



LIFE ACADEMY

PARENT HANDBOOK

Where Learning is Fun and Educational



Safety • Learning • School Readiness • Family Partnership

(682) 224-6660 | info@lifeacademyschools.com

Welcome to LIFE Academy! Choosing child care is an important decision, and we are honored that you have entrusted us with your child's care and early education. Our team is committed to providing your family with a high-quality, nurturing, and enriching environment, and we look forward to partnering with you in your child's development for years to come.

Parent involvement plays a vital role in the success of our program. This **Parent Handbook** is designed to help you understand our center's policies and procedures. It is divided into two sections:

- Texas Child Care Licensing Operational Policies
- LIFE Academy's Policies and Procedures

Please take the time to read through the handbook and keep it for future reference. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to:

- Stop by the office
- Call the Director at (682) 224-6660
- Email us at info@lifeacademyschools.com

Thank you for becoming part of the LIFE Academy family—we're excited to grow with you!

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide a fun educational early childhood learning experience that sets the path for lifelong learning.

Vision

In the pursuit of excellence in the care, development, and education of young children in our community, LIFE Academy believes in the ancient proverb that it takes a village to raise a child. So, in partnership with families we will strive to promote and encourage your child to become all that he or she can be, by teaching education, life, and greatness.

Philosophy

Your child is a unique and capable individual who has their own interests, talents, skills and ideas that we nurture and develop.

Family is the most important and influential aspect in the lives of young children and the significance of their relationships is our foundation.

Program facilitates your child's active participation in our meaningful, integrated, emergent curriculum

Educators and staff are a highly regarded and valued resource in our center.

Community enhances the growth and development of your children, your families, and center educators and staff.

Goals

- ✓ Every child is an individual who has his/her own rate of physical and emotional development, and his/her own rate of learning. Each child is accepted, loved, nurtured, and taught as an individual with this thought in mind.

- ✓ Encourage and build each child's imagination, creativity, self-worth, and self-confidence.
- ✓ Provide activities that will nurture the child's self-esteem and help him/her gain and keep a positive self-image.
- ✓ All activities will be guided with positive reinforcement, encouraging every child to try or try again, but will never be pressured into participation of any activity.
- ✓ All activities, both play and learning, will be geared towards your child's ability level.
- ✓ Parents are welcome to visit their children anytime during the day. I enjoy getting to know all parents. My main concern and goal in caring for your child is to see your child grow physically, emotionally, intellectually, and socially to the best of his/her ability.

LIFE Academy is a year-round early learning program serving children from infancy through school age, based on program availability. Our daily activities and program consist of a flexible schedule that has been created to provide diversity and challenge for children in all age groups. We offer a structured program for children of all ages that includes a year-round curriculum. Our activities include school readiness skills, arts and crafts, games, music, outdoor play and story time.

CURRICULUM

LIFE Academy uses an emergent curriculum as well as play-based and hands-on learning. With our experience, it is best to offer children various ways to learn because each child learns differently. The goal at life academy is

for each child to continuously develop in many ways physically, socially, emotionally, in language and literacy, and thinking (cognitive) skills.

DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

LIFE Academy is open year-round, Monday through Friday, from **6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.** To support a consistent routine and minimize classroom disruptions, all children are expected to arrive by **9:00 a.m.**

If your child will be late due to a doctor's appointment, please inform the center ahead of time so they can be included in the daily attendance. Children arriving late for this reason must be signed in by **11:00 a.m.** and must have a **doctor's note** upon arrival.

HOLIDAY CLOSURES AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAYS

LIFE Academy publishes a separate annual Holiday Closure Schedule. Closure dates and staff development days may be updated, and families will receive advance written notice of changes.

In addition to holidays, LIFE Academy closes two days each year for staff development and team training, typically held **before the start of the school year and before summer break**. These days are essential to ensure our team is well-prepared to provide the best care and education for your children.

Please note: **There is no reduction in tuition for holiday or staff development closures**, as these are considered paid days for our staff and part of our regular schedule.

If a holiday falls on a **Saturday**, it will be observed on the **preceding Friday**. If it falls on a **Sunday**, it will be observed on the following **Monday**.

Holiday and closure dates are subject to change, but families will receive **advance notice** of any updates.

ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE

For the safety and security of all children, **parents are required to check their child in and out each day using the tablet located in the front lobby**. Each parent will create a personal access code, which should remain confidential. This code provides access to your child's attendance, account balance, and messages from staff.

If your access code is not in use, you may also check your child in by selecting their **photo**, tapping your **name**, and signing in directly on the tablet.

Children must be escorted into their classroom by an adult. Please do not drop your child off at the front door. A classroom teacher must **acknowledge your child's arrival** before you leave.

Only a parent or legal guardian may go directly to the classroom for pick-up. **All authorized individuals listed on your child's file** (including grandparents, aunts/uncles, or family friends) must **check in at the front desk** before proceeding. A **valid photo ID** is required. Once a child is picked up, the adult is responsible for supervising the child at all times—including in the hallways, lobby, and parking lot.

Please note that children may be grouped in a combined classroom during opening and closing hours, typically the first and last 30–45 minutes of the day.

Failure to check your child in or out will result in a \$5 fee. This procedure is a mandatory requirement by the State of Texas and is necessary for accurate attendance and safety compliance.

RELEASE OF CHILDREN

In accordance with Texas Health and Human Services – Child Care Regulation standards, LIFE Academy has a plan in place to verify the identity of any individual authorized to pick up a child who is not known to staff.

Children will **only** be released to individuals listed on the child's enrollment form as authorized for pick-up. To ensure safety, our verification process includes the following:

1. **Photo Identification Check:**
Any person other than a parent who is authorized to pick up a child must present a **valid driver's license** or **government-issued photo ID**. This also applies to parents who staff may not recognize or new staff have not yet met.
2. **Introductions for Safety:**
All new parents and staff members will be **introduced to one another** to help prevent the release of a child to an unauthorized individual.
3. **File Verification and Parent Contact:**
If a staff member does not recognize the person attempting to pick up a child, they will refer to the

child's file to verify authorization. If necessary, the parent will be contacted for confirmation.

Information regarding authorized individuals will be documented and maintained in the child's file.

Any person who exhibits concerning behavior, appears impaired, or poses a safety risk to themselves or others will not be permitted to pick up a child or remain on the premises.

Ensuring the safety and security of all children is our top priority.

ILLNESS AND EXCLUSION

At LIFE Academy, we make every effort to reduce the spread of illness through proper hygiene, sanitation, and health practices. However, it is common for children—especially those entering group care for the first time—to experience an increase in mild illnesses. On average, children under the age of five may have **6 to 12 mild illnesses per year**, and symptoms may vary in frequency and severity.

When a child is ill, they require a higher level of care and attention, which we are unable to provide while also meeting the needs of the entire group. Additionally, bringing a sick child into the center increases the risk of spreading germs to other children and staff. A child who is already ill is also more susceptible to other infections as their immune system is compromised.

If your child is too ill to participate in daily activities—including outdoor play—they should remain at home. If a child becomes ill while at the center, we will contact the parent to pick them up promptly. If we are unable to

reach a parent, we will contact someone listed on the child's emergency contact form.

The **center's staff will make the final decision** regarding whether a child needs to be sent home based on the symptoms and severity of illness observed.

Exclusion Guidelines

Children must remain at home or will be sent home from the center if they exhibit any of the following, unless a medical professional provides written documentation clearing them to return:

- **Fever:**
 - Oral temperature above 100.4°F or armpit temperature above 99.4°F with other symptoms or behavioral changes.
 - Child must be fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication before returning.
- **Severe Symptoms:**

Signs of serious illness such as extreme fatigue, difficulty breathing, persistent crying, lethargy, wheezing, uncontrolled diarrhea, or repeated vomiting.
- **Vomiting:**

Two or more episodes in a 24-hour period. Child may return once able to keep down a light meal.
- **Diarrhea:**

Two or more episodes of loose, watery stools.

Child may return when normal bowel function has resumed.

- **Rash with Fever:**
Any unexplained rash accompanied by a fever must be evaluated by a doctor before the child can return.
- **Severe Cough or Sore Throat:**
Persistent, hacking cough or red, blistered throat may require a doctor's clearance.
- **Green Nasal Discharge:**
This may indicate a respiratory infection and requires a doctor's evaluation before returning.
- **Mouth Sores with Drooling:**
May indicate a viral infection and should be assessed by a healthcare provider.
- **Breathing Difficulties:**
If a child is too uncomfortable or unable to sleep due to difficulty breathing, they should remain at home.
- **Swelling, Redness, or Pain:**
In any injured area that appears infected or causes discomfort.
- **Undiagnosed Rash or Blisters:**
Must be evaluated and cleared by a healthcare provider before returning.
- **Head Lice:**
Children may return after treatment and complete removal of all nits.

- **Infectious Eye or Skin Conditions** (e.g., pink eye, impetigo, ringworm):
Child may return **24 hours after starting prescribed treatment** (antibiotic or antifungal).
- **Communicable Disease Diagnosis:**
If a child is diagnosed with a communicable disease, they must provide **written clearance from a healthcare provider** confirming they are no longer contagious.

This policy is in place to protect the health of all children and staff. Your cooperation in keeping sick children at home helps maintain a safe and healthy environment for everyone.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

If a child or staff member is diagnosed with a **communicable or infectious disease**, families will be notified via a **notice posted on the classroom door**. The notice will include the **name of the illness**, the **date it was diagnosed**, and **key symptoms** to watch for.

Parents are required to notify LIFE Academy **immediately** if their child is diagnosed with any infectious or communicable disease. Children diagnosed with such illnesses must be **cleared by a physician** before returning to the center. A **doctor's note** stating the child is no longer contagious and is well enough to participate in daily activities is required.

LIFE Academy reserves the right to **deny re-entry** if the center director or designated staff member determines that the child still appears too ill to safely participate in

the program. The health and well-being of all children and staff is our top priority.

ALLERGIES AND EMERGENCY MEDICATION POLICY

It is essential that LIFE Academy is made aware of **any known allergies** your child may have, including food, environmental, or medication-related allergies.

If your child has a diagnosed allergy, you are required to complete an **Allergy/Food Exemption Medical Statement**. This form enables us to notify all staff members and take the necessary precautions to protect your child. The completed form must be submitted to the office **as soon as the allergy is identified** and must be **updated annually**.

If your child requires emergency medication, such as an **EpiPen** or other prescribed treatment, you must also complete an **Authorization to Administer Medication** form. This ensures we have proper consent and instructions for administering the medication in case of an allergic reaction or emergency.

Your child's safety is our priority, and timely submission of these forms helps us maintain a safe and responsive environment.

MEDICATION AND TOPICAL OINTMENT POLICY

To ensure the health and safety of all children, LIFE Academy follows strict procedures for storing and administering medications.

Medication Guidelines

- All medications—**prescription and non-prescription**—must be in the **original, up-to-date container** with clear instructions. Expired medications will not be accepted.
- **Prescription medications** must include the child's **full name** on the pharmacy label.
- **Non-prescription medications** must have a **permanent label** with the child's name and the **date** the medication was brought to the center.
- A completed **"Authorization to Give Medication"** form is required **before** any medication can be administered.
- All medications must be dropped off and picked up at the front desk daily. Medications will be stored in a secured area that is **inaccessible to children**.
- Parents may not place medications in children's backpacks or take them into classrooms. This is strictly prohibited for safety reasons.

LIFE Academy reserves the right **not to administer medication** if the dosage is unclear or inconsistent with label instructions. We may also require a **doctor's written consent** for any over-the-counter medication.

At the end of the medication cycle, any unused medicine along with a copy of the completed medication form will be returned to the parent.

Exceptions for Emergency Medications

Life-saving medications, such as EpiPens and breathing treatments, will be kept accessible and administered on an as-needed basis. These also require a completed Medical Authorization Form on file.

TOPICAL OINTMENT POLICY

LIFE Academy follows Texas Child Care Licensing standards regarding the use of topical ointments. This includes sunscreen, insect repellent, diaper creams, and other over-the-counter skin products.

- Parents must complete a Topical Ointment Authorization Form before any products can be applied.
- Only spray-form sunscreen and insect repellent will be accepted for use at the center.
- Products must be provided by the parent in the original container, clearly labeled with the child's name.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent are applied once daily before outdoor play and only to unbroken skin.
- Staff will avoid applying products to the child's face or hands.
- All products are stored safely out of children's reach.

We encourage families to apply the first layer of sunscreen before arrival. No topical ointments will be applied without written consent.

HANDLING MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

If a child becomes ill while at LIFE Academy, the **parent or guardian will be contacted** promptly. If we are unable to reach a parent, we will call the individuals listed on the **emergency contact form** to arrange for the child to be picked up. The **center's staff will determine the severity of the illness** and make the final decision regarding whether a child needs to go home.

In the event of an injury, staff will assess the situation to determine the level of care needed. For **minor injuries** (such as scrapes, bumps, or bruises), basic **first aid will be administered**, and an **accident report** will be sent home with the person picking up the child.

For **serious injuries or medical emergencies**, staff will immediately contact **Emergency Medical Services (911)**. While waiting for emergency responders, staff will provide first aid **to the best of their ability**. Every effort will be made to contact the parent or guardian right away. If we are unable to reach a parent, we will call the **authorized emergency contact** listed on your child's file to make medical decisions.

If no emergency contact can be reached, your child will be **released to EMS personnel** for immediate medical care. Please note that **staff members are not permitted to transport injured children** under any circumstances. A staff member will remain with your child until a parent, guardian, or emergency contact arrives.

SAFE SLEEP POLICY

All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at LIFE Academy will follow these safe sleep recommendations of the

American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) for infants to reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome/Sudden Unexpected Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS/SUIDS):

- ☐ Always put infants to sleep on their backs unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.
- ☐ Place infants on a firm mattress, with a tight-fitting sheet, in a crib that meets the CPSC federal requirements for full size cribs and for non-full-size cribs.
- ☐ For infants who are younger than 12 months of age, cribs should be bare except for a tight-fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector. Items that should not be placed in a crib include soft or loose bedding, such as blankets, quilts, or comforters; pillows; stuffed toys/animals; soft objects; bumper pads; liners; or sleep positioning devices. Also, infants must not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing.
- ☐ Do not use sleep positioning devices, such as wedges or infant positioners. The AAP has found no evidence that these devices are safe. Their use may increase the risk of suffocation.
- ☐ Ensure that sleeping areas are ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult. o If an infant needs extra warmth, use sleep clothing, such as sleepers or footed pajamas, as an alternative to blankets.
- ☐ Place only one infant in a crib to sleep.

- ☐ Infants may use a pacifier during sleep. But the pacifier must not be attached to a stuffed animal or the infant's clothing by a string, cord, or other attaching mechanism that might be a suffocation or strangulation risk.
- ☐ If the infant falls asleep in a restrictive device other than a crib (such as a bouncy chair or swing or arrives to care asleep in a car seat), move the infant to a crib immediately, unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.
- ☐ Our childcare program is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas childcare operations (this includes e-cigarettes and any type of vaporizers).
- ☐ Actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound.
- ☐ If an infant is able to roll back and forth from front to back, place the infant on the infant's back for sleep and allow the infant to assume a preferred sleep position.
- ☐ Awake infants will have supervised "tummy time" several times daily. This will help them strengthen their muscles and develop normally.
- ☐ Do not swaddle an infant for sleep or rest unless you provide an Infant Sleep Exception form 2710 signed by the infant's health care professional.

PARENT COMMUNICATION AND PARTNERSHIP

At LIFE Academy, we believe that a strong partnership between parents and staff is essential to a child's success. Open, consistent communication helps ensure a positive

and enriching early learning experience. We are committed to keeping you informed about your child's day and developmental progress through a variety of methods:

- **Monthly Newsletters** – To keep families updated on center-wide activities, events, and program highlights.
- **Parent Information Board** – Located in the center with up-to-date details about LIFE Academy's curriculum, policies, and announcements.
- **Daily Communication** – Shared through our Parent Engagement App, as well as written updates including "Incident" or "Ouch" reports and occasional memos placed in your child's cubby.
- **Parent-Teacher Conferences** – Held twice a year to discuss your child's progress, goals, and development.
- **Additional Conferences** – Parents may request a meeting with teachers or administrators at any time to support their child's individual needs.

We value your involvement and encourage ongoing collaboration throughout your child's time at LIFE Academy.

At LIFE Academy, we are committed to working closely with you to provide the best possible childcare experience for your family. Achieving this requires **strong communication and mutual support** between parents and staff.

We aim to maintain open and friendly communication during **drop-off and pick-up times**; however, please note that these are **not ideal times for extended conversations**, as our teachers are actively supervising children and ensuring a safe transition.

Additionally, the staff member present at pick-up may not always be the same individual who spent the majority of the day with your child. Many children are in care for up to 10 hours, while most staff members work 6–8 hour shifts. To support your child’s learning, we schedule **lead or primary teachers** during morning and early afternoon hours when children are most engaged in developmental activities.

For updates on your child’s **daily experience or developmental progress**, we encourage you to connect with your child’s **lead teacher**. You are welcome to call the center at any time to check in, and the **best time to speak directly with your child’s teacher** is during naptime.

There is always a member of management available to speak with you in person or by phone. You may also leave a note in our **Payment/Suggestion box** or email us at info@lifeacademyschools.com.

We appreciate your partnership in supporting your child’s growth and development.

DISCIPLINE AND GUIDANCE

At LIFE Academy, we believe that children learn best through positive guidance and the modeling of respectful behavior. Our staff is committed to helping children develop social-emotional skills through age-

appropriate conflict resolution and supportive discipline strategies.

We use a **five-step mediation process**, designed to empower children to resolve their own conflicts with the guidance of a teacher:

1. **Cool Down (Thumb):**

If needed, the teacher will help all parties—including themselves—calm down before beginning the mediation. Children may be temporarily separated during this time to allow emotions to settle. This is a **cooling-off period**, not a punishment.

2. **Identify the Problem (Pointer Finger):**

The children, with assistance as needed, express what happened and work together to identify the cause of the disagreement.

3. **Brainstorm Solutions (Tall Finger):**

Children are encouraged to come up with possible ways to solve the problem. The teacher may guide the process but prioritizes using **the children's own ideas**, even if the solutions differ from what the teacher might suggest.

4. **Agree on a Solution (Ring Finger):**

The children agree on one solution to try. A teacher may guide them through a **guidance talk**, reviewing the situation, discussing alternative behaviors, and exploring how to make amends. Follow-up conversations may also occur later if needed.

5. **Follow Up (Pinky Finger):**

The teacher supports and monitors the implementation of the agreed solution. They provide encouragement and further guidance as

needed. Additional guidance talks may be used to reinforce learning and build emotional intelligence.

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS AND DISCIPLINE APPROACH

All teachers at LIFE Academy are expected to model the respectful, kind behavior we want children to learn.

Positive reinforcement and patient, respectful guidance are the foundation of our discipline practices.

Discipline strategies will always be:

- Appropriate to the child's age and developmental level
- Focused on teaching, not punishing
- Intended to support long-term behavioral and emotional growth

The following practices are strictly prohibited:

- Demeaning, humiliating, or abusive language
- Physical punishment or threats of physical punishment
- Leaving a child alone or unsupervised as discipline
- Withholding food, drink, or bathroom privileges
- Forcing silence for unreasonable periods of time

Chronic or severe behavior issues may result in a conference involving the teacher, director, and the child's parent or guardian. Together, we will create a plan to address and support improved behavior. However, if inappropriate behavior persists despite intervention, the **center director reserves the right to take further action**, which may include suspension or dismissal from the program.

Our goal is always to work in partnership with families to support the healthy social-emotional development of every child in our care.

BITING AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR POLICY

LIFE Academy recognizes that **occasional aggressive behaviors**, such as **biting**, are a **developmentally typical part of early childhood**, especially in infants and toddlers who may have limited language skills. While these behaviors are expected at certain stages, we understand that they can be distressing for both the child's family and those affected.

We want to assure families that our staff is trained to respond promptly and appropriately to such incidents. We work diligently to **identify triggers or patterns** that may be causing the behavior and implement strategies to prevent recurrence.

While we understand that biting may occur from time to time, **repeated incidents will not be tolerated**, and ongoing efforts will be made to redirect the behavior and support positive social interactions.

Our top priority is to maintain a **safe and nurturing environment** for all children. Staff will actively supervise, respond appropriately to aggressive behaviors, and communicate openly with families as we work together to support each child's development.

INCLUSION AND ACCOMMODATIONS POLICY

LIFE Academy is committed to supporting **all children and families**, including those who may need additional accommodations related to **home language, special needs or differing abilities, and cultural backgrounds**.

Children with disabilities or special learning needs are welcome in our classrooms **as long as they are able to meaningfully participate in the regular program structure**. Our staff will work collaboratively with parents and external specialists to create individualized strategies that support each child's unique needs.

If a child requires **exceptional care or individualized attention** beyond what can be reasonably provided within standard staff ratios, families may be asked to arrange for **additional support personnel**.

We welcome **outside specialists and therapists** to work one-on-one with children at the center, and designated space (such as the lobby) will be provided for these sessions.

LIFE Academy is committed to **inclusion and equity**; enrollment will not be denied or terminated due to a child's special needs. However, if a child poses a **consistent physical or emotional danger to themselves or others**, alternative care options may need to be considered in collaboration with the family and professionals involved.

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP AND ENROLLMENT POLICY

A positive and respectful partnership between LIFE Academy and our families is essential to supporting each child's success and upholding the values of our program.

LIFE Academy reserves the right to **deny or discontinue enrollment or re-enrollment** if it is determined that a family's behavior or interactions with staff interfere with the school's ability to maintain a constructive working relationship. This includes conduct that is disrespectful, disruptive, or inconsistent with the center's policies and values.

Additionally, the Director or Owner may make the decision to **dismiss a child from the program at any time** if the actions or behavior of any individual associated with the child are not aligned with the standards and expectations of LIFE Academy.

In such cases, **no tuition refunds will be issued** for the remainder of the enrollment period. Our goal is to maintain a safe, respectful, and cooperative environment for all children, families, and staff.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR DAMAGED PROPERTY

If a child causes damage to center property as a result of **intentional behavior or failure to follow staff guidance**, the parent or guardian may be held financially **responsible** for the cost of repair or replacement of the damaged items.

We encourage families to partner with us in reinforcing respectful and responsible behavior.

MEALS & NUTRITION

LIFE Academy provides **daily breakfast, lunch, and an afternoon snack** for each child, following the **nutritional guidelines established by the USDA**. We use a **5-week rotating menu** to ensure variety and balanced nutrition in every meal served.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We welcome families who wish to celebrate their child's birthday at LIFE Academy! You are welcome to bring **store-bought treats** to share with the class. For safety and allergy concerns, **homemade items are not permitted**. Please coordinate with your child's teacher **in advance**, and note that all birthday treats will be shared during **afternoon snack time** only.

If you plan to distribute **birthday party invitations** at the center, we ask that you do so **only if every child in the class is invited**, to avoid hurt feelings. Please **do not bring presents** to the center for birthday celebrations.

We appreciate your cooperation in making celebrations inclusive, safe, and enjoyable for all children.

IMMUNIZATION AND HEALTH RECORDS POLICY

LIFE Academy is required by the State of Texas to maintain current health and immunization records for all enrolled children.

Immunization Requirements

Parents must provide documentation from a licensed healthcare provider verifying that their child:

- Is in **overall good health**, and
- Has received all **age-appropriate, up-to-date immunizations**, or
- Has a valid **medical or conscientious exemption** on file.
-

A **physician's statement** must be submitted confirming the child's current immunization status. If a child is medically unable to receive a vaccine, a **written letter from a licensed physician** is required. This letter must explain the reason for the exemption. Even if the exemption is listed as permanent, **an updated letter must be submitted annually**.

Exemptions for Reasons of Conscience

If a parent chooses not to vaccinate their child for reasons of conscience, they must request the official Affidavit for Exemption from Immunizations for Reasons of Conscience from the Texas Department of State Health Services.

- The affidavit must be **notarized** and is valid for **two years**.

- A copy of the notarized affidavit must be **kept in the child's file** at the center.

Vision and Hearing Screening

Children **four years of age and older** must also have a **vision and hearing screening** on file.

Tuberculosis (TB) Testing

TB testing is **not required** for children or staff by the local county health department. Any additional immunizations recommended by the CDC that are **not required by the state** **do not need to be obtained** for enrollment at LIFE Academy.

Maintaining accurate and up-to-date health records helps us provide a safe and compliant learning environment for all children.

HEARING AND VISION SCREENING REQUIREMENT

All children who are **4 years old and enrolled in a licensed child care facility** are required to have **vision and hearing screening results** on file.

- If your child is already 4 years old at the time of enrollment, this documentation **must be provided upon admission**.
- If your child turns 4 while enrolled, you will be required to **submit the screening results at that time**.

Most pediatricians complete these screenings during the **4-year well-child visit**. Please ensure the results are shared

with the center to remain in compliance with state regulations.

ENROLLMENT POLICY

LIFE Academy welcomes children and families from all backgrounds. Enrollment is open to all families in our community, and we operate on a non-discriminatory basis. No child will be excluded from enrollment or participation in any program based on race, color, religion, sex, disability, or national origin.

Only a parent or legal guardian may enroll a child. All required enrollment forms must be completed and submitted prior to your child's first day of attendance. All personal information is kept confidential, and it is the parent's responsibility to keep emergency contact and authorized pick-up information current, including changes to addresses, phone numbers, or custody arrangements.

Up-to-date immunization records are required at the time of enrollment. LIFE Academy must also be notified in advance of any custody agreements, and legal documentation must be kept on file.

By enrolling your child, you agree to follow all state licensing requirements and all center policies outlined in this Parent Handbook.

Required Enrollment Documents

The following forms must be completed and on file before admission:

- Admission Form

- Child Care Agreement
- Copy of Current Immunization Record
- Signed and Dated Health Statement
- Allergy Emergency Plan (if applicable)
- Photo Consent Form
- Topical Ointment Authorization Form
- Parent Handbook Acknowledgement
- ACH Authorization Form (if applicable)
- Copy of Parent/Guardian's Driver's License or ID
- USDA Food Program Form (if applicable)

Infant Forms:

- Infant Feeding Schedule (due monthly)

Timely submission of these documents ensures a smooth enrollment process and helps us provide the best care for your child.

PARENT ORIENTATION AND POLICY ACKNOWLEDGMENT

At LIFE Academy, we believe that clear communication and shared understanding are essential to a successful partnership between families and our program. **All families new to LIFE Academy are required to participate in a Parent Orientation** to become familiar with our philosophies, policies, and daily practices.

This **Parent Handbook** outlines the center's official policies and procedures and is reviewed and updated **annually**. Prior to enrollment, each family must sign a **Child Care Agreement** confirming that they have read and understand the policies within this handbook. This

signed agreement will be kept on file in the Preschool Office.

In addition to the signed agreement, we strongly encourage families to:

- **Tour the facility**, visit classrooms, and meet the teaching staff
- **Participate in classroom visits** at the beginning of each school year
- **Attend New Family Orientation** events

If any changes to policies occur during the school year, parents will be notified **in writing** and asked to sign a statement confirming that they have received and understand the updated policy.

Families who **consistently fail to follow** center policies and procedures may be subject to **dismissal from the program**, at the discretion of the Director.

TUITION AND PAYMENT POLICY

At LIFE Academy, tuition is based on **the reservation of a space** in our program—not on your child’s attendance.

This means that **weekly fees are due regardless of absences**, including vacations, holidays, or illness.

Tuition rates are outlined in the **Child Care Agreement** signed at the time of enrollment and are charged on a **weekly basis**. Because tuition remains the same each week, **billing reminders are not issued**. It is the responsibility of each parent or guardian to make timely payments according to the terms of the agreement.

STATE PAID TUITION

LIFE Academy is an approved provider for the **Child Care Subsidies (CCS)** program. Families receiving assistance through CCS may be responsible for a **monthly co-payment**, which is determined by the program based on household income.

All co-payments are due in full by the first business day of each month. Failure to pay the required co-payment in a timely manner may result in **termination of your CCS contract**, which can affect your eligibility for continued assistance—both at LIFE Academy and any other participating child care center.

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to stay current with all co-payment obligations to avoid disruption in child care services.

TUITION AND PAYMENT POLICY

Tuition is due **each Friday** for the **upcoming week of care**. A **\$50 late payment fee** will be applied if payment is not received by the **close of business on Monday**. Consistent, on-time payment is required to maintain enrollment.

Failure to pay on time may result in immediate suspension or termination of services. No account will be allowed to carry a balance unless prior arrangements are approved in writing by the Director.

Accepted Payment Methods

Payments may be made by:

- Cash (must be handed directly to the Director)
- Debit or credit card
- Cash, debit card, or credit card

Refund and Final Payment Policy

- All tuition payments are non-refundable, except in the case of prepaid tuition that exceeds any outstanding balances, including the required two-week notice.
- All families are required to pay the final week's tuition in advance.
- Registration fees are non-refundable.

Withdrawal and Collections

If you plan to withdraw your child from LIFE Academy, you must provide a minimum of two weeks' written notice. Failure to do so will result in a charge equal to two weeks of tuition.

LIFE Academy reserves the right to seek collection of unpaid balances, including the two-week termination fee, as well as any collection agency costs and attorney's fees incurred in the process.

If necessary, LIFE Academy may immediately terminate all services, including the immediate dismissal of your child(ren) from the program.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in helping maintain a fair and consistent financial policy for all enrolled families.

REFUND AND CREDIT POLICY

LIFE Academy **does not issue refunds** for tuition or fees under normal circumstances. If an **overpayment** occurs, the credited amount will be **applied toward the following week's tuition**.

If your child is withdrawn and a credit balance remains after the last day of attendance, any applicable charges—including the required **two-week notice fee**—will be **deducted from the balance** before a final refund is processed.

Refunds, when applicable, will be **issued on a monthly basis via Zelle**, following our regular billing cycle. Please ensure your Zelle information is up to date with the front office.

LATE PICK UP

Parents are expected to pick up their child **no later than 6:00 p.m.** each day. If you anticipate being late, please **notify the administration immediately**.

Late pick-up fees will be charged **per child** (not per family) as follows:

- 6:01 – 6:15 p.m.: \$30
- 6:16 – 6:30 p.m.: \$60
- 6:31 – 6:45 p.m.: \$90
- 6:46 – 7:00 p.m.: \$120

If a child is **not picked up by 7:00 p.m.** and no authorized individual can be reached, **local law enforcement will be contacted** for the child's safety.

Late pick-up fees must be paid at the time of pick-up or by the following morning. These fees may not be carried over or added to your regular tuition account. Failure to pay late fees promptly may result in suspension or termination of services.

ADMISSION

Parents interested in enrolling their child at LIFE Academy are encouraged to **schedule a tour** through the center office. During the tour, families will have the opportunity to **visit classrooms, meet the Director and teaching staff**, and learn more about our program. While we will do our best to accommodate your schedule, tours are most effective when held during less disruptive times of the day. For this reason, we recommend scheduling tours between:

- 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. or
- 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The purpose of the tour is to provide an overview of LIFE Academy's learning environment, introduce our **philosophy, policies, and daily practices**, and answer any questions you may have. At the time of the visit, you will receive a copy of our **Parent Handbook** and the necessary enrollment forms.

All children are considered **continuously enrolled** from the date of admission until formally withdrawn by following the **withdrawal procedures** outlined in this handbook.

WITHDRAWAL

It is the responsibility of the family to initiate the withdrawal process. **A written two-week notice must be submitted to the Director prior to a child's withdrawal from LIFE Academy. Full tuition is required during the two-week notice period, regardless of whether the child attends during that time. No tuition adjustments or refunds will be made for unused days during the notice period.**

In certain circumstances, the center may request the withdrawal of a child. In such cases, the **Director will determine the appropriate timeline for withdrawal following a conference with the parent or guardian.**

DISMISSAL POLICY

LIFE Academy is committed to supporting the individual needs of each child and creating a positive, inclusive learning environment. Our staff will make every effort to work with families and children to ensure a successful experience. However, the center **reserves the right to request alternate care arrangements if:**

- It is determined that a child's individual needs cannot be adequately met within the structure of our program,
- A child is unable to adjust to the center environment, or
- A child's behavior becomes consistently disruptive or poses a **safety risk** to themselves or others.

In such cases, a child may be subject to **temporary suspension or permanent dismissal**, depending on the severity and frequency of the concern.

Additionally, a child may be dismissed from the program if a parent or guardian:

- Fails to complete or return required forms,
- Fails to pay tuition on time,
- Does not comply with applicable **state or local child care regulations**, or
- Repeatedly disregards **center policies and procedures** as outlined in this handbook.

LIFE Academy strives to maintain a respectful and cooperative relationship with all families and appreciates your partnership in supporting a safe and nurturing environment for every child.

ANNUAL PAPERWORK UPDATE POLICY

LIFE Academy is required by the State of Texas to maintain **current and accurate information** for every child enrolled in our program. Keeping this information up to date is also essential for the **safety and well-being of your child**.

Each year in August, families must review, complete, and return updated enrollment and food program paperwork by the announced deadline. Current immunization records and health statements are also required when applicable; these two records are not required for school-age children.

Please note:

- Failure to return required annual paperwork by the deadline will result in a pause in care until all required

documents are received. A pause in care does not automatically withdraw the child or stop tuition from accruing.

- Tuition and fees will continue to accrue according to the most recently published rates, including late payment fees where applicable.
- The annual registration fee will also be applied at this time.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us meet licensing requirements and ensure a safe, organized environment for all children in our care.

CHANGE OF PERSONAL INFORMATION

Parents are strongly encouraged to update their contact information promptly whenever a change occurs. It is critical that our staff have the most current phone numbers, addresses, and emergency contacts to ensure quick communication in the event of an emergency.

All updates to contact information must be submitted in writing or via email to the Preschool Office. Verbal updates to classroom staff are not sufficient.

Keeping your information current helps us maintain a safe and responsive environment for your child.

TRANSPORTATION (When Applicable)

LIFE Academy follows all Texas Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards for transporting children safely. Eligibility & Permission

Transportation is provided for field trips and program

activities. Parents must submit a signed **Transportation Permission Form** before a child may ride in a center vehicle.

Driver & Vehicle Requirements

- Drivers hold a **valid license**, pass a **background check**, and complete **annual transportation safety training**.
- Vehicles are **inspected daily**, properly insured, and equipped with **child safety restraints**, a **first aid kit**, and a **fire extinguisher**.

Supervision & Attendance

- Children are supervised at all times.
- Staff will take **attendance before, during, and after transport**.
- A **thorough vehicle check** is completed after each trip.

Loading/Unloading

- Children are escorted on and off the vehicle by staff.
- A **head count and name check** is done every time children board or exit.

Emergencies

- In case of an emergency, staff will contact **911**, the center, and parents.
- All vehicles include staff **trained in CPR/first aid**.

Parent Responsibilities

- Be on time for pick-up/drop-off and communicate transportation changes in advance.
- **Non-compliance with policies** may result in removal from transportation services.

This policy ensures your child's transportation experience is **safe, supervised, and state-compliant**.

WATER ACTIVITIES

LIFE Academy doesn't have pools. However, in special occasions we will have events such as water balloons or sprinklers.

FIELD TRIPS (When Applicable)

LIFE Academy may offer field trips to enhance learning. All trips follow **Texas Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards** for supervision, safety, and transportation.

Permission & Notice

- Parents must sign a **Field Trip Permission Form** in advance.
- You will receive **written notice** with the trip's date, time, location, and transportation details.

Supervision

- Staff-to-child **ratios meet state requirements** at all times.
- **Headcounts** are taken before, during, and after the trip.
- Children are kept **in staff sight and easily identifiable**.

Transportation (if applicable)

- Vehicles meet **state safety standards** and are operated by qualified, background-checked drivers.
- **Attendance logs** are maintained during transport.

Emergencies

- Staff carry emergency contacts, first aid supplies, and any needed medications.
- In an emergency, staff will call **911**, notify the center, and contact parents.

Participation

- Children must follow safety rules to attend.

- Those not attending may be reassigned or may need alternative care for the day.

This policy ensures safe, supervised field trips that comply with all **licensing regulations**.

ANIMALS (When Applicable)

LIFE Academy may occasionally include animals in the classroom to support learning. Parents will be notified in advance of any animal visits or classroom pets.

- Only healthy, non-aggressive animals are allowed.
- Dangerous or high-risk animals (e.g., reptiles, ferrets, wild animals) are not permitted.
- Children will not handle animal waste or clean cages.
- Handwashing is required after touching animals.
- Staff will supervise all animal interactions and ensure clean, sanitary enclosures.
- Please inform us of any allergies or concerns related to animals.

Animals may be removed if they pose a safety or health risk.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY REQUIREMENT

At LIFE Academy, we strongly support and promote **daily physical activity** as an essential part of each child's healthy development.

Regular movement helps children build strong bones and muscles, improve endurance and coordination,

reduce stress and anxiety, and boost self-esteem. Physical activity is also linked to **improved cognitive and academic performance**, as it stimulates brain development and enhances learning.

Daily Physical Activity Requirements

- **Toddlers** will engage in a **minimum of 60 minutes** of moderate to vigorous active play each day.
- **Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten** children will engage in a **minimum of 90 minutes** of moderate to vigorous active play each day.

Whenever possible, active play will take place **outdoors**, weather permitting.

Types of Physical Activity Provided

All children will have opportunities to:

- Participate in **two outdoor play periods per day** (weather permitting)
- Engage in **two or more teacher-led movement activities** throughout the day
- Practice and develop **age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills**

Activities may include running, dancing, climbing, jumping, skipping, or other energetic movement. When outdoor play is not possible due to weather, **indoor physical activities** will be provided in the classroom.

Clothing & Footwear for Active Play

To ensure safe and full participation in physical activities, children should wear:

- **Supportive footwear** such as gym shoes or sturdy closed-toe shoes

- **Weather-appropriate clothing** that allows free movement and protects against sun exposure (e.g., lightweight jackets, hats)

Inappropriate items include:

- Footwear that may slip off or lacks support for running or climbing
- Clothing with **drawstrings, loose hoods, or accessories** that could catch on equipment

We ask parents to dress children appropriately each day to support their **safety and enjoyment** during active play.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

At LIFE Academy, we **value and encourage parent and guardian involvement** in all aspects of our program. We believe that **family participation is essential** to a successful early childhood experience and helps create a strong connection between home and school.

We recognize that parents may not always be available due to work or other obligations. Our goal is to help **bridge that gap** by creating meaningful opportunities for parents to stay involved and connected with their child's development and learning.

LIFE Academy maintains an **open-door policy**, allowing parents and legal guardians to visit the center **at any time during operating hours**. We welcome your presence and participation!

Below are examples of ways families can get involved. This list is **not exhaustive**, and we encourage you to

share any additional ideas for participation with the office:

- Fall Open House
- Two Parent-Teacher Conferences per Year
- Holiday Programs and Special Events (e.g., Christmas Program)
- Parent-Involved Celebrations (e.g., Thanksgiving Feast)
- Party Day Volunteer
- Classroom Helper or Guest Reader
- Assisting with Fundraisers or Special Projects

We believe a **strong partnership with parents** enriches every child's experience and contributes to a supportive and thriving school community.

ACCESS TO LICENSE STANDARDS AND INSPECTION REPORTS

LIFE Academy maintains a current copy of the **Texas Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards** on-site at all times. Parents are welcome to review this document upon request by speaking with the Director.

You may also access the standards online at:
<https://www.hhs.texas.gov/doing-business-hhs/provider-portals/protective-services-providers/child-care-licensing/minimum-standards>

The **most recent** licensing inspection report is available for parent review in the **desk catalog** located in the lobby.

We are committed to transparency and compliance with all licensing regulations to ensure the highest quality of care.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT REPORTING

The State of Texas requires all child care providers to be vigilant in identifying and reporting **suspected cases of child abuse or neglect**. LIFE Academy and its staff are fully committed to complying with this legal obligation.

At LIFE Academy, **all staff are considered mandatory reporters** of child abuse and neglect. This means that **any suspected abuse or neglect must be reported immediately to Child Protective Services (CPS)**. We are not permitted to investigate, question the child, or determine the validity of the suspicion. **All reports must be made directly to CPS** for proper investigation.

To report suspected child abuse or neglect, contact the
Child Abuse Hotline at:

 1-800-252-5400

or visit: www.txabusehotline.org

All LIFE Academy staff are required to complete **annual training** on recognizing, preventing, and responding to child abuse and neglect.

Parents are encouraged to **inform staff of any visible injuries**, such as bruises or scratches, that may have occurred at home or outside of the center. This helps avoid unnecessary concern or confusion.

Local Licensing Office Contact Information

To contact our local child care licensing office or report concerns regarding center operations:

Texas Health and Human Services – Licensing Division

 1501 Circle Dr., Suite 310
Fort Worth, TX 76119

 (800) 582-8286 or (817) 321-8604

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

We are committed to the safety, well-being, and protection of every child in our care.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

LIFE Academy takes several factors into consideration when determining whether to **open late, close early, or close for the day** due to inclement weather. The safety of our children, families, and staff is our highest priority.

In the event of severe or questionable weather conditions, please do the following:

- Tune in to local news or weather stations for updates
- Follow White Settlement ISD closures, as we generally align with their decisions
- Check our official Facebook page for real-time updates
- Check the Procare Engagement App for announcements and notifications from the center

If you are ever unsure of our operating status, please refer to Facebook or Procare first, or contact the center directly.

We thank you for your cooperation in keeping everyone safe during inclement weather conditions.

Emergency Preparedness Plan

LIFE Academy has a detailed **Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Plan** in place to ensure the safety of all children and staff during an emergency. A copy of the evacuation route and procedures is **posted in every classroom**.

Our designated emergency relocation site is:
White Settlement Recreation
8213 White Settlement Rd.
White Settlement, TX 76108

The plan includes:

- **Designated staff roles** and responsibilities during an evacuation
- **How we will communicate with families** during and after the emergency
- **Transportation procedures** to the relocation site
- **Support for children with special needs**
- **Accountability procedures** to ensure all children are accounted for

Emergency contact information is **securely stored electronically** and is accessible by the Director or the designated person in charge.

We conduct **monthly evacuation drills** to ensure all staff and children are familiar with the procedures.

In the event of an actual emergency:

- Children will be safely transported to the relocation site by designated staff
- Families will be notified as soon as we are in a safe location

 If you would like to review the full Emergency Preparedness Plan, please contact the front office and we will be happy to email it to you.

Your child's safety is our top priority.

BREAST FEEDING

LIFE Academy supports families who choose to breastfeed and is committed to providing a **welcoming and comfortable environment** for nursing.

Children who require breastfeeding while in our care will be **accommodated in a designated, comfortable space** that allows for privacy and a calm environment. Nursing parents are welcome to breastfeed on-site at any time during operating hours.

We respect and support each family's feeding choices and are happy to work with parents to meet their child's individual needs.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT PREVENTION

At LIFE Academy, the safety and well-being of every child is our top priority. In accordance with Texas Child Care Licensing Minimum Standards, all staff are mandatory

reporters and are trained annually (minimum 1 hour) in the prevention, recognition, and reporting of child abuse and neglect.

We are legally required to report any suspected abuse or neglect to Child Protective Services (CPS). Staff are not permitted to investigate or determine whether abuse has occurred—any suspicion is reported immediately to the appropriate authorities.

If you observe unexplained bruises, behavioral changes, or signs of distress, we recommend notifying staff in advance if your child has visible injuries to prevent misunderstandings.

Types of Child Maltreatment

Physical Abuse

Intentional physical harm or threat of harm, including hitting, biting, burning, or choking.

Signs may include: unexplained bruises, fear of adults, aggression, or wearing clothing to cover injuries.

Neglect

Failure to provide for a child's basic needs—food, clothing, medical care, or supervision.

Signs may include: poor hygiene, frequent hunger, untreated illnesses, or being left alone.

Sexual Abuse

Inappropriate sexual behavior or exposure toward a child, including exploitation.

Signs may include: knowledge of sexual acts beyond their age, fear of certain adults, or STDs.

Emotional Abuse

Chronic rejection, criticism, or emotional harm that affects the child's mental well-being.

Signs may include: low self-esteem, depression, extreme behavior, or developmental delays.

How Parents and Community Members Can Help

- Use positive parenting techniques and avoid corporal punishment. Parenting classes are widely available.
 - Manage stress and ask for help when needed—reach out to friends, family, or local resources.
 - Learn about child development stages to set realistic expectations.
 - Report any concerns to the Texas Abuse Hotline at
 1-800-252-5400 or online at
www.txabusehotline.org
-

Local Resources

- Texas Child Care Licensing Office
1501 Circle Dr., Suite 310
Fort Worth, TX 76119
 (800) 582-8286 | (817) 321-8604

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

- Support Organizations:
 - *Alliance for Children*
 - *Justice for Children*

Health Checks

Each day upon arrival, a **brief health check** will be conducted for every child entering LIFE Academy. This includes:

- Asking parents or guardians about any **unusual behaviors**, recent **illness symptoms**, rashes, or changes in **eating, sleeping, or toileting patterns**
- Observing the child for any **visible signs of illness** or discomfort

Throughout the day, staff will continue to monitor for any **changes in behavior, appearance, or energy levels** that may indicate a child is becoming ill.

These daily checks help us maintain a **safe and healthy environment** for all children in our care. If any concerns arise, the parent or guardian will be notified immediately.

TEAM IMMUNIZATION AND HEALTH SCREENING POLICY

At LIFE Academy, the health and safety of the children in our care is a top priority.

While **flu shots and COVID-19 vaccines** are not required, employees are encouraged to make informed decisions regarding their health and immunizations. This decision is left to the **individual discretion of each staff member**.

However, in compliance with local health regulations, all employees **must be screened for tuberculosis (TB) prior to working with children**, but only in counties where TB testing is required.

We remain committed to maintaining a healthy environment through regular health screenings, hygiene practices, and staff training in illness prevention.

VISITOR AND PARENT ACCESS POLICY

Parents are **welcome to visit their child at LIFE Academy at any time** during operating hours. For safety and accountability, we ask that all visitors **check in at the front office or sign-in desk** before entering any classroom.

It is each employee's responsibility to ensure that **all visitors have checked in appropriately**.

If you plan to **eat lunch with your child**, please notify the center in advance so we can make necessary arrangements.

To maintain the safety and security of all children:

- Only individuals listed on the child's "Pick-Up Permission" form are allowed to visit.
- In custody-related situations, the same guidelines listed in the Pick-Up Policy will apply.

Parents are encouraged to pre-arrange classroom visits or lunch dates. **Extended family members** (e.g., grandparents, aunts, uncles) are also welcome to visit, but **visits must be pre-approved and scheduled through the front office**.

Due to the complexities of custody arrangements and to ensure the safety of all children, we follow **strict visitation procedures**. Please contact a member of the **management team** if you would like to schedule a visit for an extended family member.

GANG FREE ZONE

In accordance with Texas state law, LIFE Academy and the area within 1,000 feet of our campus is designated as a Gang-Free Zone.

Criminal activities related to **organized criminal behavior** that occur within this zone are subject to **enhanced penalties** under Texas law.

This designation helps ensure a **safe and secure environment** for all children, families, and staff. We appreciate your cooperation in maintaining the safety of our campus.

OTHER GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

DIAPERING AND POTTY TRAINING

DIAPERING

Children are checked regularly and **changed promptly at the first sign of wetness or soiling**. No child will be knowingly left in wet or soiled clothing.

Families are required to provide:

- A weekly supply of **diapers and wipes**, clearly labeled with the **child's first and last name**.

- Diapers may be left at the center in bulk for convenience.

You will be notified when your child is running low. If your child runs out of diapers during the day, **a diaper will be provided at a fee of \$2 per diaper.** For any questions, please contact the front office.

POTTY TRAINING

Toilet training begins in our **2-year-old classroom**. We understand this process can be emotionally challenging for children and families, and we are here to offer full support. **Parent-teacher collaboration is essential** for successful potty training.

Pull-Ups Policy

- We **do not allow standard pull-ups** at the center, as they require full clothing removal during changes.
- **Only pull-ups with side fasteners** (the kind that open and close like diapers) are permitted if needed.

Toilet Training Guidelines

- We begin training **only when the teacher determines a child is ready** and will notify parents when to start sending **underwear and extra clothing**.
- Once training begins, children must arrive in **underwear**, not diapers or pull-ups. If a child arrives in a diaper, they will remain in diapers that day.

- We will only work on toilet training **if families are actively training at home as well**. Consistency between home and school is key.

From experience, we find that when a child is developmentally ready and supported consistently, they can often complete toilet training in **two weeks or less**. Our goal is to make this a **positive, stress-free experience** through patience, encouragement, and partnership with families.

For questions or support during this process, please speak with your child's teacher or a member of the administrative team.

PARKING POLICY

LIFE Academy has a drop-off area by the doors. Due to the limit of the number of vehicles that may be in this area, please park in one of the parking spaces if you anticipate you will be in the building longer than 5-10 minutes. We strongly urge you to turn your car off and lock it when you come into drop-off or pick-up your child(ren). LIFE Academy is not responsible for items lost or stolen from cars or from the parking lot or facility.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

To minimize distractions and avoid lost or damaged items, we kindly ask that **personal toys and belongings be left at home**, unless your child is specifically asked to bring something for a classroom activity.

The only personal items allowed are:

- One small blanket

- **One comfort item** (e.g., a small stuffed animal)

These items will be kept in your child's **cubby** during the day, used only during **naptime**, and returned to the cubby afterward. All items **must be labeled** with your child's **first and last name** and must **fit in the designated cubby space**.

Please note:

- **No oversized blankets or pillows** will be allowed.
- **LIFE Academy is not responsible for lost or damaged personal items.**

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in helping us maintain a safe, organized, and respectful learning environment.

CLOTHING GUIDELINES

Children should come to LIFE Academy dressed in **comfortable, weather-appropriate clothing** that allows them to fully participate in active and messy play.

Please keep the following guidelines in mind:

- **Dress children according to the weather.** We go outside daily, including on chilly days, so a **jacket or coat** is required when temperatures are cool.
- **Closed-toe shoes** are mandatory. For safety, **no flip-flops, sandals, or open-toe shoes** are permitted.
- **Pajamas are not allowed** unless it is a designated pajama day.

Each child must have **at least two full changes of clothes** (shirt, pants, underwear, socks) stored at the center at all times. For children who are potty training, **multiple changes of underwear and clothes** are strongly recommended.

All clothing and outerwear—including jackets, coats, and hats—must be **clearly labeled** with your child's first and last name to avoid loss.

Your cooperation ensures that your child stays comfortable, safe, and ready to learn and play each day.

NAPTIME

LIFE Academy provides a daily **quiet rest or nap period** for all full-time children. We understand that **each child has different rest needs**, and we aim to accommodate those differences in a calm and respectful environment.

- Each child is provided with their own **mat or cot** for resting.
- Children who fall asleep will be allowed to nap.
- Children who do not sleep but are able to **rest quietly** may be given a small bag of **quiet toys or books** to use during this time.

Our goal is to create a peaceful environment where all children can **relax and recharge** for the rest of their day.

CLASSROOM TRANSITION PLAN

At LIFE Academy, we implement individualized Transition Plans to support children as they move from one

classroom to the next. These plans help children become familiar with their new environment, teachers, and peers. They also give the new teaching team an opportunity to understand each child's unique needs before the transition occurs.

Because every child develops at their own pace, each Transition Plan is tailored to best support their adjustment. Your child's teacher or the director will share specific details when a transition is approaching.

BABY-SITTING

LIFE Academy expects both parents and employees to avoid any activities that may create a conflict of interest with the center. If a parent chooses to arrange off-premises child care with a LIFE Academy staff member, it is important to understand that the staff member is providing this service independently—not as a representative of LIFE Academy.

LIFE Academy does not endorse, supervise, or assume responsibility for any off-site care provided by its employees. We make no guarantees regarding the suitability or qualifications of staff members for such private arrangements, and none should be implied.

PORTRAITS AND PICTURES

LIFE Academy offers school pictures twice a year—in the spring and fall. Throughout the year, we may also take candid photos of children during play, for classroom projects, to label cubbies, or for promotional purposes.

A **Photo Consent Form** is included in your enrollment paperwork. This form grants or denies permission for your child's photo to be taken and used by LIFE Academy. Please be sure to review and update this consent as needed.

FAMILY SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

Children don't come with an instruction manual, and we understand that parenting can sometimes come with questions or challenges. LIFE Academy is here to support families with resources and guidance when needed.

Parenting resources are available on our website, and printed informational flyers can be found near the sign-in tablet. We encourage families to take advantage of these materials and reach out if additional support is needed.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

At the end of each school year, LIFE Academy distributes a written parent survey to all families. Your feedback is valuable to us and helps guide improvements. Whenever possible, suggestions and survey results are used to enhance our preschool program and overall school experience.

PARENT'S RIGHTS

Form 2987 – October 2023

This form provides the required information per Chapter 42 of the Human Resource Code (HRC) Section 42.04271.

Rights of Parent or Guardian

A parent or guardian of a child at a child care facility has the right to:

1. Enter and examine the child care facility during the facility's hours of operation without advanced notice.
2. Review the child care facility's publicly accessible records.
3. Receive inspection reports for the child care facility and information about how to access the facility's online compliance history.
4. Obtain a copy of the child care facility's policies and procedures.
5. Review, at the request of the parent or guardian, the facility's:
 - o (A) Staff training records.
 - o (B) Any in-house staff training curriculum used by the facility.
6. Review the child care facility's written records concerning the parent's or guardian's child.
7. Inspect any video recordings of an alleged incident of abuse or neglect involving the parent's or guardian's child, provided that:
 - o (A) Video recordings of the alleged incident are available.
 - o (B) The parent or guardian of the child does not retain any part of the video recording depicting a child that is not their own.

- o (C) The parent or guardian of any other child captured in the video recording receives written notice from the facility before allowing a parent to inspect a recording.
- 8. Have the child care facility comply with a court order preventing another parent or guardian from visiting or removing the parent's or guardian's child.
- 9. Be provided the contact information for the child care facility's local Child Care Regulation office.
- 10. File a complaint against the child care facility by contacting the local Child Care Regulation office.
- 11. Be free from any retaliatory action by the child care facility for exercising any of the parent's or guardian's rights.

Resources

- Facility Information and Online Compliance History: <http://txchildcaresearch.org>
- Child Care Regulation Contact Information: <https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/safety/child-care/contact-child-care-regulation> Texas Health and Human Services+3The LUX School+3cdn.childrenslighthouse.com+3

ACTIVE SUPERVISION

Children are actively supervised at all times, including during classroom activities, outdoor play, meals, rest periods, toileting, transportation, and transitions.

Staff position themselves to maintain sight and sound supervision, scan the full environment, count children before and after every transition, verify attendance by name, and remain engaged with children rather than relying on cameras or electronic devices.

Classroom doors, furniture, learning centers, and outdoor areas are arranged to reduce blind spots. Staff communicate whenever responsibility for a group changes. No child may be left unattended in a classroom, restroom, vehicle, hallway, playground area, or other part of the operation.

SCREEN TIME AND TECHNOLOGY

Screen media is limited, educational, developmentally appropriate, and connected to classroom learning. It will not replace hands-on exploration, conversation, outdoor play, physical activity, creative experiences, or teacher-child interaction.

Teachers select content in advance and remain present to guide discussion and participation. Personal devices are not used by children during the program day unless an approved accommodation or instructional need has been documented.

CLEANING, SANITATION, AND INFECTION CONTROL

Frequently touched surfaces, learning materials, bathrooms, diapering areas, food-contact surfaces, and classroom equipment are cleaned and sanitized on a routine schedule and whenever contaminated.

Staff follow required handwashing, diapering, glove-use, food-safety, and bodily-fluid procedures. Items that have been mouthed or contaminated are removed from use until properly cleaned and sanitized. Families may be asked to replace personal items that cannot be safely cleaned.

DEVELOPMENTAL OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT

Teachers use ongoing observation, work samples, developmental checklists, and age-appropriate assessments to plan instruction and monitor progress. Assessment information is used to support learning, communicate with families, and identify areas that may benefit from additional support.

Screenings and classroom assessments are not medical diagnoses. When concerns arise, LIFE Academy will communicate with the family and may recommend consultation with the child's healthcare provider, local school district, Early Childhood Intervention, or another qualified professional.

SOCIAL MEDIA, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND CONFIDENTIALITY

LIFE Academy follows each child's current Media Release. Photos and videos may be used only within the permission selected by the parent or guardian.

Families, visitors, and staff may not photograph, record, post, forward, or publicly share images, identifying information, incident details, or private communications involving children other than their own. Concerns about a child, family, employee, or classroom must be addressed privately with administration.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITMENT

Texas Rising Star is Texas's quality rating and improvement system for child care programs. It supports care that goes beyond minimum Child Care Regulation standards by focusing on teacher-child interactions, staff development, curriculum, learning environments, program administration, and family engagement. LIFE Academy uses these practices to support safe, nurturing, high-quality early learning.

Program procedures may be revised when licensing requirements, quality standards, safety needs, or operational needs change. Families will receive written notice of material policy changes and may be asked to sign an updated acknowledgment.

IN CONCLUSION

We hope this handbook has been helpful in explaining LIFE Academy's guidelines and procedures. Please note that policies are subject to change at any time. If any updates occur, revised policies will be provided in writing and must be signed and returned by each family.

If you have any questions about our policies or procedures, we encourage you to speak with the Director. You're welcome to stop by the office, call us at (682) 224-6660, or email info@lifeacademyschools.com.

PARENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I acknowledge that I have received the LIFE Academy Parent Handbook, reviewed its policies and procedures, and understand that I am responsible for following the requirements described in this handbook.

I understand that the handbook is reviewed annually, that material policy changes may be provided in writing, and that I may be required to sign an updated acknowledgment. I also understand that the annual Holiday Closure Schedule is provided separately and may be updated with advance notice.

Child's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date:

Staff Signature

Date:

Please sign and return this page with your enrollment paperwork.