



Grace Lutheran School Parent Handbook

WELCOME

The congregation and staff of Grace Lutheran Church and School welcome you! We are proud to provide a Christian preschool with a safe, loving, supportive, and nurturing environment for your child. Our desire is to partner with you, the parent, by providing support and resources through these early childhood years. Thank you for choosing Grace Lutheran School!

MISSION STATEMENT

Living the Grace of God is the mission of Grace Lutheran Church, and Grace Lutheran School is a key ministry of Grace Lutheran Church. Grace Lutheran School's mission is to provide a place away from home and family where children can feel a sense of love, security and self-worth while learning about the love and grace of God through His son Jesus.

PHILOSOPHY

Believing a child is a gift from God endowed with unique abilities, Grace Lutheran School believes these qualities are best developed within a Christ-centered community that partners with parents and caregivers. With the help of committed Christian teachers, our purpose is to nurture a relationship with Jesus; give opportunities to be with other children in a setting conducive to the development of wholesome social relationships; provide appropriate play experiences which contribute to children's developmental needs; provide opportunities for learning based on individual needs and interests; and to set educational foundations which prepare children for entry into formal public education.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Grace Lutheran School supports and actively teaches the Mission Statement and Core Convictions of Grace Lutheran Church. Grace Lutheran School functions as a Christian family and is supportive and projects a positive attitude toward Grace Lutheran Church, and its Pastor and staff.

ENROLLMENT PRACTICES

Grace Lutheran School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national, or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarships, or other school-administered programs.

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OUR CURRICULUM AND PROGRAM EXTRAS

Current research indicates that ninety percent of a child's brain growth occurs from zero to five years of age, and during this time children learn best through direct interactive experiences. Children learn by doing – through play, experimentation, exploration, and trial and error. More formal learning and structured experiences are built on top of this important foundation that takes place in the preschool years. 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 while keeping this underlying principle in mind: What looks like “play” to adults is the “work” of the preschooler and our job is to facilitate that learning.

Each new age group is introduced to increased structure to help develop self-control, extended attention span, small muscle development, coordination, and social skills. In our three-year-old and Pre-K classes we utilize a variety of curriculum to teach beginning reading, math, and science skills with a continued emphasis on hands-on, experiential learning. Our center uses Abeka curriculum with a number of additional resources for history, math, and science.

Program Extras

- Children will participate in chapel led by the Grace Lutheran Church Pastor once a week. Bible stories, singing, and prayer will also be part of the daily activities for the children at GLS.
- Throughout the year we will invite a variety of guest speakers to the school to perform a demonstration for the children. These guests may include but are not limited to community helpers, such as police officers, fire fighters, nurses, dentists, service dog trainers, and other people whose jobs may be interesting and educational for young children.
- Other special events may include the following: Pumpkin Patch, Rodeo Days, Water Days, Fun Runs and Walks. Participation in these activities vary based on age and class schedule.
- GLS holds several large events each year in which the children participate. You will receive advance notice on all events and specific information regarding your child's participation from their teachers.

HOURS OF OPERATION AND TYPES OF CARE

Grace Lutheran School operates year-round, Monday through Friday. School year hours are 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Hours for holidays and summer sessions are 6:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Regular School Hours: 8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

The formal teaching part of the preschooler's day begins at 8:30 and ends at 2:30. For parents needing only this type of care, they may enroll their children in **Regular School Hours** and pay The Regular School Hours tuition package.

AM Care and PM Care

For parents needing additional safe supervision of children outside of the Regular School Hours, we offer additional care both in the morning hours before the school day begins (**AM Care**) and afternoon hours after the school day ends (**PM Care**). Parents requiring this additional care will pay for either the AM care or PM care package.

- **AM Care hours** are from 6:30 a.m.8:15 a.m. – Cereal bars can be provided to students arriving by 7:30 a.m.
- **PM Care hours** are from 2:45 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. – PM Care provides a safe, active environment for children to learn important social skills and have fun after a full academic day. Children will have the opportunity to play, explore, create, and learn from other children in various developmental stages. Typical activities include playground time, story time, centers, games, and simple crafts. Snacks will be provided.
- Parents should be aware that late child pick-up from extended care incurs an initial charge of \$30, then an additional \$1 for each 1 minute or portion thereof until the child is picked up.

Drop-In Care: Hourly or Daily

GLS offers two types of drop-in care. **Daily Drop-In Care** is for parents needing care on a day their children do not normally attend. They may do so provided space is available. Parents must make arrangements with the office staff and pay the \$60 fee in advance. The daily drop-in rate covers the hours from 6:30 am – 6:30 pm.

Hourly Drop-In Care is available for enrolled children who do not regularly utilize the extended care program. This care is available for a fee of \$10.00 per hour. To allow for planning, parents must contact the office in advance when they will be utilizing Hourly Drop-In Care.

Holiday Care

Holiday Care is offered during traditional break times such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Spring Break. Holiday Care hours are 6:30 to 6:00 at the daily rate of \$60. A two-week notice and pre-payment are required for this care. No refunds for Holiday Care will be given after the Friday before the holiday because the number of teachers needed to maintain a safe ratio will already have been determined and scheduled.

ADMISSION POLICIES

Enrollment in the GLS program will be open to any child, provided the school can meet the need of that child.

- A \$150 non-refundable registration fee is due at the time of enrollment.
- A \$100 supply fee is due at the beginning of each semester. (**September** and **February**)
- Families who return the next school year will be eligible for a discounted registration fee for that school year.

- All forms in the enrollment packet must be completed before your child can be enrolled.
- Registration Fees are not refundable.
- Students enrolling after the start of the school year will have the first month prorated.

PAYMENT PROCEDURES

- A current tuition schedule is included in your enrollment packet.
- **Tuition payments are due on the 1st of each month.**
- GLS offers convenient automatic tuition payments through **Tuition Express**.
- **ACH Autodraft**- all ACH drafts will be set up to automatically charge on the 1st of the month.
- **Cash** – for those accounts desiring to pay in cash, those payments are to be made in person to the front desk on the 1st of each month.
- It is your responsibility to keep your account information for ACH Autodraft current. If payment is refused by your bank, we will notify you of the occurrence and ask you to resolve the matter promptly. However, your payment responsibility will remain subject to our late fee and delinquency policies. Any costs or fees incurred by GLS as the result of a refused bank charge will be your responsibility and will be added to your account.
- Failure to pay monthly tuition by the 3rd of each month will place your child’s enrollment at risk.
- It is imperative that families in financial distress communicate with the Director or Assistant Director in order to create a financial plan that is mutually beneficial.

All tuition payments are non-refundable. Because of budgeting and staffing needs, no tuition credit or make-up days can be given for a child’s absences. Families with a balance at the end of the school year will not be eligible for reenrollment until the balance is paid, and student records will not be released until the balance is paid.

DISCOUNTS

Families who enroll multiple children will pay full tuition for the oldest child and receive a 10% discount for each additional child.

WITHDRAWAL and REFUNDS

Parents who wish to withdraw their child(ren) from Grace Lutheran School must notify the Director in writing two weeks in advance. Telling the teacher does not qualify as notification. Parents are responsible for tuition throughout the entire notice period. Partial month tuition will not be refunded.

DROP OFF AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

Children must be signed in and out by the custodial parent or adult person approved by the parent(s). Parents who fail to sign in or out may be charged a \$5 penalty for each occurrence. Signing In and out is a state of Texas requirement. Please understand that due to liability issues, staff of GLS are not permitted to take children home from our center.

Regular School Hours: 8:30 to 2:30 PM Drop Off

- Every student must be signed in and signed out by the parent, legal guardian, or designated emergency contact. This person must be 18 or older.
- Children may be dropped off in their classrooms between 8:15 and 8:30; as soon as the teacher is available (no child may be left in a classroom without a teacher present).
- At 2:30 PM, students will be released to parents/legal guardians and adults who have been designated on the authorized pick-up list. See Dismissal Procedures.

Extended Care AM Drop Off

- Every student must be signed in and signed out by the parent, legal guardian, or designated emergency contact. This person must be 18 or older.

Regular School Hours Dismissal

A car line is available for all parents who wish to participate. The following guidelines are intended to protect your child.

- Dismissal will begin at 2:30 pm and end at 2:45 pm.
- Each family will receive two GLS Car Rider placards. A placard must be displayed in the windshield on the right side of the vehicle when you pick up your child. We will not release your child to anyone who is not on your child's emergency card without your prior written consent. Anyone who is not the parent or regular driver and anyone who does not display the placard in the window of his or her vehicle will be asked to park and come inside to sign their child out while we check for authorization and driver's license. Children will not be released to a minor.
- Please be patient and remain in your vehicle until you reach the horseshoe driveway.
- Form a single line along the right curb in the horseshoe driveway in front of the school. Please pull forward to the awning (first cone) to make room for other cars along the curb.
- Please pay attention to all signs, cones, and signals made by the staff members.
- Please stand outside your vehicle at the curb. A staff member will bring your child (ren) to you.
- Quickly but safely buckle in your child(ren).
- THE CAR LINE IS A CELL PHONE FREE ZONE.

Parents who do not wish to participate in the car line may park in a parking space and come to the front door facing the parking lot to pick up their children directly from their classroom. Please observe the handicap parking signs.

PARENTS' SUPPLY LIST

Parents are asked to send a full-sized backpack (or suitable diaper bag for infants) equipped with the following items to school with your child every day:

- **Nutritious lunch:**
 Each student must bring his or her own lunch and drink in a lunch box clearly marked with his or her name. Please include a “freezer pack” to keep cold foods cold. Help us in promoting good health and nutrition by including fresh or dried fruits, fresh vegetables, cheese, peanut butter (If we are informed a student in your child’s class has a serious allergy to foods such as peanut butter, we will ask that you not send these foods in your child’s lunch), or meat sandwiches, dry cereal, and/or fruit juice or milk. Please limit sugary foods and avoid carbonated and caffeinated beverages.
- **Extra Clothes:**
 Please provide a shirt, shorts/pants/skirt, underwear, and socks in a plastic bag and check regularly so the correct size stays in your child’s backpack.
- **Necessary Rest-time Items:**
 Each child must bring a rest mat and cover at the beginning of the school year and summer session. These items will be stored in the classrooms, and the cover will be sent home periodically for washing. Children may also bring a blanket and, if necessary, a security item (pacifier, teddy bear, etc.) to help them rest more easily. Pre-K students do not need a rest mat. Pre-K does have a rest time, but they do not use nap-mats. Please don’t send expensive or sentimental bedding or clothing.
- **Sweater or Jacket:**
 Weather-permitting, children will be taken outside to play on a daily basis. On cool days, send a sweater or jacket for your child. Make sure to label it with your child’s first name and last initial.
- **Infants and Toddlers:**
 Infants and toddlers require diapers and formula and/or baby food. It is a good idea to send a familiar blanket from home if the child is over 12 months. We are unable to put blankets and soft bedding in the cribs of infants under 12 months. A warm sleeper is more suitable for that age. The State of Texas has eliminated swaddlers for use with infants; we provide sleep sacks for our infants to use while sleeping. We wash all infant items in hypoallergenic soap, but you are welcome to provide your own sheets if you feel more comfortable doing so.
- Please make sure your child’s backpack, blanket, and each item inside are clearly marked with your child’s first name and last initial.

HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICIES

Each child enrolled must meet applicable immunization requirements according to their age as specified by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Immunizations

Current immunization records must be provided to GLS upon enrollment. It is the parents' responsibility to keep these records updated. Parents opting not to immunize their children must provide an acceptable statement or affidavit that meets the standards of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Tuberculosis testing requirements are set by the county health department. They are not required at this time but could be required in the future.

Vision and Hearing Screening

In accordance with state guidelines, all children who are four years of age by September 1st are required to be screened for hearing and vision problems. Please provide a copy of the screening result to GLS administration.

Illnesses

- Any child who has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher by mouth, vomiting (one time or more), diarrhea (two or more episodes in a 24-hour period), or other symptoms of illness will not be admitted to class.
- If a child becomes ill at school, he or she will be separated from other students (for his or her and other students' protection) and must be picked up immediately/within one hour, by a parent/guardian or an adult designated on the authorized pick up list.
- In the event of severe illness or injury or if a parent fails to pick up their child within a reasonable amount of time, GLS may call for an ambulance at the parent's expense.
- Symptoms for which a child may be sent home include but are not limited to:
 - Fever
 - Profuse colored nasal discharge
 - Reddened or discharging eyes
 - Diarrhea or vomiting
 - Constant coughing, sneezing, or wheezing
 - Rash, sore throat, or abdominal pain
 - Injury
 - Head Lice (Students who have head lice must have all nits removed and a GLS supervisor must check their head before they can return to school).

For the health and safety of all children, please do not return your child to school until she or he is fever free (without the use of fever-reducing medication for 24 hours) and symptom-free.

Doctor's Note Required

A doctor's note is required before returning to school for any child who has been diagnosed with one of the following childhood communicable diseases.

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Chicken Pox | Pneumonia | Roto Virus | Scabies |
| Measles | Hepatitis A | Hand, Foot, Mouth | Scarlet Fever |
| Mumps | Bacterial Meningitis | Ringworm | Viral Meningitis |
| Whooping Cough | Impetigo | Pinworms | Strep Throat |
| Pink Eye | Covid 19 | | |

Communicable Diseases

In the event of a positive test result of a communicable disease, GLS will follow the guidelines of the local Health Department in regard to quarantine and isolation.

Food Allergies/Dietary Restrictions

It is important that we know about any allergies or dietary restrictions your child may have. Included in the enrollment packet is a section addressing allergies and dietary restrictions. Each child having allergies must have an **Allergy Emergency Plan signed by a health care professional*** on file with administration.

All food allergies of GLS children will be posted on our Parent information board (no name listed) and a food allergy alert/plan posted anywhere the child will have food or any room in which the child spends time.

If a food allergy is life-threatening (anaphylactic reaction/shock), that food will not be allowed that classroom. Notice of a food restriction such as this will be posted outside the classroom.

Dietary Preferences or Restrictions

For children having dietary preferences or restrictions that are not life threatening, we ask that you fill out and sign the **Dietary Restriction Emergency Plan/Alert***. This plan will be posted in the same manner as allergy plan alerts.

Help us to keep your children safe by listing all of your child's allergies/dietary restrictions on the GLS Enrollment Paperwork. We will take every precaution to prevent your child from coming in contact with the allergen(s). Please understand, and we are not responsible for the food brought into the classrooms.

*These forms are available in the administration office.

Medications

We prefer that medications be administered by the parent outside of school hours. However, in the event that medication must be given during the school day, it will only be administered to a child under the supervision of administrative personnel.

The Following Must Take Place:

- All prescription medication must be in its original container with the child's name and dosage, as prescribed by the child's doctor.
- All over-the-counter medication, including sunscreens, must have age-appropriate dosages clearly marked (in English) on the label. Over-the-counter medications without age-appropriate dosages will not be administered without written permission from the child's doctor.
- Parents must complete an authorization form prior to the medication being administered and must deliver the medication in a zip-lock bag labeled with the child's name to the front office. The authorization forms are valid for one year or the expiration date the parent has written. **Never leave medication in your child's backpack.**
- Medicine that has reached its expiration date will not be administered.
- It is the parent's responsibility to pick up the medication at the end of the day. We will not send it home in the child's backpack.
- Medication can be given one time with verbal authorization per school year.

Medical Emergency Procedures

- In case of minor injury or accident, the GLS staff will administer first aid. All injuries or illnesses not requiring immediate parental notification will be documented and reported to parents when the child is picked up at the end of the day.
- In case of medical injury or illness requiring immediate professional care (emergency), the staff will call 911, giving location and nature of emergency. As appropriate, the staff will administer CPR or first aid measures. Parents will be notified immediately. If parents are unavailable, those individuals designated as emergency phone contacts will be notified. All children must have an emergency medical release form on file in case of such an emergency.
- If a child ingests or comes in contact with a poisonous substance the staff will contact the Poison Control Center 1 (800) 222-1222.

Safe Sleep Practice/Policy

- All staff, substitute staff, and volunteers at will follow 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).
- **Safe sleep practices include the follow:**
 - 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.
 - If an infant needs extra warmth, we will provide sleep sacks 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 child care program is smoke-free. Smoking is not allowed in Texas child care 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.

There is no registered nurse on campus. All GLS employees are trained in CPR and first aid. Staff members will document accidents and send home reports in a timely manner. In the event of a serious or life-threatening emergency, we will call 911 and contact the parent guardian or designated adult immediately.

Fire and Emergency Preparedness Plans

GLS emergency preparedness plan includes three emergency procedures to address Fire, Bad Weather, and Intruder Threat*. These drills are practiced in accordance with our licensing requirements and are posted in each classroom. In the event of campus wide evacuation, we will leave our classrooms using the Fire Route assigned in each room and meet in the grassy area between the chapel and school. After all are accounted for, we will proceed in coordination with the local fire department, as a school, across the lot next door to the parking area of Living Branch Church and Promised Land Learning Center. Parents will be contacted for an emergency pick up in this area.

Living Branch Church
13229 TX-105
Conroe, TX 77304

- In case of a small fire or gas leak in the building, children will be evacuated to the church building, and parents will be called to pick up their children.
- In keeping with state-mandated safety guidelines, we conduct fire drills on a monthly basis and severe weather drills once every three months.

- In case of inclement weather, such as a tornado or hurricane, we move all children to interior classrooms away from glass doors and windows. We follow Montgomery ISD's lead with regard to school closures due to inclement weather or natural events, such as wildfires. (See INCLEMENT WEATHER.)
- In case of an intruder in the building or threatening individual in the area, we will implement lockdown procedures: all teachers will be instructed to close and lock classroom doors, and we will call 911.

Inclement Weather

If Montgomery ISD closes its campuses due to hurricanes, flooding, or other crisis situations, Grace Lutheran School will follow suit. Also, weather-related loss of electricity at our facility may make closing GCS necessary. We will make every effort to publish that information on our website and/or the front door of the school; if your child is in our care at the time power is lost, we will contact you to pick up your child. We will also use **Remind101** in emergency situations. Tuition will not be refunded in such situations.

GUIDANCE AND DISCIPLINE

In order to maintain a classroom environment that is beneficial to all students, it is necessary for each child to practice appropriate behavior. Our goal is to teach children how to make good choices when interacting with their peers and adults, and our discipline will be positive and age appropriate. We will follow the following guidelines when administering discipline.

Discipline must be:

1. Individualized and consistent for each child.
2. Appropriate to the child's level of understanding.
3. Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control and self-direction which include at least one of the following:

1. Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior.
2. Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily using clear, positive statements.
3. Redirecting behavior using positive statements.
4. Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.

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

1. Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment.
2. Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training.
3. Pinching, shaking, or biting a child.
4. Hitting a child with a hand or instrument.

5. Putting anything in or on a child's mouth.
6. Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child.
7. Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language.
8. Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom or closet with the door closed.
9. Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long period of time

The following is considered unacceptable behavior:

- Throwing toys, rocks, sand.
- Aggressive behavior towards others (hitting, biting, spitting, kicking).
- Inappropriate language.
- Running out of the classroom or away from the teacher.
- Disruptive, uncooperative attitude that does not respond to correction.
- Need for on-gong individual care from a staff member.

If attempts to manage a child's behavior within the classroom is ineffective, a child may be sent home and a conference arranged with the parents to decide the best course of action.

The following courses of action may be considered:

- **Shadowing** is the assignment of a caregiver for a child who behaves aggressively (i.e. biting) toward other children. The caregiver remains near the child at all times in order to redirect him/her and protect other children. Should shadowing be required, the parent will be charged additional fees to cover the cost of staffing.
- **Suspension** is a temporary dismissal of a child from school for behaviors that include but are not limited to hitting, kicking, biting, teasing, and other aggressive behaviors. Nonaggressive behaviors, including but not limited to persistently disobeying instruction and severely disrespecting classroom and school guidelines, may also lead to suspension. A period of suspension may range from 2 to 30 days, depending on the severity of the offense.
- **Expulsion** is dismissal from Grace Lutheran School and is reserved for extreme cases when a variety of disciplinary actions has not positively impacted a student's negative behavior.
- **Tuition is not refundable in cases of suspension or dismissal.**

COMMUNICATION

The success of our program is based on establishing a partnership between our parents and our staff. We will endeavor to keep you informed concerning your child's day and overall development through several mediums.

- **Email:** Our primary means of communication with parents and the community is by email. You can communicate directly with the Director at lauren.young@glscnroe.org
- **Website:** Our website will keep you informed of upcoming events and relevant news. glscnroe.org

- **Facebook:** Our Facebook page (**Grace Lutheran School**) has up-to-date information as well as pictures of daily GLS activities
- **Remind101:** Upon your child's admission, you will be added to our group text system, Remind101. Our teachers will use Remind as a quick way to communicate and to send reminders, and we will use Remind in the event we need to contact parents with important information and emergency situations, such as school closings.

PARENT CONDUCT

GLS must follow particular rules on discipline and guidance as outlined in the Texas Minimum Standards for Child Care Centers. All adults, including parents, must follow these rules while on our property. If you would like to go to their website, it is:

http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/child_care_standards_and_regulations/

- Please understand, young children are present in our building. Some adult language is not appropriate for young children. GLS prohibits swearing or cursing in our facility.
- Threatening staff, children or other parents will not be tolerated per Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. GLS has the right to terminate care in the event of disruptive behavior from a parent or guardian.
- Open Carry is not permitted on our property per Texas Penal Code 46.035

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

There are several ways you can help us maintain the best possible teaching atmosphere for your child:

- Communicate in writing or by email any concerns regarding our program or your child immediately to the Director.
- Pick up and read the notices and information in your child's backpack and/or posted in the classroom, in the office, Remind101 or in e-mail.
- Pick up your child's papers/projects daily. Their work is very important to them and provides another means of communication between parent and child and helps the parent share in the child's day.
- Be aware of the scheduled meal and nap times and make sure your child arrives in time to be included.
- Periodically check out your child's supply of extra clothing, making sure it is clean, still fits, and is appropriate for the season.
- In order avoid confusion with school toys and a child's personal property, we ask that children not bring playthings from home. GLS staff cannot be responsible for lost or broken personal toys.
 - Two exceptions to this are a stuffed animal for use at naptime and an item brought for Show & Tell purposes. You will be notified by your child's teacher when the class has Show & Tell time.

CHILD CUSTODY

GLS does not get involved in custody disputes. GLS will follow a court order exactly as written. If your family has a court order on file, please provide us with the most recent copy. PLEASE NOTE: PER STATE LAW, IN THE ABSENCE OF A COURT ORDER, BOTH PARENTS HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS. It is imperative that all enrollment forms are completed with both parents' information. A copy of a child's birth certificate may be requested at the Director's discretion. In the event that a custody dispute takes place on our property, the local police will be called and asked to handle the dispute. If a custody issue creates a risk for our facility or staff, GLS has the right to terminate care.

GRIEVANCES

We welcome open communication between parents and staff because we believe it is through open communication that issues are avoided and peacefully resolved. We will do our best to use the Biblical model for conflict resolution found in Matthew 18:

15 "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. 16 But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' 17 If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. 18 "Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19 "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

If you have a concern, we ask that you please use the following procedure:

- Avoid discussing the matter - in person, by email, or on social media websites - with those not directly involved.

In matters related to the classroom:

- Speak directly with the teacher about your concern privately, away from the children, and outside of class time.
- If the situation is not resolved, speak to the Director or Assistant Director, who will schedule a conference with all parties involved in order to seek a reasonable solution.
- If you believe that the administration's solution somehow violates the policies in this handbook you may appeal to the GLS School Board by submitting your grievance in writing to the Board. The matter may be addressed in a school board meeting or in a separate conference with a school board member.

In matters unrelated to the classroom:

- Address the concerns directly to the Director or Assistant Director.
- If you believe that the administration's solution somehow violates the policies in this handbook you may appeal to the GLS School Board by submitting your grievance in writing to the Board. The matter may be addressed in a school board meeting or in a separate conference with a school board member.

MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

Physical Education

GLS is committed to effective physical education and promotion of indoor and outdoor physical activity. Outdoor play also extends opportunities for large muscle development, social-emotional development, and small muscle development by offering variety, challenge, and complexity. While at GLS, Students engage in a minimum of one hour daily of physical education through Recess, P.E. class and utilizing the Imagination Playroom. Recess and the Imagination Playroom offer opportunities for unstructured indoor and outdoor play while P.E. Class offers opportunities for structured indoor play regardless of weather conditions. Close toed rubber bottom shoes, bloomers under skirts and non-restrictive clothing will allow a child to participate freely and safely in physical activities

Breast Feeding

Grace Lutheran School will provide a comfortable place with an adult sized seat that enables a mother to breastfeed her child. Parents may also provide breast milk for their child to be served while in our care.

Potty Training

Although potty training is not a part of the preschool curriculum, our staff will be happy to support you in your efforts. Because we know each child is different and develops at his or her own natural pace, we will not refuse admission of a child based solely on whether she or he is potty-trained. Please communicate your individual needs to your child's teacher, who will assist you in a reasonable manner. While we will not force a frustrated or distressed child to sit on the toilet, we will provide regular opportunities to go to the restroom and implement simple reward systems at the parent's request. Non-flushing potty chairs and potty seats are not permitted. In potty training rooms the child will be placed in a pull up when accidents happen that may cause unsanitary conditions.

Biting

Biting is a common issue in early child development. The best way to deal with biting is consistency between childcare providers and parents. Biting could occur for multiple reasons. Proper communication will help determine why a child is biting. When biting becomes a problem, GLS staff will work with parents to resolve the issue as soon as possible.

Visitors

Parents and family members are welcome to visit their child(ren)'s classroom any time. For the safety of our students all visitors are required to enter through the front doors and check in at the front office. They must present a valid driver's license or other acceptable form of ID, sign the visitor log, and wear a visitor badge at all times. No child will be released to anyone other than a parent/legal guardian or an adult pre-approved on the GLS Emergency Card.

If you wish to celebrate your child's birthday with his or her class, please coordinate with your child's teacher and the administration in advance to be sure you know how many children are in the class and that the time and date do not conflict with a planned activity. Treats are acceptable, but please accommodate for the food allergies in your child's class.

Photographs/Videos

GLS believes in the benefit of using real life pictures and videos in our educational program.

- We will not use photographs or videos of your child without your permission
- Permission is given or denied by initialing the proper paperwork in the enrollment packet
- Parents taking pictures/videos of events held at our center, may only photograph/record their child, unless written permission is given by the other parent.
- During certain parent events, such as Pre-K graduation, Christmas programs and Carnivals, photographs/videos may be taken. If you wish for your child not to be photographed/recorded, you may want to remove them from these events.

Facebook

Grace Lutheran School has a Facebook page that is regularly updated with school activities, notifications and photographs. It is a public page. Teachers have the discretion to have a private Facebook page/group for their classrooms to post daily pictures and activities throughout the day.

Cell Phones

Proper parent communication is imperative when working with young children; however, it is difficult to supervise children properly when cell phones are in use. Effective December 1, 2010, the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services passed new regulations prohibiting the personal use of cell phones in classrooms. Please help us stay in compliance with this new standard by not contacting your child's teacher by his/her cell phone. Contact our office at 936-588-3020 if you need to convey information regarding your child to the teacher.

TRANSPORTATION/FIELD TIPS

Grace Lutheran School does not provide transportation or offer off campus field trips.

REPORT OF CHILD ABUSE

Every person, including Grace Lutheran School personnel, having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect by any person is required by law to report to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services or Children's Protective Services. The number for the Child Abuse Hotline is 1-800-252-5400. Timing and source for notification of the child's parents will be at the recommendation of DFPS or CPS. When a report of suspected child abuse is made in good faith, the reporting person is immune from any liability.

GLS employees, as part of required annual training hours, receive instruction about child abuse, neglect, and exploitation. We receive newsletter and updates from Prevent Child Abuse, Texas. Information may be obtained from the following agencies:

Prevent Child Abuse, Texas
13740 Research, Ste. R-4
Austin, TX 78750
512-250-8438
www.preventchildabusetexas.org

The Children’s Assessment Center
2500 Bolsover St.
Houston, TX 77005
713-986-3300
cachouston.org

GANG-FREE ZONE

As a licensed childcare center, Grace Lutheran School is designated as a gang-free zone. Be aware that certain gang-related criminal activity or engaging in organized criminal activity within 1000 feet of GLS is a violation of sections 71.028 and 71.029 of the Texas Penal Code and is therefore subject to increased penalty under state law.

NOTIFICATIONS

This handbook applies to the 2022-2023 school year and following summer sessions and is subject to change. Parents will be notified of changes in writing. This handbook is intended to promote fairness and safety. If you have any questions about any of the above policies, do not hesitate to contact the school Director.

State-regulated Minimum Standards are available in our front office or online at http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Documents/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations_746.pdf. The local licensing office may be contacted at (936) 441-1775. Each year we are inspected by a representative of the DFPS. The most recent inspection report is always posted on the bulletin board in the foyer, and we welcome any questions regarding its contents.