Trips:**

Working closely with the Facilities, Events and Resources Manager, the Chair will oversee the school's Transportation Day. The Facilities, Events and Resources Manager maintains a list of established contacts, and the Chair may also add new contacts to the list. The Chair will coordinate all communication with vehicles owners, enlist parent volunteers, and manage event day set-up in close coordination with the Facilities, Events and Resources Manager. The Chair will serve as hostess for other Here Trip presenters when needed. **(Indoor Here Trips are on hold during protective practice.)**

**Hospitality:**

Will work to welcome new families and help them integrate into the SLDS community. On behalf of PAC, send notes of congratulations (births) or condolences (deaths) to SLDS families.

**Library:**

Oversees the committee that helps the SLDS Librarian by re-shelving books and processing new books that are donated during the Book Fair.

**Busy Parents:**

Coordinates meetings and activities for parents working outside the home (open to all parents, Luke's Place Full-day and SLDS Part-day).

**Parenting Center:**

Coordinates PEP Talks programs that feature speakers who address parenting, child development, and other interesting topics. This committee is also responsible for publicizing and implementing each program. This committee relies on the teachers to help with publicity, reminding parents of upcoming

programs. Teachers are welcome to attend any program, and may receive in-service training hours for most programs.

**Pictures & Screenings:**

Oversees all aspects of individual and class pictures. Creates schedules, collects photo orders, and escorts classes to and from photo site. Oversees volunteers who escort small groups of children (PreK and some 3s) to and from on-site screenings for speech and language, vision, and hearing. Volunteers supervise children while they wait for screening; teachers stay in the classroom with the rest of their class.

**Room Parents:**

Oversees the training of room parents. Updates and distributes the room parent guidelines so that parties, gifts, etc. are more uniform across classes and age levels. Communicates with room parents about upcoming events as needed.

**Spring Picnic:**

Oversees the Spring Picnic, with chairmen for different areas of the event. This committee depends on teachers to help make this event successful. Classroom projects and/or activity booths may be expected. Teachers receive complimentary dinner at the event. During the pandemic entertainment has switched to a concert.

Funds raised at the Spring Picnic go toward major purchases for school improvement or enrichment, as well as The Ella Hawes Endowed Scholarship Fund. Past items purchased include Outdoor Classroom equipment, new tables and chairs, classroom aquariums, PreK HATCH computers, the Classroom Environments Initiative, and teacher technology tools like our iPads and iPods.

**Teacher Appreciation:**

Plan and implement the PAC monthly lunches for staff, as well as special luncheons during in-service at the start and end of school and at Christmas. (Individual pick-up lunches are being provided during protective practice.)

**St. Luke's Safety Policy for Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults (Regarding School Volunteers and Visitors – currently on hold during protective practice)**

In accordance with the Safe Sanctuary program of the United Methodist Church, St. Luke's has initiated a training and registration plan for all volunteers who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults.

**All Day School volunteers must be approved and registered by our church before they can volunteer on our campus in any capacity.** The registration process includes acknowledgement of having read a packet of information, a clear criminal history check, a signed orientation statement, and any other documentation as requested by the church.

When the initial registration process is complete, teachers will receive a list of registered volunteers. The list will be updated as necessary during the school year.

Once a volunteer has been registered, that person will remain on the list each school year as long as they complete an annual renewal form.

Teachers **may not** have volunteer readers, party helpers, or any other adult volunteers in the classrooms unless they are registered. Please refer the parents with questions to the office.

All short-term visitors to the classrooms must sign in and wear a visitor name tag. Examples include a grandparent visiting from out of town who is joining the child for lunch, a dad who does not volunteer regularly but is coming for Dads Breakfast, or a teacher from another school that is observing in the

classroom. Please be sure that sign-in sheets and name tags are available in the classroom for events such as class parties and Dad's breakfasts.

Both teachers must remain present in the classroom when a volunteer or visitor is present unless otherwise approved by the Program Coordinator.

Any parent questions regarding the volunteer registration process should be referred to the Day School office.

### **Transition to the Next Class or Next School**

Please assist families when the time comes to transition to the child's next class or school.

When a parent asks you for guidance about our school, **do not recommend** specific SLDS teachers for the child's next class. This is frustrating to the parent since we do not take parent requests for specific teachers. Instead, talk to the parent about teaching qualities the child responds well to – and, again, do not name DS teachers who have these qualities.

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. Refer the parents to administrators as needed to provide basic general information on enrollment procedures and practices, visiting opportunities, and school options.

Classroom teachers will complete recommendation forms with parent permission as requested by school to which children are applying. The Staff Systems Coordinator manages the teacher recommendation process. Most schools have switched to an online system, so parents are asked to use her email ([rgreen@stlukesmethodist.org](mailto:rgreen@stlukesmethodist.org)) instead of individual teacher emails. If teachers receive a request from a school, they must forward to the Staff Systems Coordinator immediately. All paper recommendation forms delivered to teachers must be given to the Staff Systems Coordinator, as well.

We have asked parents to request teacher recommendations at least 2 weeks prior to the due date and no later than December 9. The Staff Systems Coordinator will give them to you once received. Please complete the form in pencil and return to the Staff Systems Coordinator promptly as there are several steps to be completed before it is approved and submitted to the requesting school. A copy will be kept in the child's file in the office.

### **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 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.

If you witness inappropriate conduct by an adult, including fellow staff members, please report this immediately and directly to the Director or Assistant Director.