****

**OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN EARLY CHILDHOOD**

**PRESCHOOL PROGRAM**

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# MISSION STATEMENT

“*Serving Families for Jesus Christ”*

# PHILOSOPHY

Our Savior Lutheran School’s Early Childhood Education program is designed to nurture the whole child through intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and most importantly spiritual development with the goal of building a foundation for classical Lutheran education.

We seek to develop the children entrusted to us:

* **Intellectually** to reach their God-given potential as they discover, communicate, conceptualize, and create, laying the foundation for school readiness skills.
* **Physically** in both fine and gross motor skills, establishing habits that encourage a healthy and safe development and teaching the children that God created their bodies in His image for their good and for His glory.
* **Socially** by promoting a sharing, cooperative, and respectful environment and teaching the children to resolve relationship conflicts in a God-pleasing manner,practicing their responsibility to others as Jesus commanded us to love one another.
* **Emotionally** in a loving, nurturing, Lutheran Christian environment, so they know that they are God’s beloved children.
* **Spiritually** by instilling biblical values for daily living, so the children know God’s love and grace revealed in Jesus Christ and their need for a Savior who died on the cross for their sins and won their salvation through Jesus’ death and resurrection.

Early childhood is a special time of tremendous growth and development, and it brings us parents and teachers much joy as we watch them mature and change.

It is also a pivotal time, because what our children see, hear, and do today greatly influences their tomorrow. Early childhood is the ideal time to plant the seeds of faith, self-mastery, self-discipline, and Christian learning so that they may ripen in our children’s future, giving them a solid foundation for future school endeavors and everyday life.

# POLICIES AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

The program’s policies and procedures are outlined in this handbook and in supplemental notes and newsletters we will send you from time to time. If you have any questions that are not addressed in this handbook, please contact the Assistant Principal and Early Childhood Director, Lynette Cherington, or the Principal, Kate Thoelke. We are a fully accredited Early Childhood Program through National Lutheran School Association (NLSA) and the Consortium for Classical and Lutheran Education (CCLE).

# CURRICULUA

These early years are crucial in building the foundation for success in future school learning. The following are the curricula we use at OSL:

In our Preschool 3 year old classes, we use the Christian based *A Beka* curricula for learning the alphabet, phonics and handwriting. We also use *A Beka* for learning numbers and early math skills. This is a traditional, classical Christian approach to teaching early literacy in math and language. It is age appropriate with lots of interaction between the student and teacher. Along with the *A Beka* curricula, students will be exposed to favorite childhood classic stories, poems and nursery rhymes.

In our Pre-Kindergarten 4 year old classes, we use the Christian classical *Memoria Press Junior Kindergarten* curricula. This curriculum is comprehensive in classical methodology teaching alphabetical knowledge, handwriting, early math literacy skills, discovering beautiful children’s literature and poetry through socratic questioning for comprehension, and intentional character training in Christian virtues. We also use the *Heggerty Phonemic Awareness curriculum* to develop a strong foundation in phonics and reading.

Character training in Christian virtues is also intentionally taught throughout the day. Through orderly classroom routines, use of manners, teacher examples, Bible story time, and discipline, Christian virtues are taught, practiced and reinforced.

We use *The Story Bible* from Concordia Publishing House as our foundation for our religion curriculum. Our Bible stories are introduced at the beginning of the week and then retold in a variety of ways throughout the week along with doing Bible crafts, memory and songs to reinforce the Bible truths learned. Our Bible stories are chronological beginning with Creation, Old Testament stories, the birth of Christ, His ministry, death and resurrection and some stories of the Apostles. We worship once a week with our whole school in a Matins service on Wednesday mornings at 9:45 am in our church. On Thursday mornings, we have a special Early Childhood Chapel at 9:15 am in the cafeteria with Pastor Cholak focusing on our Bible story for the week. Parents are always welcome on both chapel days.

The truth of Jesus Christ is always our focus in everything, and our teachers are committed to bringing that truth into all parts of the curriculum.

Additionally, children will attend a music class with Mrs. Molitor weekly. For the further development of gross motor skills, students will attend a weekly gym class with Mr. Kemnitz.

Daily playground (weather permitting) and center time is provided. Through unit themes and observation of nature, social and scientific concepts are studied as well. Once a week, we concentrate on an outdoor learning experience where our scholars explore our beautiful campus and learn about God’s world.

Furthermore, your child’s experience is enriched by visits from special guests and programs on campus and celebrating special days such as Teddy Bear Day, Gingerbread Man Days, Winter Wonderland Day, Go Texan Day, Thanksgiving Feast, etc. Off campus field trips are also planned to enhance our early childhood program.

# ENROLLMENT

**RACIALLY NON-DISCRIMINATORY POLICY:** Families are invited to enroll their child(ren), whether or not they are members of Our Savior Lutheran Church. Our Early Childhood Center admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin which entitles them to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally made available to students at the Center. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies or any other administrative programs.

1. All students must register for enrollment each year.
2. The registration fee must accompany a student’s online enrollment package.

**No refunds or transfers of the registration fee will be made.** The registration fee will be refunded if the Board of Parochial Education declines to accept a student for enrollment.
3. State law requires that an immunization record be provided for the child’s records before the beginning of each school year. This may be obtained from your doctor.
4. All student fees, charges, and balances must be current prior to re-enrollment.

# AGE REQUIREMENTS

#### Preschool and Pre-K

Children who are **three years old on or before September 1st** of the current school year **and potty trained** are eligible for in enrollment in our preschool (3-year-old) classes.

Children who are **four years old on or before September 1st** of the current school year are eligible for the pre-kindergarten (four-year-old) classes.

Once the child is enrolled in the program it is assumed that he/she will be with the program throughout the school year (August-May).

#### Turning Three Years Old After September 1

In the event that there is space available for preschool students, the following is recommended:

Children who turn three between September 1 – December 31 of the current school year, would be able to enroll at the beginning of the second semester in our 3-year-old preschool class if space was available. It is understood that any child who was not three before September 1 and is currently enrolled in our preschool program, would need to be re-enrolled in the three-year-old preschool class for the following school year, not advancing to pre-kindergarten until the age requirement is met.

#### Class Placement

Once the school year has begun, the right to move a child from one class to another is at the school’s discretion only, if his/her needs can be better met in another group. This will be discussed with the parent, prior to taking place.

**If a child has special needs which cannot be adequately met in the classroom, the school reserves the right to terminate the child’s enrollment with a return of a prorated registration.**

#### Class Size

The class size will be limited to no more than 15 students in each Pre-K class and 12 students in each preschool 3-year-old class to maximize the amount of attention each child receives from teachers and aides.

# FINANCES

#### Non- Members of Our Savior Lutheran Church

All non-member families (families who are not members of Our Savior Lutheran Church) pay tuition monthly through FACTS.

If tuition payments are 30 days in arrears, the family shall be informed, and the child will not be allowed to attend classes until the account is current.

#### Members of Our Savior Lutheran Church

Our Savior Lutheran Church views the program of its Parish School as an integral component of the total ministry of the congregation. Accordingly, the church does not require its members with children in the school (Preschool-8th grade) to make direct tuition payments. The congregation does, however, expect that the contributions of its member parents will represent 10% of the total family income (a Biblical Tithe), or if the contribution is less than a tithe, that it represents the “Member Contribution Rate” established by the Board of Parochial Education each school year. The board of Parochial Education will monitor member contributions to ensure faithful Christian stewardship is being practiced and at least minimum support levels are maintained.

#### Extended Care

For both members and non-members, families will be billed weekly through their FACTS account for their child’s hours in Extended Care.

# ADMINISTRATION

The administration of Our Savior Lutheran School Early Childhood Center rests primarily with Board of Parochial Education elected by Our Savior Lutheran Church. Each board member is a member of Our Savior Lutheran Church and is elected by the voting body of the church. The director is the chief administrator of the Early Childhood Center and works with the principal of the school and the staff. The director is directly responsible to the Board of Parochial Education who in turn is accountable to the congregation.

# ABSENCES AND WITHDRAWALS

When your child is absent due to illness, please contact the school’s director as soon as possible. After two weeks of successive absences without any notification from parents/guardians, the school will drop the child from its roll and an opportunity will be extended to another child to fill the opening. In this case, no tuition refund will be made.

# POTTY TRAINED POLICY

Children should arrive in underwear and wear the underwear during the entire school day. This includes naptime. Pull-ups and plastic pants are not considered underwear. While there are designated times when each person in the class takes a turn using the potty, children must be able to recognize when they need to use the restroom and tell their teacher.

Children must be able to use the potty independently. This includes aiming, wiping and flushing. Children must be able to pull down and pull up their clothing items independently. Teachers will most certainly help with buttons, snaps and zippers, etc.; however, the goal is to foster independence and self-confidence. With that being said, we ask that you consider this when choosing clothing for your child to wear to school.

We do recognize that from time to time an accident will happen because someone has waited too long to head to the potty. However, children should be able to recognize when an accident has occurred and alert the teacher. A potty-trained child does not play in or sit in the remnants of an accident.

# MEDICATION POLICY

All medicine administered by Our Savior Lutheran School is given by the school secretary. ALL medication must be current. Written orders are to be submitted to the school from a physician for prescription medication detailing the name of the drug, dosage, and the time interval in which the medication is to be taken. These orders are to be reviewed periodically as deemed necessary by the school. The label on the prescribed medication needs to meet these requirements:

1. Prescription medication must be brought to the school in the original container appropriately labeled by the pharmacy or physician. The label must be current including the child’s name, the doctor’s name, and dosage.
2. Over the counter medications such as cough drops, cough lozenges, headache medicine and the like must be brought to the school in the original container and have a note from the parent to the school allowing the child to have them during school.
3. An Authorization Form must be signed by the parent at the sign-in counter before any medications, prescription or over the counter, will be administered to a child by the school secretary.

**The school does not have any supply of any medications for students.** Records are kept of all medicine administered to the students by the school office.

# FOOD ALLERGIES

A physician’s statement must be on file for all children with food allergies who may require medication at school. Special needs will be addressed on an individual basis.

# ILLNESS & EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL

Children may not attend school or will be sent home from school for the following reasons:

1. Oral or ear temperature of 100.4° or higher
2. Two episodes of vomiting within a 24-hour period
3. Two episodes of diarrhea with a 24-hour period
4. Lice, rashes, or other skin irritations which require medical attention

Students may NOT return to school until they are symptom free without medication for at least 24 hours.

If a student becomes ill at school, he/she will be kept at the front lobby or the Director’s office until parents are able to pick up the child.

Please notify the school immediately when your child becomes ill with any communicable disease.

# EXTENDED CARE

**Our Extended Care program is only offered to those students who attend Our Savior Lutheran School (preschool - 8th grade).**

#### Preschool and Pre-K Extended Care

Our Extended Care program is available Monday through Friday with hours of operation on school days from 7:30 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Preschool and Pre-Kindergarten students will be placed in Extended Care if they arrive before 8:45 a.m. and/or have not been picked up by 2:15 p.m. and **will be charged accordingly.**

During the afternoon, a snack will also be given to the children who are staying in extended care.

#### Early Morning Drop Off (7:30 am – 7:45 am)

Between 7:30 am and 7:45 am, **please walk your child into the** **cafeteria** where an Extended Care staff member will check in your child. At 7:45 am the staff member will walk your child to the Early Childhood building to their designated Extended Care room.

#### Morning Drop Off (7:45 am – 8:45 am)

* If you are using the supervised drop off car line in the morning, a staff member will escort your child to the appropriate Extended Care classroom.
* If you choose not to use the drop off car line, you may walk your child into their classroom.

#### Afternoon Extended Care Pick Up (2:15 pm – 6:00 pm)

To officially check your child out of Extended Care, go to the staff member at the front desk of the ECE building. The staff member will check out your child through the computer system and then you may go to the Extended Care room to meet your child.

If you are picking up your child along with an older sibling at 3:15 pm, please let us know, so that we can get them ready for the car pick up line.

#### Late Fees

Late fees are incurred should a child be picked up after 6:00 p.m. The late fee is $1.00 per minute after 6:00 p.m. This fee is added to the weekly payment.

#### Extended Care on Scheduled Holidays

Please see the school calendar or the Extended Care Rate schedule for the days in which all facilities are closed and no Extended Care is offered.

Note that on school holidays when school is not in session the Extended Care hours are 8:00 am - 5:00 pm. We will follow the same Extended Care rate schedule and will include a morning snack, lunch, and an afternoon snack for all age levels.

# MORNING DROP OFF & AFTERNOON PICK UP

#### Morning Drop Off (8:45 am – 9:00 am)

We will offer a supervised drop off car line for all Pre-K and Preschool children. If you choose not to use the drop off car line, you may walk your child into their classroom.

Classes begin promptly at 9:00 am, so allow enough time for your child to get settled at school before class begins.

If you arrive after 9:00 am, please park and walk your child into their designated classroom.

#### Afternoon Pick Up (2:00 pm – 2:15 pm)

At 2:00 pm, children are picked up only through the car pick up line. A staff member will walk your child to your car.

Please do not walk inside to pick up your child between 2:00 pm and 2:15 pm.

We will release students ONLY to their parents or regular pick-up person as designated by the parents. If an individual other than the parents or regular pick-up person will be picking up your child from school, please email or give Lynette Cherington a call noting the change of person picking up your child. The person will be asked to present their ID before the child will be released.

# DRESS CODE

We do NOT require a uniform in preschool or pre-kindergarten. However, we do suggest your child wears appropriate play clothes. We do have much on the playground, and closed toe shoes are a must for safety—**no flip-flops, sandals, or Crocs**.

#### Change of Clothes

At the beginning of the school year, each child should bring an extra set of clothes labeled with their name and placed in a gallon size Ziploc bag in case of accidents.

# PERSONAL ITEMS

Backpacks, lunch kits, jackets, nap mats, etc. must be labeled. **We reserve the right to label anything not labeled.**

Please do not allow your child to bring personal toys, video/audio tapes, books or any other personal items to school. We cannot be responsible for items if lost, damaged or destroyed. Our program is equipped with an adequate supply of toys and manipulatives.

# FIELD TRIPS

During the school year, our Early Childhood students may go on occasional field trips. Preschool usually takes their field trip in the spring semester, and Pre-K usually takes both a fall and spring semester field trip.

Families will be informed about the field trip several weeks prior to the date. Emergency medical consent forms and emergency contact information will be taken with the sponsors on the bus. All children participating in the field trip must wear a field trip t-shirt. The cost of this shirt is included in your child’s tuition.

#### Chaperones

The adult/child ratio on field trips will be one adult to three children. We encourage parents to attend field trips as teachers do need help with supervision. For the safety of our children, we require a background check on all chaperones attending field trips.

#### Transportation and Safety

All field trips will be taken on the OSL school bus with an authorized driver. An emergency first-aid kit is kept on the bus at all times.

# COMMUNICATION

Good communication between parents and the school is important and fosters an understanding between parents and the school. So that we may better meet the needs of your child, please keep us informed of such things as birth of new siblings, a severe illness or death in the family, or anything that may cause stress and strain in your child’s life.

Weekly newsletters will go home in your child’s folder to keep you informed of happenings in the classroom, and the director will send home a monthly newsletter to also keep you informed**.** Please check your e-mail often to stay informed.

Another important form of communication is the weekly school-wide newsletter. It is sent out every Friday via email.

Your Parent Portal in Facts is another source of information. Also, you may consult the school’s website for additional schedules, calendars and menus.

If at any time you have a question concerning the school’s policies and procedures, please discuss your concerns with Lynette Cherington.

**For your child’s benefit, please keep us informed of any changes in phone numbers, physicians, employment or any other pertinent information.**

# CONFERENCES

Parents of our early childhood students are asked to participate in two conferences during the school year. Prior to the parent/teacher conference, you will be asked to sign up for a time to meet with your child’s teacher. You may request additional parent/teacher conferences if the need arises.

# PARENT TEACHER LEAGUE (PTL)

Our school has a very involved parent group. We invite every family to get involved. Our PTL (Parent/Teacher League) is very supportive of what our school needs. It is a wonderful way of finding new friends who have the same interests and goals for their children. Each class has room mothers who assist with all parties and special celebrations. We encourage every parent to get involved.

# DISCIPLINE

A well-planned day, with smooth transitions and a variety of activities should keep discipline problems to a minimum. However, if challenges occur, discipline will be handled in a kind and loving way. Discipline is not punishment, but an opportunity to teach self-control, acceptable behavior, and Christian attitudes and orderliness. God’s Word will be our guide in evaluating these actions and determining appropriate discipline. Positive examples of behavior will be discussed with the child. A private discussion with the student may follow to reinforce the classroom guidelines. However, a child may be removed from the room if the behavior is such that it would harm themselves or others. NO corporal punishment will be directed toward any student.

# LUNCH TIME /SNACK TIME

Parents may order school snacks or lunch for their children through using the Parent Portal in FACTS. Parents may choose to send a lunch and/or snack from home, as well. In rare circumstances when a child comes to school without a lunch, he/she will receive a lunch prepared byour school’s kitchen if other plans had not been made previously. The teacher will inform the school office, so they may charge the parent for that day’s lunch and let the school kitchen know to prepare a lunch.

# CHAPEL

The entire school (Preschool – 8th Grade) attends chapel in the church sanctuary on Wednesdays at 9:45 am. Parents are encouraged and always welcome to attend chapel services with their child.

# CLASSROOM PARTIES

We have planned parties at the following times: Christmas, Valentine’s Day, Easter, and at the End of the School Year. These parties will be held during school hours and room mothers will plan them along with the teacher.

# CHILDREN’S BIRTHDAYS

Teachers recognize individual children’s birthdays in their classrooms. In addition, birthdays may be celebrated during morning snack time or at lunchtime. Please notify your child’s teacher if your child will be bringing a special birthday snack to celebrate his/her birthday. Please do not send whole cakes; cupcakes and cookies are recommended. Please do not send party favors. Birthday invitations will only be handed out if the whole class has been invited.

# PLAYGROUND RULES

Children are to be supervised at all times on the playground. Climbing on the fences is prohibited. Children should not be permitted to play on the school playgrounds without adult/parent/teacher supervision. Children are to use all playground equipment properly and safely.

Additionally, to help our teachers and staff avoid confusion, we ask that we ask that parents do not permit their children to play on the playground while another class or Extended Care class is using the playground for recess.

# TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

The posted speed limit on campus is 10 M.P.H. Exceeding that limit places our children in danger. **Parents, please remember it is an unlawful act to leave a small child unattended in a car. We would appreciate everyone abiding with this.**

Please also remember that by state law children younger than eight years old (unless they are taller than 4 feet 9 inches) must be secured in a safety seat whenever they ride in a vehicle.

# CLOSURES

When the school must close due to an act of God, i.e., loss of electrical power, flooding, etc., parents will be contacted as early as possible. The school cannot make alternate arrangements to cover those situations. When school must close due to severe weather, we will inform parents through a Parent Alert Text Message, e-mail, and on our school’s Facebook page.

# ACCREDITATION

Our school holds two national accreditations from CCLE (Classical Consortium for Lutheran Education) and NLSA (National Lutheran School’s Association).

# MINIMUM STANDARDS

If parents have questions about any minimum standards, a copy of the Minimum Standard Rules for Texas is in the director’s office for your perusal. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have. If a parent needs to contact the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services you can reach them at 713-940-5277. They can be reached at their website address: [www.tdprs.state.tx.us](http://www.tdprs.state.tx.us)

# RESOURCE NUMBERS

Local Child Care Licensing:
713-767-2521

Texas Department of Protective & Regulatory Services Child Abuse Hotline:
1-800-252-5400

# EMERGENCY DRILLS

#### Fire Drills

Fire drills are required at least once a month. The children are to exit the building immediately and go to the parking lot behind the ECE building. They are to remain there with their teacher until the “all clear” is given.

#### Severe Weather Drills

The state requires us to have a severe weather drill at least once each three months. They are assigned specific locations where they are to remain until the “all clear” is given.

#### Lock Down Drills

Our Savior Lutheran School has specific emergency procedures in place for other emergencies where the school is in lock down until the emergency has passed. We practice campus-wide lock down drills throughout the school year.

# CAMPUS EVACUATION

In case of an emergency evacuation, Our Savior Lutheran School has a specific plan to reunify families. Our evacuation safe place is the church, and our way of communicating to parents will be through Parent Alert and email.

# PARENT’S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This is to acknowledge that Our Savior Lutheran Early Childhood program has provided me with a copy of the Early Childhood Handbook: Parent Policy and Procedures. I have read and become familiar with this handbook.

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(Print name of parent/guardian) (Name of child)

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(Signature of parent/guardian) (Date)

**STAFF’S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

This is to acknowledge that as a member of the Our Savior Lutheran School Early Childhood Program, I have received and read a copy of the Early Childhood Handbook: Parent Policies and Procedures.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Print name)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Staff Member’s Signature) (Date)