



# **FAMILY HANDBOOK**

## **2025-2026 School Year**

# St. Luke's Day School

## FAMILY HANDBOOK

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# Welcome to the New School Year!

Welcome to our school family! Whether your first year, your fifth, or even your tenth year at St. Luke's Day School, we are so glad you have chosen us for your child/ren's early education and care! Each year we review our policies and procedures and issue an updated family handbook. Consider the SLDS Family Handbook your resource for answers to many important questions. Please take time to review it and keep it handy. Our administrators are here to help should you need further information or assistance.

## OUR PROGRAM

### OUR MISSION

We are a Christ-centered early childhood program where educators and parents teach and strengthen each child's social, emotional, 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 early childhood educators are life-long learners who foster life-long learning in children; they are expected to keep abreast of research developments, while also learning continuously from the families and communities we serve.

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

The National Association for the Education of Young Children's position concerning developmentally appropriate practice informs implementation of our curriculum.

Developmentally appropriate practice follows three core considerations. (with consideration for social, cultural, linguistic, and historical contexts) In short:

- **Commonality:** Knowing the current research and understandings regarding the processes of child development and learning that apply to all children;
- **Individuality:** Knowing the characteristics and experiences unique to each child; individual assets and strengths that contribute to the learning environment; and,
- **Context:** Knowing what is socially and culturally important for each child, each educator, and the program as a whole (with emphasis on family life and school 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 engaged 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 manipulatives, math, writing, book corner, sensory table, chapel, and computer, and give children opportunities to enhance skills, make choices, solve problems, and experience autonomy while interacting with teachers and peers
- Daily “Circle Times” or “Together Times” to allow participation in group activities such as listening to stories, singing songs, or sharing ideas while building vocabulary, hearing correct language, and developing concepts
- Care 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 regarding classroom activities. Please let us know if English is your family’s second language. If you would like 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 and tablets is limited to approved developmentally appropriate programming.

## Specialty Classes

St. Luke’s Day School offers the following specialty classes which enhance individual classroom curriculum. The frequency is one or two times per week, depending on the number of days your child attends. Each area below is led by teacher specialists in the designated area of curriculum.

Music – all ages, Infants through Kaleidoscope TK

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

STEAM Labs indoors and outdoors – 3s, PreK, and Kaleidoscope TK

Early Literacy Lab – PreK and Kaleidoscope TK

Early Literacy Consultations –Threes, PreK, TK

## CLASS SPACES, WELCOMING LEARNING PLACE

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*. (*Reggio-Emilia-Approach*)

In 2012, we began an initiative to reenvision 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 including 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 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 and are recertified annually.

SLDS joins the Nature Explore network in a 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 national network of organizations. 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 designed 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 best 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 ensure 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 <https://glasscock.rice.edu/school-literacy-culture>. 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, Assessment Coordinator, and Program Coordinator to make informal assessments throughout the school day as children participate in classroom activities. Therapists or other specialists are hired for more formal assessments such as speech, language, hearing, and vision screenings. The state of Texas requires hearing and vision screenings for children aged 4 and older.

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.
- 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 two to 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 part-day younger classes and all 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 in May. 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 or therapist, we ask that the school be informed. We would like to establish regular opportunities to communicate with the parents and outside professionals 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.

### **Supporting Families of Children Who Receive a Diagnosis**

We at St. Luke's Day School believe in supporting each child's individual progress, which may include a child who presents differently or who has received an official diagnosis. Once a confirmed diagnosis has

been identified, we ask the parents to begin regular meetings with our Assessment Coordinator. Our Assessment Coordinator's role is to support parents, teachers, and, if needed, therapists, as we help create a triangle of support around the child for school success. At this time, a *Collaborative Agreement* will be offered. For more information, please contact the Day School's Assessment Coordinator.

## 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 Credential, and experience in early childhood education. \*At the discretion of the Director, teachers may be in the process of completing a degree or CDA certification. These teachers are assigned Shepherds, which are mentor teachers.

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

Continuing education is a high priority for our staff. All staff members are required to obtain at least 24 hours of training each year. Through weekly staff meetings, age-level coordination meetings, and a variety of seminars and workshops, our staff often exceeds that requirement. 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. These professional development opportunities are thanks in part to the annual SLDS Book Fair and generous fundraising efforts of our SLDS 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. Parents may request to review staff training records and training curriculum by contacting the Administration Manager.

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

<b>Lambs</b> (FD infants)	1:3 ratio	<b>Twos</b>	
		2 years	1:6 ratio
<b>Bunnies, Penguins, and Honeybees</b> (FD toddlers)	1:5 ratio		
<b>Kangaroos</b> (PD infants)		<b>Threes</b>	
6-11 Months	1:3 ratio	3 years	1:8 ratio
<b>Bears, Ponies</b> (PD toddlers)		<b>Pre-K</b>	1:9 ratio
12-23 Months	1:5 ratio	<b>Kaleidoscope TK</b>	1:10 ratio

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



## **LINKING WITH THE COMMUNITY**

The SLDS administrative staff maintains 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. We maintain a current list of child and family support services available in the community. The Director, Assistant Director, and Program Coordinators 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. A referral list of local consultants recommended by our SLDS families and staff is available upon request.

The Nick Finnegan Counseling Center is an outreach of SLUMC and includes counseling, play-group therapy, and additional services for children and families.

Our community partners, which include local retailers and sports organizations, offer sponsorship for SLDS fundraising events or donate items to support our fundraising success.

Transportation Day is a fun annual event where folks from all around the community bring vehicles to show our students. Examples include the Houston Fire Department, Texas Children's Hospital, West University Recycling Center, and many more. "Here Trips" for our 3s, PreK, and TK students are another way our children learn about the community (see page 18).

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 SLDS families.

## **TUITION AND OTHER FEES**

Tuition and fees are due on the following schedule:

At enrollment:	Annual Registration Fee and September 2025 Tuition Deposit
5/5/2025:	May 2026 Tuition Deposit for SLDS Part-day program
8/5/2025:	August 2026 Tuition Deposit for Luke's Place Full-day program
9/3/2025:	Annual Activity/Supply Fee
10/1/2025– 4/1/2026:	Monthly Tuition for SLDS Part-day program
10/1/2025– 7/1/2026:	Monthly Tuition for Luke's Place Full-day program

Tuition payments are due on the first of each month. Most families are set up for automatic payments; we do not issue monthly invoices.

There are three ways to pay tuition: ACH transaction from bank account, credit card, or personal check or money order. We do not accept cash for tuition. Checks should be made payable to "St. Luke's Day School." Monthly tuition payments made via ACH are eligible for a 2% discount. The 2% discount may also be applied if a check for payment in full - entire school year - is received by September 30.

Parents choosing to pay via ACH or credit card submitted a payment page at enrollment. If you wish to change your payment method 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:

- 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.**
- A late charge of twenty dollars (\$20) will be assessed for tuition paid after the **fifth** of the month **and** for returned checks and declined ACH/credit card transactions.
- Tuition is defined as payment for the child's assigned class. Tuition deposits and fees are **not refundable** and **non-transferrable** to another child in the family or to another month of the school year. This includes the registration fee, activity/supply fee, first and last month's tuition (May for Part-day and August for Luke's Place Full-day), which were paid before the start of the school year.

Questions about tuition may be addressed to the Administration 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 submit a request using the webform on the "Welcome to the 2025-2026 School Year" page on our website. 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, 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
- Receipt of Family Handbook Acknowledgement

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 school, parents should inform the Registrar, **in writing, a minimum of 30 days before the date of withdrawal**. The school needs time to fill openings so we can continue to meet our financial obligations. Tuition deposits (September 2025 for all programs, and May 2026 for Part-day or August 2026 for Full-day) that have been paid in advance are forfeited and non-transferable to other children in the family or other months of the school year.

## 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 or Assistant Director.

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 and Assistant Director have an open-door policy; parents are welcome to meet with them 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. 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. As part of our accrediting organization, Cognia, families and educators receive an annual survey developed by Cognia. Also, a 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.

Additionally, the Day School Director, Assistant Director, and Program Coordinators meet regularly 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, Assistant 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 main office (EW127) and are accessed only by office personnel (director, assistant director, program coordinators, registrar, and administration manager) and the children's teachers. The teachers also keep enrollment records with parent's contact information, along with ongoing assessment tools such as 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.

### **LICENSING AND ACCREDITATION**

St. Luke's Day School is licensed by the Child Care Regulation division of Texas Health and Human Services. More information may be found on their website:

<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/safety/child-care>

St. Luke's Day School is accredited by Cognia. More information may be found on their website:

<https://www.cognia.org/>

## 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 lunch with a drink for the noon meal. All foods should be ready to eat - fruit peeled and cut up, etc. (See page 30 for preparation guidelines.) 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 TK 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* on page 31.

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 online or in the office for all families (see page 26 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 (or Show and Share) and books or educational items that are suitable for curriculum
- naptime loveys (stuffed animals, blankets, blanket animals)

**Please mark 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 may be purchased at our online store;

purchased mats will be delivered to the classroom. Child Care Licensing regulations for storage, disinfecting, and fire safety require the use of this specific type of rest mat, and that mats be must replaced if they become torn. 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.) Additionally, weighted blankets and weighted sleep sacks are prohibited by Texas Child Care Licensing.

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 on Monday morning, and 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. A luggage tag with each child's name is provided for identification. In addition to the bag, children are permitted to bring a small lunch kit. If your child's school bag or ID tag is lost, replacements may be requested in the school office.

## **WHAT NOT TO BRING TO SCHOOL**

No pretend guns, or war toys are allowed. Other prohibited items include money, electronic devices including tablets, valuable jewelry, makeup, candy, and gum. Children may not bring backpacks (except Kaleidoscope TK), rolling suitcases, or other totes for personal belongings. Children aged 2 and under may not wear necklaces of any kind (choking and strangulation hazard). Children aged 3 and older may wear Mardis Gras style beads during a party or parade only. 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**

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

SLDS 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 insect 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 Luke's Place full-day classes may send sunscreen or insect repellent, in lotion form only, to be applied in the late afternoon. Permission slips, available in the office and 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—7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.—except for brief periods at high traffic drop-off and pick-up times.

At the beginning of the school year, all families will be issued three secure access key tags. When the Activity Center entrance is locked, parents and caregivers will show the key tag to the security guard and/or Welcome Desk receptionist to gain access to the secure area. The tags are for identifying approved entry and do not unlock doors. Additional key tags may be obtained at the Welcome Desk as needed.

Do not use the Main Entrance expecting entrance to the classrooms located in the Johnson Building, and do not park on the Edloe side of the building expecting entrance to the school through the outdoor classroom or the Edloe door. For safety and security reasons, teachers have been instructed not to open locked doors or outdoor classroom gates unless they must be used for **emergency exit**.

**The Activity Center is the only entrance parents should use for all classrooms.**

## **Luke's Place Full-day (FD) Class Participants**

Arrival begins at 7:30 a.m. Your child should be taken to their classroom and left with supervising teachers. Any special instructions for the day should be in writing for best communication. If the class is not in the room, check the "Where Are We?" sign on the door or ask the Welcome Desk receptionist for the location of the class. Deliver your child to the teachers there.

## **SLDS Part-day (PD) Class Participants**

Bring your child to his/her classroom between 9 and 9:15 a.m. and leave with supervising teachers. **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 wait 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.

## **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 we appreciate contact with your child's teacher regarding special plans for the day.

All doors lock at 9:30 a.m. For arrival at or after that time, take your child to the Welcome Desk in the Activity Center, show your SLDS key tag for entrance to the secure area, and deliver your child to the classroom. If your child's classroom is in the Johnson Building, check with the Welcome Desk receptionist for the procedure to access those classrooms while doors are locked.

## **Other Important Arrival Information**

Be aware that all students of SLDS are small, in age and stature, and extra care and time must be taken at all times. Please **slow down** and drive cautiously through the parking lot, and park in a parking space. Do not park in porte-cocheres or along curbs. Do not use handicapped spaces unless you have proper permits. 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.

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 at 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. Written communications and children's art will be available for parents/caregivers to pick up. Please check the location for your child's classroom daily as some information may be time sensitive.

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 office.



When arrangements are made for your child to go home with a friend, a note to the child's teacher is required and that parent must be added to the pickup list.

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

- SLDS Part-day & Kaleidoscope TK classes: 2:15 - 2:30 p.m.
- Luke's Place & TK Full-day classes: by 5:30 p.m.

If you wish to pick your child up early, such as before nap or for a doctor's appointment, be sure to make sure the teachers are informed. Show your SLDS key tag for entrance to the secure area.

**Please note our Late Fee policy:** If you know that you are going to be detained, please notify the office (713-402-5030) immediately so that we can reassure your child. Teachers will take children to the Activity Center lobby after the expected pick-up time has ended (2:30 p.m. or 5:30 p.m.), sign them into the late pickup binder, and wait until the child is picked up. Parents or caregivers will sign the child out and note the time of pickup. There is an overtime charge per child of **\$1.00 per minute**, which will be billed to your account. 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 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:

- 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 Sharing Days are planned, including canned food donations at Thanksgiving, a special Christmas donation, canned food ("Souper Bowl") in January, and others 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\*

Our staff is trained in Conscious Discipline, a method that emphasizes empowering adults to create safe, connected, problem solving schools and homes. Learn more at <https://consciousdiscipline.com/>.

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
- 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 Health and Human 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**

During the warm weather months, children will participate in "wet and wonderful" play that may include water activities. Children are carefully supervised during water play. Guidelines from Child Care Licensing 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.

### **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 and adhere to the procedures in this handbook.

Prior to the start of school, there are two events to help ease the parent and transition to SLDS and/or a new classroom. First, we offer children, with a parent, a chance to visit the classroom at “Little Learners Meet the Teachers.” The focus is on the child, giving them the opportunity to explore the room and meet their teachers along with some new classmates. Next, an important Parent Orientation & Expo is held the Sunday before the first day school to provide further information and to answer parents' questions about the program. Parents receive an overview of classroom procedures and a classroom information packet from the teachers. These events are not mandatory, but are very helpful for all families, whether they are new or returning. Additionally, parents will receive a link to their child's Class Welcome Page with information and resources specific to the classroom and age group.

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.

Throughout the school year, parents of enrolled children are welcome any time during operational hours. Please use the main entrance and check in with the receptionist at the Welcome Desk.

## **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 their children.

We encourage each family to share your suggestions, comments, and goals for your child. They are important, and they matter. 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. Daily schedules and lesson plans are posted digitally and inside the classroom.

The teachers in each SLDS class will communicate regularly with class parents via a platform called REMIND. Information sent via REMIND includes class news and reminders, photos, and links to class sign-ups such as parent-teacher conferences, party helpers, and other volunteer opportunities, and more. The platform is also used for school-wide reminders, notices, and emergency communications.

REMIND was launched at the start of the 2023-24 school year and we appreciate your patience as we continue to learn ways to utilize this helpful communication system.

A “Today We” notice is posted digitally on REMIND 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 in the class communication crate. Please read them as they are usually of a timely nature.

Additionally, classroom calendars, supplemental notes, St. Luke’s Day School on Instagram, and school-wide “Need to Know” email updates are offered to keep you informed. Refer to the Current Family Information page on our website for the school calendar, family handbook, and forms that may need to be updated during the school year. Please let us know if translation or interpretation of communications in a language other than English is needed.

Direct conversations in person, by phone, or classroom email, are the preferred methods of communication for parents and teachers. **Teachers are prohibited from using cell phones or other means of electronic communication while supervising children.** Do 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 REMIND by other parents or persons with access to this password-protected platform. 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 Luke’s Place Full-day or SLDS part-day classes. 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.
- Luke’s Place Full-day program Infants to Threes have fall and spring conferences; end-of-year report sent home in August.
- SLDS Part-day PreK/TK program has fall, mid-year, and spring conferences.
- Luke’s Place Full-day PreK has fall, mid-year, and spring conferences, and an end of year report sent home in August.

Following 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 Director or Assistant 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.

Help us to help you by following the procedures for teacher recommendations outlined below, including all schools to which you are applying.

### **Teacher Recommendation Forms**

As families take steps to choose their child's next school, teacher recommendations are often part of the process. To request a recommendation, the following procedure has been established:

1. Parents submit an online request at <https://stlukesdayschool.org/trr> as soon as possible.
2. School administrators will facilitate form completion by the student's teacher/s, SLDS administrative approval, and submission to each school to which you are applying. SLDS is aware of each school's deadlines and will process every recommendation in a careful and timely manner. To give classroom teachers adequate time to evaluate the student, recommendations are completed closer to the receiving school's deadline date, not the date that the request is made.
3. Recommendations can only be completed by the current year classroom teachers.
4. You may confirm completion of submission by emailing [technology@stlukesdayschool.org](mailto:technology@stlukesdayschool.org). We maintain a copy of the teacher recommendation in your child's enrollment file.

### **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 legal documentation including custody and visitation agreements. Documentation must be updated as changes occur.

St. Luke's Day School will comply with all valid court orders signed by a judge; parents are required to submit updated documentation if there are changes. Copies of court orders and other legal documentation are kept in the child's file.

### **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 case of an emergency.

### **Requests for SLDS Staff to Provide After-Hours Childcare**

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. **PLEASE NOTE:** SLDS teachers are restricted from after-hours care for children who are currently enrolled in their classrooms.

### **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 (Safe Sanctuary)**

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 completing the online application and agreeing to a criminal background check. Registered volunteers must repeat a renewal application annually. The Safe Sanctuary initial and renewal applications are linked on your class welcome page, as well as under Current Family Information on our website.

Volunteers who have completed the Safe Sanctuary process for SLUMC are automatically approved for SLDS. For school volunteers interested in becoming authorized for church opportunities, please be aware additional steps will be needed first.

## **PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL AND COMMITTEES**

St. Luke's Day School has an active Parent Advisory Council that enhances the quality of our educational program. 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 occur during the evenings as well as daytime hours.

The committees are:

- Birthday Book Club
- Book Bags
- Book Fair
- Fundraising
- Hospitality
- Library
- Busy Parents
- PEP Talks
- Pictures & Tours
- Publicity
- Room Parents
- Spring Picnic
- Teacher Appreciation
- Transportation Day

## **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,
- Coming to campus under the influence of alcohol or drugs; *if this is suspected, it is our duty not to release a child to a person who is demonstrating alcohol or drug impaired behavior,*

- 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 main office. For more information about childcare regulations and other services for children, see the Texas Health & Human Services website: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/> or call the state office at 512-424-6500. For any additional inquiries, contact the local Child Care Regulation office at 866-885-2247. The address is 1330 East 40<sup>th</sup> Street, Houston, TX 77022.

To access St. Luke's Day School's compliance history, visit [https://childcare.hhs.texas.gov/Child\\_Care/](https://childcare.hhs.texas.gov/Child_Care/) and click on "Information for Parents." Search by provider for "St. Luke's Weekday Ministries." Our operation number is 223116.

There will be no retaliation against families if parents exercise their right to file a complaint.

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. Protocols 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 AUX 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 and 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 Luke's Place Full-day program, the two or three Lead Teachers are with the children from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Sometimes, the opening and closing Lead Teacher works with a Support Teacher from 7-8:30 a.m. and from 3:30-5:30 p.m. In our SLDS Part-day program, the Lead Teachers are in the classrooms for the scheduled day of 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Support teachers, also known as Campus Champs, as well as our On Call Teachers are well-trained and valued SLDS team members. They may also be assigned for substituting in both full-day and part-day classes.

Under normal circumstances, children stay with the same teachers from the start of school year (August or September) to May in our SLDS Part-day program and September through August in our Luke's Place 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 call the parents and care for that child until the parent or authorized adult can arrive. We ask that the child be picked up as soon as possible, and no longer than an hour after the parent has been notified. **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. The Communicable Disease list of reportable diseases is available in the office and online here: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/idps-home/school-communicable-disease-chart>.

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 must submit an Allergy Action Plan form signed by a doctor and the parent. Copies of the completed form will be kept in the classroom, in the office, and with any rescue medications. 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 inside the classroom. All common areas, such as Outdoor Classrooms, the Children's Chapel, and the Children's Library are allergy alert areas. No food of any kind may be consumed in these 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.

**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 office and on our website <https://stlukesdayschool.org/3d-flip-book/the-potty-training-handbook/>.

## 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, the Local Emergency Contact listed on the child's Emergency Card will be contacted.
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 emailed to the school with the specific administering directions relative to your child's age and weight.

All medications **must** be brought to the Activity Center Welcome Desk 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). Medication with expired dates will be discarded.

**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.

## IMMUNIZATIONS AND WELL CHECKS

As required by the Texas Department of State Health Service, all students must have proper documentation of required immunizations or official affidavits of exemption to attend St. Luke's Day School. The schedule of required immunizations for the state of Texas may be found at <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/immunizations/school>.

Texas Child Care Licensing 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 Medical 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. Documentation of vision and hearing screenings must be provided for children who are not screened on out campus.

## CLOSING DUE TO WEATHER

It is possible that we may have to close due to bad weather conditions. Unless you are specifically notified otherwise, the school 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 REMIND "urgent" text messages and checking the SL website updates.

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 and HPD officers who maintain a presence 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 14 for further details)

## PARKING LOT SAFETY

For the safety of our SLDS 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 increase visibility of children and adults as they cross through the parking lot to the building.
- Do not park in spaces reserved for handicapped individuals unless you have the proper permit.

***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.***

If you witness a suspicious or dangerous situation on campus, please don't hesitate to report it to the school office (713-402-5030). We will pass the report on to the proper church and/or law enforcement authorities.

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS**

In accordance with Texas Child Care Licensing regulations, the school practices the following emergency preparedness drills: Fire Drills (monthly) and Severe Weather Drills (quarterly). Additionally, administrators review intruder alert, lockout, and lockdown procedures with teachers quarterly 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: REMIND text alert, a group e-mail notification, 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 automobiles, 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.

## **ALERT**

In case of suspicious yet unconfirmed dangerous activity in proximity to our campus, we will initiate Alert campus status. This is not a Lockout or Lockdown. Administrators will inform teachers of such activities in the area, so that the teachers' awareness will be heightened. Activities will proceed as normal. In case of confirmation from our security team of dangerous activity in the area, we will move to Lockout or Lockdown status as appropriate for the situation.

## **LOCKOUT**

In the event that we are alerted of a confirmed dangerous situation in our area, St. Luke's will implement a Lockout response. During a Lockout, if any classes are outside, they will immediately come inside and return to their classroom. 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 near 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.

## **LOCKDOWN**

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 or email 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>. Extra snacks are kept on hand if needed.

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 at room temperature. We are unable to heat any lunches.

Child Care Licensing requires that parents 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.

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.

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	2 Year Olds	3 year olds	4 year olds
<b><u>Choking hazards</u></b> <b>Dried fruit</b> (raisins, apricots, etc.), <b>nuts</b> of any type, <b>sticky foods</b> (gummy fruits, Fruit by the Foot, etc.), <b>popcorn, raw peas, hard candy, marshmallows</b>	DO NOT SEND	DO NOT SEND	DO NOT SEND	
<b>Hard/crunchy fruits &amp; vegetables</b> (e.g. apples, carrots, celery, etc.)	Cut in ¼" dice	Cut in ½" dice	Cut into small bites	
<b>Round foods</b> (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	
<b>Goosey foods</b> (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
<b>Vegetable, Fruit, or Juice</b>			
Serve two different vegetables and/or fruits to equal	¼ cup	½ cup	¾ cup
<b>Grains and Breads</b>			
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
<b>Meat / Protein</b>			
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	½ cup
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 and their families including Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Mom's Bible Study, Men's Life, and Children's and Adult's Choirs. All children and their families are cordially invited to attend. Please contact the St. Luke's UMC website [www.stlukesmethodist.org](http://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

<b>Infants/Toddlers</b>	<b>Parties:</b> Christmas, Easter Egg Hunt/Party, End of Year
<b>Twos</b>	<b>Parties:</b> Halloween (no costumes), Christmas, Easter Egg Hunt/Party, End of Year  <b>Special Event: Family and Friends Valentine Breakfast</b> (no children's party or cards)
<b>Threes</b>	<b>Parties:</b> Halloween (wear costume on Parade Day only), Christmas, Valentine's (please note card exchange instructions from teachers), Easter Egg Hunt/Party, End of Year  <b>Special Event: Family and Friends Rodeo Breakfast</b> (February)
<b>PreK</b>	Halloween (wear costume on Parade Day only), Christmas, Valentine's (please note card exchange instructions from teachers), Easter Egg Hunt/Party  <b>Special Events:</b> Thanksgiving Feast, Kite Flying with Dad, Mother's Day Tea, End of Year PreK Capers
<b>Kaleidoscope TK</b>	<b>Parties:</b> Halloween (wear costume on Parade Day only), Christmas, Valentine's (please note card exchange instructions from teachers), Easter Egg Hunt/Party  <b>Special Events:</b> Thanksgiving Feast, Nativity Play Family Preview, Kite Flying with Dad, Mother's Day Tea, End of Year Kaleidoscope Celebration and Field Day
<b>School-Wide</b>	<b>Special Events:</b> 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***!

Throughout the day the child will be valued as a VIP through holding special jobs, being given places of honor during transitions and meals, sung *Happy Birthday* to during large group time, and various other ways that are relevant to each class!

Additionally, each classroom will include a birthday canvas that celebrates the uniqueness of each individual child through a self-portrait or photograph. Each child will be involved in creating or decorating his own birthday canvas, as able depending on the age group. The birthday canvas 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 are 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 in October. Parents will receive one copy of their child's class picture. Individual pictures and additional class pictures may be purchased directly from the photographer.

*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, Martial Arts, and Soccer Shots enrichment classes. The minimum age requirement is three years old (by September 1) for all classes. Parents will register directly with the provider. Children must be enrolled in Threes, PreK, or TK classes to be eligible for Enrichment Classes. Children in Twos classes who turn three during the school year must wait until Fall 2026 to participate.

## **TEACHER GIFTS**

Many of our families wish to honor our staff members on occasions like Christmas, birthdays or the end of the school year. **Extravagant gifts are not necessary and may cause some families to feel excluded or pressured to give beyond their means.** Room Parents receive and distribute 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 commitment in support of our school. 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 Facilities, Events and Resources Manager. 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, early literacy lab (ELL), story-telling baskets, props, and other items to support literacy development, staff professional development, and tuition assistance for families. The Spring Picnic occurs towards the end of the school year and chiefly supports our outdoor classrooms, as well as tuition assistance and other identified needs.

Families also enjoy donating to the Teacher Appreciation fund to provide monthly staff lunches or treats and small tokens of appreciation. Families may also choose to give to the Christmas and End-of-Year Recognition for Specialists and Campus Champs who are not assigned to specific classrooms. Opportunities to contribute are identified through our Parent Advisory Council notices.

Read the PAC Fundraising 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 SLUMC church members, and 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. 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, third, or fourth choice class and put on a waiting list for the first choice.

Once notified of acceptance, parents will be required to **confirm or decline** their child's enrollment for the school year. Details will be included with registration instructions. **Registration Fees are not refundable once the child is accepted in the program. First month (September) and last month (May for SLDS Part-day and August for Luke's Place Full-day) tuition deposits 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 Registrar or Program Coordinator via email and separately from applications or other forms.

## PROGRAM OPTIONS

Three 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. Please refer to the annual calendar located on our website for program closure dates.

### SLDS Part-day Program

Children from 6 months – 4 years (by September 1) may be enrolled in our SLDS Part-day program, which runs from late August to May.

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

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

### Luke's Place Full-day Program

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

### **Kaleidoscope Transitional Kindergarten (TK)**

Children aged 5 years (by September 1) may be enrolled in our Kaleidoscope TK, which meets five days per week and runs from late August to May. Designed especially for children with summer birthdays.

Daily hours are from 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Monday - Friday.

Space and minimum enrollment permitting, Kaleidoscope TK also has a full-day option, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

### **SUMMER AT ST. LUKE'S**

In addition to the continuation of our LP full-day program, SLDS part-day summer camp is available. Camp typically runs 9-10 weeks and is divided into sessions. Registration takes place in late February or early March. Programs are as follows (ages are as of September 1 of the upcoming school year):

- **Summer Ones** – Age 18-23 Months by September 1  
Children may attend two or three days per week.  
Regular Infant/Toddler curriculum.
- **Summer Camp Play-A-Lot** – Age 2 by September 1 through entering Kindergarten (including TK students)  
Summer Camp Sessions for Part-day students as published.  
Children may attend two, three, or five days per week, depending on age level.  
(Summer Sixes for TK students has both a part- and full-day option.)
- Luke's Place Full-day Classes participate in Summer Camp curriculum through mid-August.

Each summer we provide a safe and fun environment for children to continue *playing and learning together*. Children experience the adventure of learning through a variety of exciting themes and age-appropriate camp activities.

### **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 currently enrolled SLDS families.*

**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*!**