

**St. Mark Lutheran School
Early Childhood Handbook**



St. Mark
LUTHERAN
CHURCH & SCHOOL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome	3
Mission Statements	4
General Goals of the Toddler Program at St. Mark	4
Spiritual Exposures	5
Enrollment.....	5
Non Discriminatory Policy, Admission Priority	
Look at Them Learning	6
Learning with Art Materials, Manipulatives, Block Play, Books & Puzzles, Dramatic Play, Outdoor Play and Gym Play, Group Time, Water Activities	
Learning Goals and Objectives of Key Experiences	7
Discipline Policy	8
Naptime & Safe Sleep	9
Conflict Resolution & Grievances	10
Hours of Operation	11
Campus Visitors.....	11
Sign In and Out, Custodial Parents, Non-Custodial Parent	
Miscellaneous	12
Gang-Free Zone, Contact Information for TX. Dept. of Family & Protective Services, Minimum Standards & Most Recent Licensing Report, Communication, Holidays, Clothing, Lost and Found, Toys, Inclement Weather, Children’s Biting Guidelines	
Food and Nutrition.....	15
Cafeteria Services, Class Parties and Birthdays, Breastfeeding	
Health & Safety Rules	17
Illness or Accidents, Medication Policy, Medical Records and Health Requirements, Food Allergies & Limitations, Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect, Emergency Drills	
Parental Role.....	21
Financial Responsibilities	21
Registration, Tuition Management System, Overdue Accounts, Returned Checks, Exceptions	
St. Mark Toddler Program Parent Agreement	23
Prescription Medication Form	24
Over-the-Counter Medication Form	25

AS YOU PREPARE FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Be positive when you speak with your child about school.

Do not tell them too much; they don't know what you are talking about if they have not been to school.

Arrive on time; some children feel very insecure and threatened when arriving late and activity is in progress.

Spend a **brief** moment looking at the classroom and then cheerfully and in assuring tones bid good-bye to your child.

Some children will take time to adjust; it is much easier for the staff to encourage this adjustment after you are gone. Lingering good-byes are not helpful to the child, staff or parent.

Trust us! Hopefully you have asked questions and observed St. Mark and are now ready to trust us with your child: We will honor that trust!

We place this year in the hands of our loving Father and look expectantly for His blessings!

Welcome to the St. Mark Church and School family! We are glad to have you with us and hope you will soon feel comfortable and realize that you are a vital part of St. Mark Lutheran School.

St. Mark Lutheran Church Mission Statement

In response to God's call, we live to seek, strengthen, and send fully devoted disciples for Christ.

St. Mark Lutheran School Mission Statement

Our mission is to assist parents in their God-given responsibility to educate their children spiritually, mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically - as each one discovers his or her life purpose in response to God's call to seek, strengthen, and send out disciples for Christ.

Our Purpose

- To bring each child into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- To assist families by providing a program of Christian education with faith development geared towards young children
- To develop the whole child by enriching their needs through guidance of qualified and caring teachers.

General Goals of the Toddler Program at St. Mark

- To provide a Christian environment and a caring, nurturing staff to work with each child as a unique individual
- To provide experiences which allow each child to develop a loving relationship with Jesus Christ
- To assist children in the exploration of feelings, attitudes and behaviors thereby helping children develop an understanding of themselves and others
- To build confidence of each child by teaching new skills
- To prepare each child for the next level of learning

Spiritual Exposures

The overall goal is that young children will know Jesus as their Savior. Each classroom will have daily Bible stories which may include songs, puppets, crafts, object lessons, and finger plays. It is our desire to nurture the child with God's love.

Goals:

1. To develop a personal relationship with God.
2. To share God's love in relationships with others.
3. To appreciate God's wonder in our relationships with the world.

Enrollment

Non Discriminatory Policy

St. Mark Lutheran Toddler Program 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 and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, scholarship and loan programs and athletic and other school administered programs.

St. Mark Toddler Program is a ministry of St. Mark Lutheran Church and School. We are licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and will meet or exceed the Minimum Standard Rules for Licensed Child Care Centers.

Children who are between 6 weeks and three years old are eligible to enroll.

Admission Priority

Order of Priority

1. Members of St. Mark
2. Siblings of students already enrolled at St. Mark
3. Member of another LCMS Church
4. Others

Look at Them Learning!

Learning with Art Materials

As children work with art materials, they make many choices. They visually discriminate between colors as they draw and paint, between shapes as they make collages and work with construction paper cutouts, and between textures as they work with fabric scraps. This ability to visually discriminate is a skill children need in the early stages of reading in order to discriminate between forms. The children also exercise the small muscles in their hand and fingers as they work with crayons, scissors, paintbrushes and manipulatives. Art materials provide children with a safe way of expressing thoughts and feelings that they are not prepared to verbalize.

Learning with Manipulatives

The children will develop fine motor skills as they work with various manipulatives. These fine motor skills prepare children to hold and control pencils when later forming letters and words.

Learning through Block Play

The children gain skill in estimation as they consider how much space they will need for a block structure, how many blocks they will need to complete a block structure and how many blocks they will need in order to build a tower as tall as their neighbors. Children learn about balance and classifying as they group blocks according to size and shape.

Learning with Books

Children begin to understand that the symbols we recognize as letters have meaning, that sentences are read in a left-to-right pattern and that illustrations, as well as words, can be “read” for meaning. They also develop language skills as they talk about the contents of the books. They learn to use language to retell a story in sequence.

Learning with Puzzles

Children will begin to understand the relationship between part and whole.

Learning through Dramatic Play

Dramatic play offers children safe avenues to explore their fears, anger and anxieties. By pretending to be doctors, kings, ladies, etc. they are given the opportunity to work through many of the issues they confront in their own lives.

Learning through Outdoor Play and Gym Play

As children climb, run and slide, they are talking, using language to create rules and singing rhymes. They also learn to work at and resolve dilemmas such as who will have the next turn on the slide, trike or with a ball in the gym. Finally, the children will develop large muscles in the arms and legs through their play.

Learning through Group Time

Children learn to operate in a large group setting. The children learn to sit in a group and listen to the teacher and other children talk. Attention span increases, social skills develop (such as keeping hands to oneself) and the child's participation helps develop self-esteem and self-confidence.

Water Activities

Children enrolled at St. Mark participate in sprinkler and wading pool play in the summer months (June, July, and August). Tiny Tots, Waddlers, Toddlers, and those Two's children in diapers will need to wear or provide swim diapers. All children will need a bathing suit, towel to dry off on, and water or tennis shoes that they can get wet. Parents will be notified in advance of water play days.

Learning Goals and Objectives of Key Experiences:

Jesus Time is One in Christ for Infants through Two's. Each weekly Bible story is used to show each child the love of Jesus from the time they come to school in the morning until they go home.

Our Infants use HighReach Bright Baby. The first year is an exciting time with lots of exploration and discovery. Our monthly themes and activities engage the infants in interactive experiences that involve sensory, motor, and social explorations to build brain connections.

Tiny Tots, Waddlers and Toddlers use Buttercups through Funshine Express. These monthly theme activity kits develop gross and fine motor skills, as well as provide sign language, music, vocabulary development, art, cognitive (such as colors and shapes, etc.), social, and sensory experiences.

Our Twos classes use Firefly through Funshine Express. The monthly activity kits create enthusiasm for learning and introduce school readiness skills. These skills provide opportunity for the children to explore shapes, colors and counting, alphabet and number recognition, Spanish, vocabulary development, art, social and sensory experiences.

Discipline Policy

A word concerning discipline: in accordance with our beliefs – God’s love and forgiveness will be the motivating factor in our interactions. The safety of the child himself and playmates necessitate boundaries in which the child can feel secure. A certain amount of structure, not to inhibit creativity, but to allow for a day that runs smoothly, will be taught the first several weeks until the children know what is expected at certain times. From experience, we have found that this allows a lot more time and freedom to pursue spontaneous experiences throughout the year.

Per the guidelines set by the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services in the Minimum Standards for Licensed Child-Care Centers, the following policies will be upheld.

Discipline must be:

- Individualized and consistent for each child;
- Appropriate to the child’s level of understanding; and
- Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.

Staff will use only positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:

- Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
- Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
- 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:

- Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
- Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
- Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
- Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
- Putting anything in or on a child’s mouth;
- Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;

- Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
- Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed; and
- Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

The staff of St. Mark will make every attempt to redirect negative behavior. If negative behavior persists, a conference will be scheduled with the parent, teacher and the director. In some cases behavior may indicate developmental delays and could necessitate evaluation by a qualified specialist. This evaluation may be required for your child to continue in our program. Any child who continually jeopardizes the safety of him or herself, other children, and/or staff will be asked to leave the program if corrective measures are not successful.

Naptime & Safe Sleep

Per the guidelines set by the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services in the Minimum Standards for Licensed Child-Care Centers, the following policies will be upheld for naptime and safe sleep.

In our Infant and Tiny Tot classrooms:

- 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, the cribs will be bare except for a tight fitting sheet and a mattress cover or protector. Items that will 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 will not have their heads, faces, or cribs covered at any time by items such as blankets, linens, or clothing.
- We will 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 use sleeping sacks as an alternative to blankets.
- We will 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), we will 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).
- We will actively observe sleeping infants by sight and sound.
- If an infant is able to roll back and forth from front to back, we will 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.
- We will 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.

In our Waddler, Toddler, and Two's classroom:

- We will ensure that sleeping areas are ventilated and at a temperature that is comfortable for a lightly clothed adult.
- We will place only one child on a cot to sleep. If they are not walking, they will be placed in a crib.
- Your child may bring a cloth nap mat, crib sheet or blanket and a small pillow (optional).

Conflict Resolution & Grievances

Students, parents, teachers, and administrators at St. Mark are encouraged to work in partnership toward the common goal of excellence in Christian education. This requires a climate of respect, understanding, and tolerance. When questions or conflicts arise, they should be addressed courteously and directly with the individual involved. The Biblical directive for conflict resolution at St. Mark Lutheran School is found in Matthew 18: 15-17.

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

It is clear from Scripture that a parent is to discuss concerns regarding a teacher's decisions or actions directly with the teacher. Other people should not be involved and the parent should avoid making negative comments to the student. The following steps should be followed for any grievance or matter of concern at St. Mark Lutheran School:

- parent and teacher conference
- parent and Director conference
- appeal to the Board of Day School Ministries

Questions and Concerns

Parents may email, call or meet face-to-face with the director to discuss any questions or concerns about any of St. Mark's policies or procedures. Feedback is always welcome and appreciated.

Hours of Operation

The St. Mark Lutheran Toddler Program hours are from 8 am to 3 pm or an extended day from 7 am to 6 pm. **Children must be signed in and out with the time and parent's initials each day.** Please make sure to sign the roll sheet as you arrive to drop off your child and at the end of the day as you are leaving with your child.

Part time classes are available on a 2 day option on Tuesdays and Thursdays or a 3 day option on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Parents who have their child in the part time program must adhere to the same days agreed upon at registration. **There are no make-up days for absences, illness or holidays.**

St. Mark Lutheran Toddler Program is open from 7 am to 6 pm. Please make every effort to be on time to pick up your child. A late fee of \$1 per minute will be charged for every minute you are late past the child's **scheduled** pick up time. Any late fees will be documented and added to your monthly statement. If you have an emergency and will be late, please call the school office at 713 468 2623.

Campus Visitors

Signing In and Out

Any time a visitor comes to campus they are asked to check in with their photo ID at the Welcome Desk and get a visitor badge. When leaving, please check out as well. This is another step to ensure the safety of our campus for everyone involved. Any time a parent comes to campus, they are asked to show their Cougar Cub badge for the current school year at the Welcome Desk. If you don't have your badge, you'll need to check in as a visitor.

Children will only be released to their parents and those adults listed on their emergency information form on file. People who do not pick up your child on a normal basis and are on the emergency information form for release should be prepared to show their driver's license or picture ID. Parents may also give written permission to the classroom teacher or Director if someone not on their emergency information form will be picking up.

Custodial Parents

Custodial parents are welcome to visit the school at any time. If you would like to schedule a conference, please contact your child's teacher or the director. Many of our parents also perform a variety of volunteer duties that enhance our overall day school ministry. For the safety and protection of everyone on the St. Mark campus, parents and other visitors are asked to sign in at the welcome center.

Non-Custodial Parents

A non-custodial parent will be permitted to participate in routine school activities involving parents, unless restricted by court order.

The non-custodial parent is the parent who has neither the right to designate the child's residence nor the right to receive child support under the divorce decree or court order. St. Mark reserves the right to make the decision as to who is non-custodial for purposes of this policy.

The non-custodial parent may not visit the student on campus during the school day nor may the student be released to the non-custodial parent without written permission from the custodial parent. A certified copy of the court order restricting the rights of the non-custodial parent must be provided to the school office if the custodial parent wishes to prohibit the distribution of information to or restrict school visitations by the non-custodial parent. A student may, however, be released to the non-custodial parent if the decree specifies that visits begin at the time school is released, but only on days of possession.

Miscellaneous

Gang-Free Zone

Under the Texas Penal Code, any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to harsher penalty under state law.

Contact Information for Texas Department of Family and Protective Services – Child Care Licensing

TDFPS – dfps.state.tx.us
Licensing – 713 940 3009

2223 W. Loop 610S, Houston, Texas 77027
Child Abuse Hotline – 800 252 5400

Minimum Standards and Most Recent Licensing Report

Parents can review a copy of the Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Care Centers and a copy of our most recent Licensing inspection report. These items are available any time and are posted in the hallway by Room 125.

Communication

Children will bring home a daily report – the *Cougar Cub*. At the end of the week, *The Cougar* will be emailed to you with any additional school news. The teachers will also update you on individual classroom news. Please be sure we have your current email address on file.

Holidays

The Toddler Program will generally be closed for the following holidays:

- 4 Days prior to beginning of the new school year
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Holiday
- Christmas Holiday
- New Year's Eve Holiday
- Early Childhood Conference
- Good Friday & Easter Monday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day

The dates for these holidays will vary. Please check the current calendar for the days we will be closed each school year. The Early Childhood Conference is typically in late January or early February. The Toddler Program will be closed two days in order for the staff to attend the Texas District Early Childhood Conference. We will also be closed for four days prior to the beginning of the new school year. Parents will be notified in advance of these dates. There is no reduction in tuition or make-up days for holidays or in-service closings.

Clothing

Please dress your child for active (sometimes dirty) play. While normal precautions will be taken, accidents can happen. Your child should come to school in comfortable washable play clothes. For girls that are wearing dresses please have them wear shorts or bloomers for modesty and to cover their diapers so that outside materials do not stick to the diaper and cause discomfort. Shoes such as flip-flops, crocs, sandals and boots are not a safe option for active children at school. We have found that tennis shoes are the safest for the children.

On nice winter days we will go outside, so please send your child to school in coat, hat, gloves & mittens. Our room and gym are adequately heated, but long sleeves shirts in the winter are a good idea. **Please put your child's name on all coats, sweaters, hats, etc.**

Lost and Found

Unidentified found articles will be placed in the school lost and found area. Valuable items such as money, jewelry, wallets, and purses should be turned in to the school office for safekeeping until they are claimed. Students are asked to avoid bringing money or very valuable items to school to avoid the possibility of loss.

Toys

Parents are asked to help insure that toys are not brought to school.

Many toys have small parts that could be a choking hazard to our younger students. If your child brings one of these items to school, they will be placed in the child's backpack to be brought home at the end of the day.

Inclement Weather

School closings due to bad weather or other emergency conditions are announced on local television and radio stations. St. Mark Lutheran School will notify the media in such an event. Parents should check for school closing broadcasts in cases of severe weather or other emergencies.

Typically, St. Mark closes when Spring Branch Independent School District is closed.

Children's Biting Guidelines

Biting is common in group settings of young children, though when it happens it's disturbing to parents and caregivers. Reasons for biting include the following possibilities:

- Children explore their environment orally
- Since children explore their world orally, they may sometimes defend themselves orally or show affection orally
- Teething children may bite because it feels good
- Children learn through imitation
- Children feel threatened or overwhelmed
- Children feel frustrated or angry and lack words to express themselves.

For the child who is bitten:

- Appropriate First Aid will be rendered by the teacher or other designated adult
- The Director will be notified
- An Illness/Incident Report will be filled out by the teacher and signed by the parent. The original will be placed in the child's file in the Director's office
- Depending upon the severity of the bite, the child's parents will be contacted

For the child who bites:

- An Illness/Incident Report will be filled out by the teacher and signed by the parent. The original will be placed in the child's file in the Director's office.
- If the biting persists and the Toddler staff is unable to effect any change in the behavior, the child's parents will be contacted and a plan will be developed in cooperation with the parents and Toddler staff.

The identity of both children will remain confidential.

Food and Nutrition

A morning and afternoon snack will be provided daily. A variety of nutritious foods are served to insure the children are receiving their daily nutrition quota.

Parents have the option of bringing their child's lunch or ordering from our cafeteria. When packing your child's lunch, the Toddler Program is not responsible for its nutritional value or for meeting the child's daily food needs. Please try to avoid or limit foods high in sugar content. In order to prevent choking, hotdogs should be cut lengthwise and grapes or small tomatoes must be cut in half. When in doubt please cut or dice any food that may pose a choking hazard. **Lunchtime is a busy time. We do not have enough hands to cut up each child's lunch.**

Microwaves are available in the classroom to heat up lunches. Cold foods should be packed with an ice pack as **we do not have refrigerators available to store children's lunches.** Children are encouraged, but never forced, to eat their food.

Children who are attending the extended day program, 7 am - 6 pm, may bring breakfast to eat in the morning. If you arrive after 7:45 am, please make sure your child has eaten breakfast before they arrive.

Parents must provide written feeding instructions for infants not yet ready for table food. These written instructions ensure that all caregivers, including substitutes, have clear instructions for feeding your child. Parents must review and update these instructions every 30 days.

Cafeteria Services

St. Mark Lutheran School offers a well-balanced, hot lunch to students beginning at 18 months old during the regular school year. Menus are planned with children in mind, yet are designed to be nutritionally sound. Students may buy a hot lunch or bring a lunch from home.

St. Mark maintains a cafeteria account for each student using the “Café Prepay” system. Lunches may be purchased with cash, checks, or on-line at gostmark.org/cafepay.

Deposit lunch checks or cash (please place cash in an envelope and write your child’s name, grade and dollar amount on the front of the envelope) in the silver box near the school office. This system is not integrated with tuition billing, so please do not combine your payments. Put the student’s name and grade on lunch deposits, and list the amount you want to allocate to each child. Minimum deposits should cover two weeks of hot lunch.

When a student’s account balance reaches \$0, they will be given a grace period before they will not be able to receive hot lunch. If the account balance is not replenished we will provide them with a cheese or peanut butter and jelly sandwich with a milk until their account is active again. Reduced cost and free lunches are available to eligible families by a confidential application. See the business office for the forms.

Class Parties and Birthdays

St. Mark students celebrate several special occasions during the year with class parties. Teachers may also allow a parent to bring a class treat for a child’s birthday. Parents are asked to please refrain from having flowers, balloons, etc. delivered to students at school. If parents choose to have an item delivered to school for their child, it will be held in the school office until the end of the school day. If bringing a treat, please make arrangements with the teacher to schedule a time for bringing the treat. Invitations to out-of-school birthday celebrations and parties should be mailed, unless the entire class is invited. This simple courtesy will prevent many hurt feelings.

Any parent who brings in food for a birthday, Valentines’ party, etc. should be made aware of the following rules, if the food is to be served during the hours of 10:30 am to 1:30 pm:

- 1. Cakes, cupcakes, cookies etc. must be store-bought, not homemade.**
- 2. Pizza parties (or any other meals) served during this time are not allowed.**

As noted above, treats, desserts, snacks, and meals served before 10:30 or after 1:30 are not subject to the regulations.

Breastfeeding

We at St. Mark understand that breastfeeding supports optimal health and development for our infants. We provide a comfortable place that enables a mother to sit and breastfeed her child. In addition, you have the right to breastfeed or provide breast milk for your child while your child is in our care.

Health & Safety Rules

Illness or Accidents

St. Mark Lutheran School does not have the facilities or personnel to offer medical care beyond routine first aid treatment. If a student is injured or becomes ill at school, the school nurse or office personnel will comfort the child and contact a parent or guardian to pick him up. It is expected that the parent will do this within an hour of being contacted. Parents are responsible to ensure that each child has a current emergency response form on file with the school office with all parent contact numbers and several alternative numbers. In the unlikely event of a medical emergency, an ambulance may be called before the parent is notified. Our primary concern is for the health and safety of the child.

At the request of the school nurse, parents will be called to pick up a child if any of the following are observed:

- 1.
2. fever of 100.4 degrees or higher
3. vomiting or diarrhea
4. excessive coughing
5. a significant rash
6. ongoing complaints of pain
7. any injury that appears serious
8. head lice or scabies
9. recurring or heavy yellow or green nasal discharge
10. pink eye

Our school is also required by the law to uphold the following recommendations and guidelines provided by the Texas State Department of Health. Both staff and parents must comply for the health of all of our children.

1. Chicken Pox: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school. The last crop of lesions must be scabbed over, and the child must be examined by the school nurse.
2. Diarrhea: After the second incident, child must be picked up and remain at home until they are symptom-free without medication for 24 hours.
3. Diphtheria: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school.
4. Hand, Foot and Mouth: Your child will be allowed to re-enter school when fever free for 24 hours and the rash has subsided.
5. Hepatitis: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school. By law, parents of classroom contacts must be notified by a school official.
6. Impetigo: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school. All lesions must be healed, and child must be examined by a school nurse prior to returning to school.

7. Measles: You must have physician's permit to re-enter school. Child must be free from rash, and child must be examined by a school nurse prior to returning to school.
8. Mononucleosis: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school.
9. Mumps: You must have a physician's permit to re-enter school.
10. Pink Eye: May return to school after using physician prescribed eye drops/ointment for 24 hours. If it is viral in nature, child may not return until being evaluated by a school nurse, and it may be as long as 14 days.
11. Pediculosis (Lice): Children will be allowed to return to school once the prescribed treatment has been administered, and the child is checked by the school nurse before re-entering class.
12. Ringworm of scalp and skin: Child may return to school with a permit from the physician, provided prescribed treatment has been initiated, and the area is covered.
13. Streptococcal Infection: Also referred to as Strep throat, Scarletina, or Scarlet fever. Child may return to school with a physician's permit, AFTER having been free from symptoms (fever, sore throat, and rash) and on antibiotic therapy for 24 hours.
14. Tuberculosis: Child must have a physician's permit and must be taking the prescribed medication.
15. Vomiting: At first incident, child must be picked up and remain at home until they are symptom-free without medication for 24 hours.
16. Whooping Cough: Child must have a physician's permit to re-enter school.

Children with contagious diseases must remain at home until a doctor releases them to return to school. Children with fever should be kept at home until they are fever-free **without medication** for 24 hours. When your child has a fever, keep him home for 24 hours after the fever has broken. For example, if the fever breaks in the afternoon on Monday, do not send your child to school until Wednesday. The temperature should remain below 99.0 for 24 hours. Parents are asked to use common sense and consideration when deciding whether a child is well enough to attend school. Although it may be inconvenient to keep a sick child home, the well-being of the child, his classmates, and his teachers must take first priority.

Medication Policy

Many medications are sent to school for the nurse or, in her absence, a designated staff member, to give to students. Teachers do not dispense medication. For the safety of our students, the school staff will follow strict policies and procedures for administration of medication. No medication is supplied by the school. Medication purchased in a foreign country will not be

given. All prescription and non-prescription medication must be kept in the nurse's office and must be registered with the nurse when a student arrives at school. A medication permission slip (either over the counter or prescription) must be completed by the parent and turned in along with the medication before it can be dispensed. These forms are available at Back to School Night, in the school office, in the back of this handbook **and on the school's website**. (Please feel free to make copies.) Please note that prescription medications also require the authorized signature of the prescribing physician.

Prescription Medication:

Prescription medication may only be administered when a signed Prescription Medication Form with complete dosage instructions has been received from the prescribing physician or dentist licensed to practice in the United States. Prescription medication must be provided by the parent/guardian in the original container appropriately labeled with the name of the student, name of the medication, and complete dosage instructions. In cases of repeated daily doses, parents are responsible for providing a one week supply, picking up the empty container at the end of the week, and returning the container with the following weeks dosage to the nurse's office. *Note: For medications prescribed by a doctor that are given three times daily, you are encouraged to give one before school, one after school, and one at bedtime, unless otherwise advised by your physician.*

Non-prescription Medication:

Non-prescription medication may be administered when a signed Over-the-Counter Medication Form with dosage instructions written specifically for your child has been received from a parent/guardian. All over-the-counter medications must be FDA-approved and must be in the original container. Only the dosage indicated on the container will be given. If there is not an age-appropriate dosage on the container, then you must have a physician complete a Prescription Medication Form with dosage instructions in order for the medication to be given.

These procedures have been implemented with the safety and protection of the students in mind. Parents are encouraged to work with the school nursing staff to minimize any inconvenience.

Medical Records and Health Requirements

State law mandates that immunization and health records be maintained on each child enrolled in school. Parents must complete a confidential Health History Information Form for each child enrolled at St. Mark. This information is confidential. Parents must notify the school office of any changes in a child's health status, new medications, emergency phone numbers or addresses, or physician and insurance information.

Parents must supply a complete immunization health record from a licensed physician. Immunizations must be current according to the Texas Department of Health requirements. You can view these requirements on the website at dshs.state.tx.us. Staff is recommended but not required to abide by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

To claim exclusion for reasons of conscience including a religious belief, a signed affidavit must be obtained from the Texas department of Health, Immunization Division in Austin and presented to the School Nurse's Office. The affidavit will be valid for a two-year period.

To claim an exclusion for medical reasons the student must present a statement signed by the child's physician (MD or DO), duly registered and licensed to practice medicine in the United States who has examined the child, in which it is stated that, in the physician's opinion, the vaccine required is medically contraindicated or poses a significant risk to the health and well-being of the child. Unless it is written in the statement that a life-long condition exists, the exemption statement is valid for only one year from the date signed by the physician.

St. Mark Lutheran Toddler Program CANNOT accept any child who shows signs of illness. We have a responsibility to the well children who will be attending classes that day.

Being sick isn't fun for anyone. While it can be inconvenient to have to keep your child out of school when they are sick, please be considerate of the other students and teachers. Should your child have anything that is contagious, please notify the school office as soon as possible so appropriate notices can be sent home.

Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect

The laws of the State of Texas mandate that any incident of suspected child abuse or neglect observed by medical or school personnel be reported to Child Protective Services. Suspicion may be aroused by the observation or assessment of a child's behavior, conversation, physical appearance, or emotional condition. In such instances, a timely report must be made, and an independent CPS investigation will be conducted. St. Mark Lutheran School is required *by law* to comply with these procedures.

If any school family needs assistance with parenting issues or any other difficult personal situation, the school principal or any of the church pastors may be contacted for a confidential discussion or referral. The support of families and care for our children is everyone's job at St. Mark.

Emergency Drills

St. Mark follows local city ordinances concerning emergency drills and evacuation procedures. Fire, tornado, disaster, and lock-down drills are conducted on a regularly scheduled basis.

Parental Role

You are the most important people in your child's life. Your support and encouragement of school and church activities are vital to develop good attitudes in your children.

Your child will bring home work they have completed at school. Find an "important" place for your child to display his/her projects. Your children have worked hard during the week and are proud of their accomplishments.

From time to time, the teacher may need special help in some projects. One way you can be of assistance is with holiday parties. Donations of household items may also be requested.

We are fortunate to have so many caring and supportive parents at St. Mark. We appreciate the many ways you help make your child's year a success.

Financial Responsibilities

Policies Regarding Financial Responsibility

*"The master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them."
Matthew 25:19*

It is understood that, while St. Mark Lutheran School is in ministry to children and their families, operating expenses must be met. St. Mark expects parents to partner with the school in achieving the mission and goals of the school, it is therefore expected that families will treat their financial obligations to the school, including its music conservatory and after-school programs, seriously. Families who fall behind in their financial obligations are asked to contact the Business Office as soon as a problem arises. Parents are urged to work in a partnership of mutual respect and understanding with the school administration to ensure that their financial obligations are met in a timely manner.

Registration

1. Families with account balances greater than 30 days in arrears will not be permitted to register for the subsequent year until the balances are settled.

2. Families who have registered for the subsequent year, but whose account balances fall greater than 30 days in arrears at the end of the third or fourth quarter will have registration revoked. Registration papers will be returned and the registration fee will be applied to the delinquent account.

Tuition Management System

St. Mark utilizes an online tuition management system through TADS. All families are required to sign up for this online billing system. Once registered, all families will receive an email with the TADS setup instructions. Families will be assessed a \$45 annual fee.

Lunch account payment should not be included with the tuition payment.

Overdue Accounts

Payments are due by the 25th of each month, with a 5 day grace period allowed. At this time, a \$29 late fee will be assessed by TADS on all overdue balances. For all amounts over 5 days past due, TADS shall send an email reminder of the amount past due. For all amounts over 30 days past due, St. Mark shall send a formal collection letter. For all amounts over 45 days past due, St. Mark shall send a notification of collection action and possible revocation of credit privileges if payment is not received before the specified deadline.

Revocation of credit privileges may include one or more of the following:

1. Requirement to pay tuition in advance;
2. Requirement to pay tuition in cash or by money order;
3. Requirement to establish an automatic bank draft or automatic merchant card transaction; or
4. Termination of the student contract and expulsion of the student from St. Mark.

Failure to resolve overdue accounts may result in one or more of the following:

1. Denial of registration for the coming year;
2. Full legal and credit remedies including, but not limited to, transfer of accounts to attorneys or collection agencies.

Returned Checks

A charge of \$29 will be assessed on returned payments. Returned checks are not re-deposited.

Exceptions or Modifications of School Handbook Policies

In regard to any of the student handbook policies, the school administration reserves the right to make the final decision and will always do its best to make decisions on the basis of what is best for the entire student body.

St. Mark Toddler Program Parent Agreement

- I acknowledge that I have received the 2017-18 edition of the St. Mark Toddler Program Handbook, which includes the Discipline and Guidance Policies, and I agree to read and adhere to all policies stated within.
- I understand that if my child shows signs of illness including fever, rash, diarrhea, vomiting, pink eye or any other potentially contagious illness my child will not be allowed to attend the program. I will keep him/her home until they are symptom free for a minimum of 24 hours. I understand this means my child cannot return to the program the following day.
- I understand that I am responsible for my child until I place them in the care of the teacher. Children cannot simply be walked into the building and left unattended. I will keep siblings under my supervision at all times while in the building.
- I understand that all food sent from home should be ready to eat. The Toddler Program is not responsible for its nutritional value or for meeting the child's daily food needs. Foods that pose a choking hazard must be cut to the appropriate size to prevent choking.
- I understand that if any of my personal information should change, such as work phone number or home address, I will provide the school with updated information.
- I understand that St. Mark hours of operation are 7 am-6 pm. If I am late picking up my child, late pick-up fees will be applied to my account. I also understand that chronic after-hours lateness may result in my child being dropped from the program.



Prescription Medication Form

Please return this form to the school nurse at nurse@stmarkhouston.org or fax 713 468 6735.

I request and hereby give permission to school personnel to give the prescription medication to my child named below as requested by the physician.

Child's Name

Date of Birth

Telephone Number

Parent Signature

Physician's Statement

Child's Name

Date

In order that this school child remain in optimum health and to help maintain maximum school performance, it is necessary that the following medication be given during school hours.

Name of Medication

Dosage to be given (amount)

Prescription Number (School Nurse)

Expiration Date (School Nurse)

Form of medication: tablet capsule liquid inhalation injection

How often and what times

Purpose

Side effects:

Remarks:

Printed name of physician

Physician's signature





Over-the-Counter Medication Form

Date _____

I am requesting and hereby give permission to school personnel to give the following medication during school hours to my child named below in order to maintain my child's physical health and support school performance. To my knowledge, my child has no allergy to this medication.

Child's Name

Date of Birth

Parent Signature

Telephone Number

Date

Name of Medication

Dosage

Frequency (how often to be given)

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS:

The medication listed above must be supplied by the parent/guardian and must be in the original manufacturer's container with an original label containing dosage instructions. *Please do not send OTC medications in baggies or other containers.*

***Please return this form to the school nurse,
nurse@stmarkhouston.org or fax to 713 468 6735.***

