

2009-2010 CHILD CARE PARENT HANDBOOK



**Our Savior Lutheran
Austin, TX**

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OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHILDCARE

Our Savior Lutheran School and Childcare is a special educational endeavor sponsored by Our Savior Lutheran Church. Each enrolled child is viewed as a gift from God and all educational experiences for these precious ones will be based on the saving love of Jesus Christ.

We wish a hearty welcome to all families. These are cherished moments to work with you as partners in providing academic and spiritual nurturing to your children. May God bless all our joint endeavors as we support each other in this developmental process.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Savior Lutheran School and Child Care serves the community as a place where children learn about God's love for them and practice sharing His love as they grow spiritually and academically into caring members of His forever family.

PHILOSOPHY

As a ministry of Our Savior Lutheran Church, Our Savior Lutheran School and Child Care exists to share the love of Christ with children (Mark 16:15-16) so that those children may in turn share Christ with others (1 Peter 2:2, Matthew 21:15-16). We endeavor to provide a program which will develop maximum potential student growth in the faith, academic excellence, social and emotional maturity, and physical development. Our Savior Lutheran School endeavors to provide consistent and thorough instruction in all areas of an early childhood and elementary school curriculum.

Our Savior Lutheran School and Child Care believes that children are a precious gift from God and we will daily endeavor to touch children and families with God's grace so that this very knowledge of unconditional acceptance by their Heavenly Father will become the cornerstone of developing their self-worth. (Matthew 10:9-31)

Our Savior Lutheran School and Child Care is committed to providing a faculty, staff, and total environment which reflects all aspects of this philosophy statement.

Goals of Our Savior Lutheran School and Child Care:

1. To provide a Christian environment of learning which nurtures the child's holistic growth of spiritual, physical, intellectual, social, and emotional development.
2. To minister to each family of the school in regards to their spiritual and physical needs.
3. To develop a partnership with parents in providing a Christian education both at home and at school.
4. To provide an environment for excellence in learning through on-going evaluations.
5. To be an extension of the church and its goals as reflected in the mission statement of the church.

Objectives of Our Savior Lutheran School:

I. The Teacher will...

- A. educate the whole child.
- B. integrate Biblical teachings into all areas of the curriculum.
- C. reflect Law and Gospel in building relationships with students and their family.
- D. develop a means of clearly communicating to parents what is happening in the classroom.
- E. provide the best possible learning environment.
- F. serve as a minister to each child, helping to nurture their love for God.
- G. communicate and model the mission statement of the congregation and school.

II. The Student will...

- A. share God's love by showing support for others and Christian leadership.
- B. witness to others beyond the classroom.
- C. reflect the mission statement of the congregation and school in his/her life.
- D. identify God's work in the world and recognize God's presence in their lives.
- E. use their gifts to bring glory to God.

III. The Congregation, the School and Childcare Ministry Board and school administration will...

- A. integrate school families into the total ministry of the congregation.
- B. assure that school accreditation is maintained.
- C. maintain an atmosphere for excellence in learning through financial and other means of support.
- D. administer the school through policy that stresses excellence.
- D. reflect Law and Gospel in all its actions in order to build Christian relationships.
- E. reflect the mission statement of the congregation and school in its ministry.

IV. The Parent/Family will...

- A. encourage their children in their studies and Christian faith.
- B. support the school and childcare with their prayers, encouragement, and involvement.
- C. work closely with the classroom teacher to provide the best environment for their child.
- D. bring any school issues directly to the person involved.
- E. assume all financial obligations and contact the school as financial concerns arise.

ADMINISTRATION

Organization and Control of Childcare

Our Savior Lutheran Church established the childcare to fill a need of integrating all learning with faith in Jesus Christ. The church has engaged qualified Christian teachers to carry on this work and to meet the objectives of Christian education.

The childcare is overseen by the School and Childcare Ministry Board of Our Savior Lutheran Church. The Board is responsible to the Voters Assembly of the church. The principal/director serves as administrator of the school and childcare and is responsible to the Board.

Questions regarding policies may be addressed to the Principal/Director.

Non-discriminatory Policy

Our Savior Lutheran Childcare admits students of any sex, race, religion, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students in the childcare. It does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national and ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, student aid programs, and any other childcare administered programs.

ENROLLMENT PROCEDURES

Student Financial Aid Policy

Our Savior Lutheran Childcare has no provisions for financial assistance for students in childcare. However, Our Savior Lutheran Childcare does assist and cooperate with any federal, state, or local programs administered through the workplace or college.

Registration Process

The following forms need to be completed and submitted before the start date:

- Enrollment/Photograph Permission Form
- Health Requirement Form
- Family Emergency Care Form
- Guidance & Discipline Policy/Handbook Acknowledgment
- Declaration of Special Needs (if necessary)
- Immunization Record

Tuition and Fees

Tuition is due by the first day of each month.

If payment has not been received by the 10th of the month, a reminder notice will be sent home requesting immediate payment. If that amount is not received by the 25th of the month, the administrator will make a personal contact and a second letter will be sent to inform the parents/guardians that services will be ended on the 1st of the next month unless the account is brought current.

Please make all checks payable to Our Savior Lutheran Child Care. Tuition payments are not tax deductible. Parents may make payments by cash, money orders, check, or credit card. There will be a **\$30.00 fee** charged for each returned check.

Our Savior Lutheran Child Care makes every effort to collect outstanding debts. Outstanding debts that are not resolved at the time of the student's departure from the school are turned over to Financial Control Services.

There is no reduction in the cost of tuition for any of the following: Christmas vacation, spring break, holidays or emergency closings.

A **\$15.00 fee** per child will be charged to you if you arrive between the time of 6:16 and 6:30 p.m. A fee of **\$2.00** per minute will be charged for each minute after 6:30 p.m.

Registration fees

An annual registration fee is payable at the time of re-registration when normally occurs during the summer. **This fee is non-refundable.** . The annual registration fee covers that period of time from August 1 to July 31. No student will be considered registered, nor will their placement be secure, until they have paid their registration fee and have completed all necessary paperwork.

All rates may change at any time subject to Board approval.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Infant Program (6 weeks to one year)

Parents should ensure that the following remain in adequate supply:

1. a supply of diapers
2. one container of wipes
3. one container of diaper rash medication
4. one lightweight blanket

5. change of clothing.
6. formula/milk in labeled bottles
7. baby food

Powders, creams, ointments, and/or lotions must be labeled with the child's full name.

Toddler Programs (12 months to 3 years)

A child entering the Toddler Program (12 months) must be walking, feeding him/herself, and no longer on a bottle. A pacifier may be used at naptime.

Parents should ensure that the following remain in adequate supply:

1. a supply of diapers
2. one container of wipes
3. one container of diaper rash medication
4. one lightweight blanket that fits in a 2 ½ gallon zip lock plastic bag, (Do not bring a large blanket or big pillow), and
5. one change of clothing. Children going through potty training should have available at least five changes of clothing until completely trained.

Powders, creams, ointments, and/or lotions must be labeled with the child's full name.

Before and After School Program

OSL provides a before and afterschool care program for K-5 students enrolled in OSL and in several local Manor and Pflugerville schools. We provide transportation from the public school and the program is open on days when the school is closed for inservice or early release. No student will be considered registered, nor will their placement be secure, until they have paid their non-refundable registration fee and have completed all necessary paperwork.

Summer Program

OSL provides a summer program for students in K-5 including field trips and other special activities on and off campus. Registration for the summer program is held in late spring. **A non-refundable registration fee will be charged for students not currently enrolled OSL school students.**

Curriculum

A curriculum has been developed for all ages. Its purpose is to expose children to a variety of experiences so that language development, social development, emotional development, gross and fine motor skills, and the awareness of the child's special uniqueness as a child of God will be the outcome of the time spent at Our Savior.

Class Size

Our Savior Lutheran Childcare observes the Minimum Guidelines established by the Department of Human Services for class size of each age group. Our Savior reserves the right to combine classes when it is necessary for supervision purposes. In all cases where classes are combined ratios established by the Department of Human Services will be observed.

Children entering the infant/toddler programs must register

Placement into the School Program

Parents of toddlers should understand that their child is not automatically moved into the PK 3 program. The school, not the childcare, officially administers the PK 3 program. Parents who desire their children to enter this program must register with the school. Early registration begins in February or March and parents are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity. The PK 3 classes are certain to reach maximum capacity and once that takes place it will not be possible to place additional children in the program.

Children entering the PK 3 program must be potty trained and three years of age by September 1st.

Child Removal

If after a period of time, a child has not made the adjustment to the childcare program, the director will request a parent-teacher-director conference. At this conference, a plan will be formulated to achieve child/classroom adjustment. If after adopting and implementing this plan, the child cannot adjust to the program, removal may be necessary.

Parent Visits

Parents may visit the childcare center any time during the childcare center's hours of operation to observe their child, the childcare center's operation, and the program activities without prior approval. The center does request that parents and visitors check in at the front office.

Hours

Childcare is available from 7:00 a.m.-6:15 p.m., Monday – Friday for all children ages 6 weeks – 12 years. A late charge, payable upon arrival, is assessed for each child picked up after 6:15 p.m. This charge, outlined under TUTION AND FEES, is located in this handbook. If the child is not picked up by 6:45 p.m., the police department will be contacted as well as the Department of Human Services

Entrance Door Security and Visitors

For security, the west door entrance to the school will remain locked at all times other than three designated time frames with high volume arrivals (7:00-9:00 a.m., 3:15-3:30 p.m. and 5:00-6:15 p.m.) The east door entrance is locked at 5:00 pm. All visitors must check in at the school or childcare office.

Classes and Special Needs

The ability of Our Savior Lutheran Childcare to meet special needs of all children is limited. If your child has a special need, please discuss it with the Director before registering your child. Our Savior Lutheran Childcare reserves the right to deny services when, in our assessment, it is not reasonably possible for us to provide the services. Children will be placed in classes according to age considerations.

Reporting Abuse

Law requires Our Savior to report any reasonable belief that abuse or neglect is taking place.

STUDENT POLICIES AND INFORMATION

Attendance & Late Arrivals

If your child is going to arrive later than 10:00 a.m. you **must** call and advise the school/childcare office of the situation. If your child arrives after his/her lunchtime it will not be possible to provide your child with a lunch. Likewise, children arriving late will still be expected to take a nap with their class.

Public School Students in After School Care

Please contact the office before 2:00 p.m. if your child will not need to be picked up for after school childcare. When your child is absent due to illness, please notify the director and give the nature of the illness.

Biting

Biting is a common problem to group care situations involving toddlers. If another student in the program bites your child, you will be notified. If this is a situation where we are having a particular problem with a particular student, an additional employee will be brought into the room specifically to work with that child to eradicate the behavior. If the behavior cannot be stopped, the biting child may be removed from the program.

Discipline

Discipline is derived from the root meaning of discipleship, which means, “to teach.”

The caregiver will help your child learn to follow directions, develop self-control through boundary setting, and become a responsible group member. This will be accomplished by explaining rules and setting limits appropriate for each age level. The staff will allow choices within limits and re-direct unacceptable behaviors. If necessary the child will be separated from the group for an appropriate length of time and given an explanation of what behaviors were not appropriate and of those behaviors, which will be acceptable as replacements. If habitual behaviors continue, the teacher or principal/director will speak with the child and if improvement is not seen in a reasonable amount of time, parent involvement will become necessary.

Special Events or Activities

1. Water activities are held during the summer months. Information concerning water activities (dates, classes, type and length will be provided on the Summer Enrollment Form. This information will be found in the area of the form marked Field Trips. The majority of water activities involve wading pools, sprinklers, and Slip and Slides for K-5th grade.
2. If animals are kept at the childcare center we:
 - A. Notify parents in writing when animals are present;
 - B. Ensure the animals do not create unsafe or unsanitary conditions;
 - C. Ensure that children do not handle any animal that shows signs of illness, such as lethargy or diarrhea; and
 - D. Ensure that caregivers and children practice good hygiene and hand washing after handling or coming in to contact with an animal and items used by an animal, such as water bowls, and cages.
3. As parents you may view the Minimum Standard Rules and Licensing Reports by visiting the Childcare office and the glass case found near the childcare office.
4. As parents you may contact local Childcare Licensing Center at 512-834-3195. You may contact the Family Abuse Hotline at 1-800-252-5400. You may view the Website at

www.dfps.state.tx.us.

Toys from Home

Toys are not to be brought to childcare. They may be taken up by the teacher and returned to a parent. Show and Tell time is the only exception to this guideline. Our Savior Lutheran Childcare is not responsible for toys that are brought from home.

Napping

Our Savior Lutheran Childcare is required by the Department of Human Services to provide a rest period after the noon meal. Our Savior provides mats and covers. Parents may bring a small security blanket, which fits in a 2 ½ gallon ziplock bag for rest period. Blankets should be taken home each Friday for washing and returned on Monday.

Personal Items

Parents are asked to check cubbies daily for soiled clothing and folders for students work and information from the office.

Recess and Outside Play

Parents should always properly dress their children so that they may play outside, weather permitting. Parents who do not want their childcare teacher to use their own judgement with regard to matters (such as wearing coats) should request in writing that their child be required to wear their coat at recess. Parents should pay particular attention to the type of shoes that children wear to childcare. Children need to be able to run and play: flip-flops, thongs, jellies, and some sandals may not be adequate and can even result in injuries. Tennis-type shoes are preferred.

Children wearing inappropriate shoes will not be allowed to play on climbing apparatus.

Dress Code

Think of your child's comfort and dress your child in suitable clothing for inside activities. Children will be painting, gluing, and playing outside. Please keep in mind your child's need to use the restroom quickly when dressing your child. Place your child in clothing that will be easily addressed by your child when using the restroom. Clothing with buttons, difficult zippers and snaps, and shoulder straps may cause your child some discomfort, frustration, and restroom accidents.

Childcare Property

Our Savior strives to take good care of its facilities, grounds and equipment. We expect all children to show respect and appreciation for such properties by using them properly and helping to take care of them. Each child will be held responsible for any damages done to the property, including furniture and equipment that may be defaced, marred, or damaged in any way.

Observing Children's Birthdays

Parents may send treats for the entire class to celebrate their child's birthday. The childcare provider must approve this in advance. It is essential that the entire class be involved. It is also important for parents to understand that classes may include children that have allergies to certain foods that would prevent them from taking part in the festivities. No candles, please. Accommodations for these children must be made in order for treats to be acceptable.

Worship

Our Savior Lutheran Childcare is a ministry of Our Savior Lutheran Church. As such, it is a goal of this ministry to provide each child with opportunity to learn that God values them and that Jesus, through His suffering and death on the cross, has removed the punishment of sin from them. In order to accomplish this goal, regular Wednesday Chapel Services are held for children one year and older. In addition to Chapel worship, the class will also have a Jesus Time daily.

Field Trips

Children in the K-5th grade summer program will be transported by the school bus and or school van. Children in the Toddler and PK programs will not attend off-campus field trips.

SERVICES

Food/meals

All toddlers and children on childcare days will be given a hot lunch. Snacks are served during the morning and afternoon hours. The meal schedule can found posted in the building and on the school website. Please submit to the office a medical form if there are dietary requirements or food allergies.

If you wish to provide a lunch from home for your child, that lunch cannot be stored in the cafeteria refrigerator or heated in the microwave. Please provide coolant if the lunch needs coolant. A meal statement, noting the parent is choosing to provide the child's meals and/or snack from home, must be signed and placed in the child's folder. Meals and snacks provided by the parent are not to be shared with other children.

HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

Illness

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services guidelines #746.3605 state: If a child becomes ill during childcare, the teacher must isolate the child from the group and the secretary is to call the parents. If the parents cannot be reached, the secretary will call the other persons listed on the child's Emergency Medical Form. If you are to be away from your home or work number during the day, the teacher or the office must know how to reach you. Keep your Emergency Medical Form up-to-date.

Children sent home due to illness (e.g., fever, vomiting, nausea, and diarrhea) must remain at home for 24 hours after the last symptom(s) to watch for further developments and they may not return the next day. Parents are asked to report any illness to the childcare for the protection of others.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services guidelines #746.3601 state: "an ill child must not be admitted for care if one or more of the following exist":

1. The illness prevents the child from participating comfortably in child-care center activities including outdoor play;
2. The illness results in a greater need for care than the teachers can provide without compromising the health, safety, and supervision of the other children in care;
3. The child has one of the following, unless medical evaluation by a health-care professional indicates that you can include the child in the centers activities:
 - a. Oral temperature of 100.4 or greater; armpit temperature of 99.4 or greater; accompanied by behavior changes or other signs or symptoms of illness; or
 - b. Symptoms and signs of possible severe illness (such as lethargy, abnormal breathing, uncontrolled diarrhea, vomiting illness (two or more episodes in 24 hours), rash with fever, mouth sores with drooling, wheezing, behavior changes, other signs that the child may be severely ill; or
4. A health-care professional has diagnosed the child with a communicable disease, and the child does not have medical documentation to indicate that the child is no longer contagious.

Emergency Medical Treatment

In case of a medical emergency the office will:

1. contact EMS or transport the child to the nearest emergency room,
2. give the child first-aid treatment or CPR when needed,
3. contact the physician identified in the child's records,
4. contact the child's parents and
5. ensure supervision of the other children in the group.

Medications

When your child needs medication, you will need to fill out a “Parent Authorization” form. We will give your child medication only according to the directions given on the form. Never leave medication with your child. All medication and the form should be given to the teacher or the office.

Any over-the-counter medication must be in the original container and must have the following:

1. child’s name,
2. date and time to be administered, and
3. directions for administering the medication.

Prescription medication must be in the original container and must have the following:

1. child’s name,
2. name of the physician prescribing the medicine, and
3. the dosage and times the medication is to be administered.

Parents are asked to request a “school container” from the pharmacist. We may only administer the medication in the manner in which it is prescribed or as the directions indicate by the manufacturer. If the directions do not give the correct dosage for the child’s age and weight, a note from the doctor will be needed. If the directions do not give adequate information, a note from the doctor will be needed. We will not administer medication prescribed to a sibling.

Health Statement

Each child enrolled must have a Health and Immunization Statement on file. This form must be completed and signed by a physician or clinic and returned at the time of admission. It must also be updated as children receive immunizations throughout the year. Immunizations are available at the Austin-Travis County Health Department

Incident/Illness Report

An Incident/Illness Report will be made on any incident that occurs at the center and results in the need for medical attention by a health-care professional, staff or any other situation that places a child at risk. This report form must be signed by the director or the person in charge and shared with the parent. The parent is to sign the original, indicating the form has been reviewed. This must be done within 48 hours of when the incident occurred.

Release of Children

Children will be released only to persons authorized by the parent on the Childcare Emergency Form. There must be at least two emergency contact persons listed on the form in the event that you are unable to pick up your own child. If you intend for someone other than yourself or your contacts listed on your emergency form to pick up your child, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the office (836-9600).

We recognize that there may be a time when you or your back-up persons will not be able to pick up your child. Should this happen, we request that you follow the procedure outlined below.

1. Permission **MUST** be given by the parent for the designated adult to pick up the child. When possible written permission is preferred but permission by phone will be acceptable.
2. The parent must give the office the full name and phone number of the designated adult.
3. Upon arrival of the designated adult, the adult must check in with the office or childcare provider and show a picture I.D. The employee will determine if the information matches that given by the parent.
4. A photocopy of the picture I.D. may be made and kept for 24 hours.

Parental Custody

Our Savior Lutheran Childcare will not determine parental custody. It is the responsibility of parents to provide the childcare with the necessary court documents to prove that custody rights of a parent have been limited by a court of law. These documents must be signed by a judge and bear the court seal. The documents will be placed in the child's permanent records. Parents must understand that in the absence of these documents, Our Savior Lutheran Childcare **can not legally** prevent either parent from acquiring custody of their child.

HOME-CHILDCARE COMMUNICATION

Information

Our weekly school newsletter, *News & Notes*, is sent by email each week on Thursday. We ask parents to read it in order to keep informed as to school activities. Copies of *News and Notes* and other information included above can also be found on our website www.oslaustin.org

Peace-Making Policy

If a parent/guardian should have a problem of one kind or another with a member of the faculty or staff, he/she should follow the Christian philosophy described in Matthew 18:15-17.

Step 1: Voice this problem in person to that individual.

Step 2: If, after this personal conference, the parent/guardian feels the problem has not been resolved, he/she may then discuss the matter with the principal/director.

Step 3: If the matter still has not been resolved after following the above two steps, he/she may then speak to the Chairman of the School and Childcare Ministry Board.

It is not helpful to the student, parent, or teacher to voice criticism in the presence of the child or outside of the immediate household. The working relationship between the child and the teacher can be damaged if the problem is discussed publicly.

Acts of Violence, Threats or Veiled Threats Policy

Any parent, guardian, or representative of any child in our care who commits an act of violence, threatens an act of violence, or implies a threat against any employee of or persons on the property of Our Savior Lutheran will result in the suspension of services to that child and where appropriate the police will be notified.

Arguments and Personal Problems

It is central to the formation of a good learning and caring environment for childcare to be a safe place for children. Parents must refrain from angry confrontations, loud, abusive and obscene language, and threatening or confrontational gestures. Disagreements and complaints must remain civil while on school property. Failure to do so may result in the cessation of services.

Parents are not to correct, interrogate or threaten other children enrolled in Our Savior Lutheran Childcare. Parents who confront others children may have their services terminated.

Holiday and Emergency Closing Policy

Childcare holidays are established at the beginning of the school year and are included in the school/childcare calendar. Parents should become familiar with the holidays at the time of registration. Generally, childcare holidays include the following:

Labor Day	Thanksgiving (two days)	Christmas Eve and Day
Christmas Week*	New Year's Eve	New Year's Day
Good Friday	Memorial Day	Transitional Days**

*the number of days off at Christmas will depend on when Christmas Day falls.

**Transitional days are those days between the close of the school and the beginning of summer and between the close of summer and the beginning of school.

Other Closings: In certain emergencies, the childcare may be closed after parents have received ample notification. In case of exceptionally bad weather, childcare will observe the same scheduled closings as the Pflugerville Independent School District. In those cases where late openings are involved, childcare will open when the Pflugerville Independent School District opens.

Parents will be notified of any new or changed policy via *News and Notes*.

There is no reduction in tuition for holiday or emergency closings.

Parent-Teacher Organization

The Parent-Teacher Organization's purpose is to help parents and teachers to achieve greater proficiency in Christian child-training.

Service projects are organized to support the ministry of the school. Various fundraisers are also held throughout the year to supplement the programs of the school. All parents are encouraged to participate in this worthwhile organization. The PTO Executive Board conducts the business of the PTO.