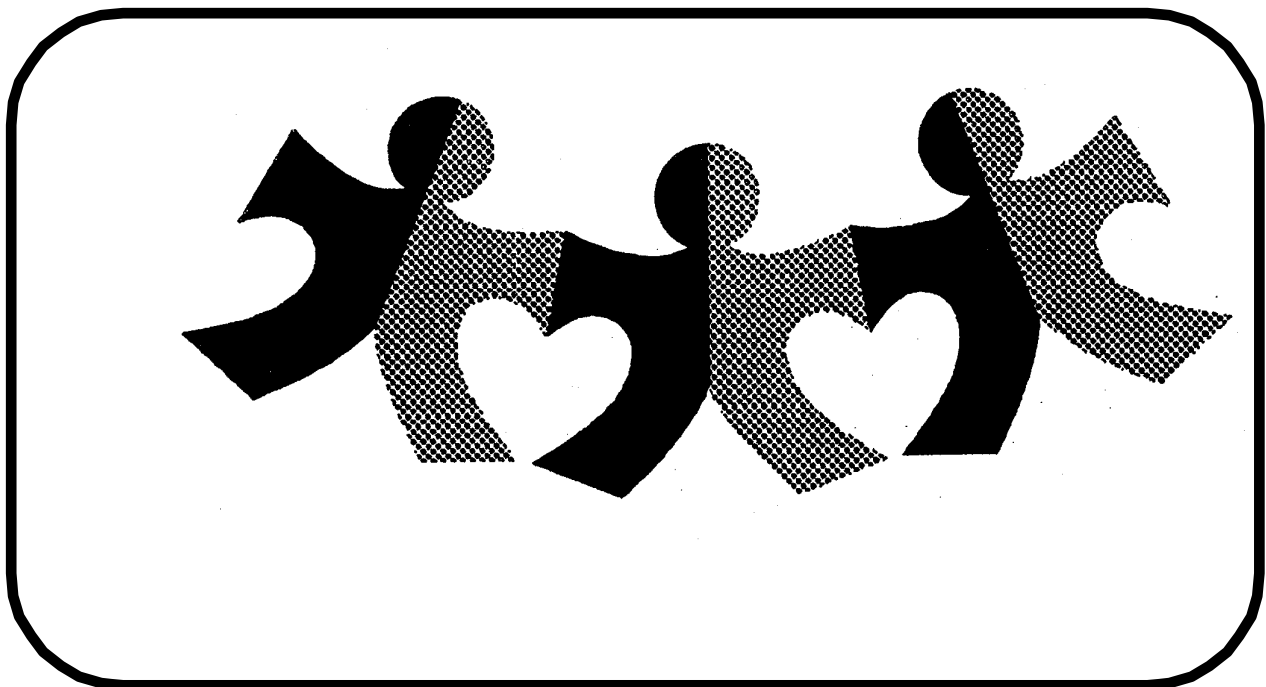


Early Childhood Ministries
2010-2011
Parent Handbook



Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Helping one another live life
with Jesus every day



18220 Upper Bay Road
Houston, Texas 77058

Dear Parents,

Welcome to Gloria Dei's Early Childhood Ministries! We are excited to have the opportunity to partner with you in raising your child to be all God has created and redeemed them to be.

During the upcoming year, your child will grow in many ways. Gloria Dei's Early Childhood Ministries is honored that you have trusted us to be a part of that growing experience.

At Gloria Dei, we place a high priority on families. We have a variety of ministries that seek to enable families to live in the love, truth and power of Jesus, the Son of God, and we invite you to check out those opportunities, too.

Go to our website at www.gdlc.org, or talk with any of the Early Childhood Ministries staff for more information.

God bless you and your family,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor A. Finke".

Gregory A. Finke
Senior Pastor

*I can do all things
through Christ who strengthens me.*

Philippians 4:13

It is our calling and privilege to provide a joy-filled, positive and exciting children's ministry to the Bay Area community sharing the good news of Jesus Christ through quality care and education.

Our school provides opportunities in educational excellence in an atmosphere of Christian love. In partnership with parents, we provide a developmentally appropriate, activity-based, and Christ centered curriculum to meet children's spiritual, intellectual, social, emotional, and physical needs. We teach children about God's love; we encourage children, families and faculty to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and in their ministry to one another.

When children graduate from the ECM, they will know their strength comes from facing challenges and successes with the grace of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Gloria Dei Early Childhood Ministries (ECM) provides a loving Christian environment for the care and education of children 6 weeks of age through Kindergarten. ECM is licensed by the State of Texas, is accredited by the Texas Lutheran Schools Association (TLSA) and the National Lutheran Schools Association, and is recognized by the Texas Education Association (TEA).

GOALS FOR CHILDREN IN THE PROGRAM

Spiritual

1. To foster awareness that the Bible is the Word of God that tells of His love through Jesus Christ
2. To provide age and developmentally appropriate worship experiences for the children
3. To engage children in life application of the Fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22)
4. To show love to the children so they can begin to understand God's love

Cognitive

1. To increase understanding that God gives us a mind to learn about all areas of His creation
2. To provide reading readiness and language development opportunities
3. To provide experiences in social studies
4. To provide experiences in math readiness
5. To allow exploration in areas of science, health, and discovery
6. To provide opportunities for children to express themselves through the arts
7. To provide opportunities for musical expression and appreciation
8. To stimulate cognitive development through change of environment (walks, field trips)

Social

1. To increase understanding that God gives us other people and ways to live with them in harmony
2. To provide individual, small group, and large group experiences
3. To mold Christian character
4. To develop positive social interaction
5. To give appropriate praise, approval, and affection
6. To provide boundaries and set limits
7. To develop and encourage the use of interpersonal skills

Emotional

1. To increase understanding that God has given us our feelings and that they are natural
2. To help children recognize their expressions of feelings
3. To direct children in learning acceptable expressions of their feelings
4. To provide security and stability for all children
5. To teach children to respect others

Physical

1. To accept each child as God's individual creation with regard to their growth and development
2. To provide space and facilities for activities
3. To provide age and developmentally appropriate materials
4. To offer nutritious and appealing snacks
5. To provide a variety of activities which alternate between stimulation and quiet
6. To encourage physical development through indoor/outdoor play
7. To provide a rest time for children participating in Extended Care

CURRICULUM

Curriculum is what an educational institution offers to its students. Gloria Dei’s Early Childhood Ministries has developed a well-balanced curriculum covering all areas of a child’s growth and development: spiritual, cognitive, social, emotional and physical. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of our very youngest children through our Kindergarten as they interact with the world God made. The curriculum focuses on age appropriate activities, physical and emotional care, a safe and nurturing environment, and interaction between faculty and families. The curriculum meets the standards of the Texas and National Lutheran School Accreditation, Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), and is recognized by the Texas Education Association (TEA).

The Gloria Dei Early Childhood Ministries Curriculum includes the following content areas:

- **Faith Development**
- **Language Development**
- **Mathematics**
- **Art**
- **Health and Physical Education**
- **Music**
- **Science and Discovery**
- **Social Studies**
- **Indoor/Outdoor Play** is essential to children’s health and well being. Children need to run, climb, jump and play. The time children spend outdoors each day is just as important to their learning as the time they spend in their classrooms. Exposure to the outdoors offers many ways to enrich the curriculum and support children’s learning and development.

It is our goal to take children outside each day, with the exception of inclement days. We utilize weather guidelines to ensure that we have limited outdoor play during extreme weather. Flexibility in the schedule also allows us to extend our outdoor play on fair weather days.

Each age level has a curriculum that is used for planning classroom activities. An appropriate age-level curriculum is located in each classroom and may be viewed on the ECM website at www.gdlc.org.

FACULTY / CHILD RATIOS

The Gloria Dei ECM offers a developmental program to children ranging in 6 weeks of age through Kindergarten. Children are grouped according to age, gender and abilities within the following faculty to child ratios:

Classroom	Age of Child	ECM Ratio/Group	TX Ratio/Group
Infant I-II-III	0–11 months	1:4 / 8	1:4 / 8
Toddler I	12-17 months	1:5 / 10	1:5 / 10
Toddler II-III	18-24 months	1:6 / 12	1:9 / 18
PS-2	2 years by 9/1/09	1:6 / 12	1:9 / 18
PS-3	3 years by 9/1/09	1:10 / 10	1:14 / 28
PK-4	4 years by 9/1/09	1:12 / 12	1:18 / 35
PK-5	5 years by 11/30/09	1:14 / 14	1:20 / 35
Kindergarten	5 years by 9/1/09	1:16 / 16	1:22 / 35
Extended Care	2 years -Kindergarten	1:10-16	

Communication between ECM Parents, Faculty and Administrative Staff

We all know that effective two-way communication is paramount to any good working relationship. Gloria Dei ECM strives to establish and maintain effective, Christ-centered communication when relating with children, parents, Administrative Staff and ECM Faculty. We believe this communication will only be successful if Gloria Dei ECM employees and parents strive to accomplish this goal together. Together we can make Gloria Dei ECM a better school by keeping the “lines” of communication open.

The ECM Administrative Staff communicates with parents using the methods listed below:

How	When	Where
Oral presentations and orientations	Beginning, middle and/or end of school year as scheduled on ECM calendar	Life Center or as scheduled
Written monthly ECM newsletter	First day of each month	In each child's cubbie, posted on the parent bulletin board and web site
Written health notices	As necessary to meet Texas Department of Health and Texas Child Care Licensing standards	In each child's cubbie and posted on the parent bulletin board (as required)
Written informational notices	As needed	Posted in entryway, placed in child's cubbie and web site
Written formal notices	As needed	Postal mail
Oral discussion	As needed to discuss and resolve issues	ECM Administrative Offices
Internet	Continuously	www.gdlc.org

The ECM Faculty communicates with parents using the methods listed below.

How	When	Where
Written monthly ECM newsletter	First day of each month	In each child's cubbie, posted on the parent bulletin board and web site
Written health notices	As necessary to meet Texas Department of Health and Texas Child Care Licensing standards	In each child's cubbie and posted on the parent bulletin board (as required)
Written informational notices	As needed	Posted on bulletin board outside classroom or placed in child's cubbie
Electronic Mail	As needed	To e-mail address supplied by parent
Oral discussion	Daily	In classroom or as scheduled

Parents communicate with ECM using the methods listed below:

How	When	Where
Oral discussion	As needed	Stop by ECM offices, classroom, or by scheduling an appointment
Electronic Mail	As needed	kwalker@gdlc.org - Director of Early Childhood Ministries ckrueger@gdlc.org - Associate Director of Family Relations and Communication kmoney@gdlc.org - Associate Director of Tuition and Administration sneigut@gdlc.org - Associate Director of Curriculum and Resources

OPERATION POLICIES

Hours of Operation

The Early Childhood Ministries is open Monday through Friday, from 7:00 AM to 5:30 PM. Parents should allow themselves adequate time to talk with the faculty and gather their child's belongings before closing time.

Preschool (PS) and Prekindergarten (PK) hours are from 9:00 AM until 12:00 Noon, Monday through Friday. An optional lunch period is available to PS and PK from 12:00 Noon until 12:45 PM. Kindergarten hours are from 8:45 AM until 2:30 PM, Monday through Friday. Extended Care hours are offered from 7:00 AM until 9:00 AM, 12:00 PM until 12:45 PM, 12:00 PM until 3:00 PM, and 12:00 PM until 5:30 PM. Parents may register their child for the mentioned programs in the ECM Office.

Daily Admission and Departure Procedures

- **Admission**

The doors to ECM are opened promptly at 7:00 AM. It is very important the children arrive on time for school, as we are shaping our children's attitudes and habits at this early age. A child's tardiness disrupts the class schedule and many times the child misses out on instructions for the day's activities.

For the safety of the children, an adult must escort their child(ren) into the building and to their assigned classroom to be left in the presence and supervision of a member of the ECM Faculty.

- **Departure**

No child will be allowed to leave with a person without prior authorization or to any individual considered a minor. Identification is required any time the faculty does not recognize the person picking up your child. Any deviation from the regular authorized person(s) will require a written note from the parent to the ECM Office prior to departure.

For the safety of the children while outside of the building, parents will be encouraged to pickup their children from the classrooms prior to, or after playground / Life Center activities. Children are expected to remain with their class while at the playground or attending activities in the Life Center.

If your child's regular transportation is unavailable, please send a note to the ECM Office and the Office will communicate these instructions to the appropriate teacher. If a last minute situation arises, you may fax our office at 281-335-0574. The designated person will be required to show pictured identification upon pickup.

Please be prompt in picking up your child at dismissal time.

Keyless Entry System

Each family has an assigned code for the Keyless Entry System (KES) at the main ECM entrance. This code will be changed on a yearly schedule or any time it is felt that the number has been compromised for the safety of the children:

- **DO NOT** share your code with others.
- **DO NOT** allow your child to enter your code.
- **DO NOT** open the door for individuals you do not recognize (as a parent of an ECM child).
- **DO NOT** compromise the safety and security of the children.

There is a guest doorbell that will indicate when a guest or one-time-pick-up-person needs to enter the facility or needs assistance. Gloria Dei Early Childhood Ministries reserves the right to change and/or modify the KES codes at any time to assure the safety of the children.

Holidays

Childcare is available for full-time students during holidays. Any child enrolled for at least 8 hours on any given day is considered full time for that day.

ADMISSION AND ENROLLMENT POLICIES

The Gloria Dei Early Childhood Ministries admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin with 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 or admissions policies.

Enrollment Requirements

The following is necessary for enrollment:

1. Completed Registration Form
2. Copy of Official State Birth Certificate
3. Copy of insurance card
4. Current Immunization Record
5. Physician's Report for Health with signature of physician
6. Parent Handbook Policies Agreement
7. Policy and Tuition Agreement
8. Religious History Form
9. Simply Giving Enrollment Form
10. Volunteer Form

These forms must be completed 48 hours prior to admission into the program.

Children in the PS-3 and older classes **MUST** be toilet trained.

The Director of Early Childhood Ministries is responsible for assuring the overall welfare of the program. Acceptance and on-going enrollment of any child in the facility is contingent upon approval of the Director of Early Childhood Ministries. Children with special medical conditions or developmental needs may be enrolled with the permission of the Director of Early Childhood Ministries after a screening process is completed.

Waiting Pool Policies

The Early Childhood Ministries maintains a waiting pool for those who desire enrollment of their child(ren) in the program. It is the responsibility of each parent/legal guardian to contact the ECM when they desire to be placed in the waiting pool. The Waiting Pool Form must be completed and a tour of the facility is encouraged. ECM uses the waiting pool as a guideline for allocation of slots in the program.

ECM will contact the parent/legal guardian of a child in the waiting pool when an opening becomes available. At the time of notification families will have 48 hours in which to reach a decision concerning acceptance of the opening. If no answer is received, ECM will move to the next eligible family for allocation of the opening.

It is the responsibility of each family in the waiting pool to notify the ECM Office of any changes in their location and phone number.

Waiting Pool Forms will be kept for the current school year or until the next registration period.

Enrollment availability will be posted and maintained on the ECM website at www.gdlc.org.

PROGRAM FEES

2010-2011 EARLY CHILDHOOD MINISTRIES FEES								
Monthly Fees for Infants and Toddlers								
Infants				Toddlers				
Age: 0-11 Months	7:00 AM-5:30 PM	Days	Age: 12-24 Months	7:00 AM 5:30 PM	Days	9:00 AM 12:00 PM		
	\$382	TTh		\$360	TTh	\$133		
	\$573	MWF		\$539	MWF	\$200		
	\$986	M-F		\$899	M-F	\$333		
Monthly Fees for PS-2 through PK-4 students								
				PS / PK	Extended Care Hours			
Age: 2-4 Years	Full-time Fee	Or for other options, add together all that apply for total fee						
	7:00:00 AM - 5:30 PM	Days	7:00 AM 9:00 AM	9:00 AM 12:00 PM	12:00 PM 12:45 PM	12:00 PM 3:00 PM	12:00 PM 5:30 PM	
		1	\$33		\$13	\$49	\$90	
	\$388	2/TTh *	\$66	\$141	\$25	\$99	\$181	
	* TTh option is only available in the Infant through PS-3 age levels							
	\$582	3/MWF	\$99	\$213	\$37	\$148	\$271	
	\$777	4/M-Th*	\$131	\$284	\$49	\$198	\$362	
	* M-Th option is only available for the PK-4 age level / M-Th Class							
	\$884	5/M-F	\$164	\$355	\$61	\$246	\$452	
	Monthly Fees for PK-5 students							
5-6 Years	\$899 **	M-F	\$164	\$371	\$61	\$246	\$452	
Monthly Fees for Kindergarten students								
Age: 5-6 Years	7:00 AM 5:30 PM	Days	7:00 AM 8:45 AM	8:45 AM-2:30 PM	2:30 PM 3:00 PM	2:30 PM 5:30 PM		
	\$1,040 **	M-F	\$144	\$650	\$42	\$246		
** \$884 for the months of June and July								
Unscheduled care with prior approval is provided for a \$5.00 per hour fee								

Fees

The ECM is a non-profit ministry of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church.

The ECM fees are established by the Early Childhood Ministries Committee to cover program expenses and are subject to change, as conditions require. As a Christian school, it is our desire to look for ways to concentrate our available human and financial resources on our primary mission – the love, care, and nurturing of your children. ECM in partnership with The **Simply Giving Program®** - Thrivent Financial for Lutherans will co-source the tuition management process. Simply Giving will enable more efficient management of the tuition collection process while offering convenience to families of students.

Benefits will include:

- Automatic bank draft
 - Monthly fees will be drafted on the 5th day of each month.
 - Bi-monthly fees will be drafted on the 5th and 20th day of each month.
- Support of the Early Childhood Ministries through electronic contributions and donations.

Each family must enroll in Simply Giving. The enrollment process is completed with the Associate Director of Tuition and Administration in the ECM Office.

Referral Credit

With the referral of a new family in the Early Childhood Ministries, a credit of \$200 will be applied to the tuition of the referring family. New families are required to fulfill all enrollment procedures and have paid all required fees prior to referral credit. Referral credit will apply to each ECM family on an annual basis.

Discounted Fees

A 15% discount is offered when a sibling is enrolled in the program.

- Discounts are not applied to the registration fee.
- Discounts will be offered to the eligible sibling whose tuition is the lowest.

A 10% discount is offered to the parents of children of families actively serving in the Military.

Qualifying families will receive only one of the above mentioned discounts. The greater of the discounts will be applied to the monthly tuition.

Registration and Supply Fee

All families are required to pay a non-refundable \$200.00 (\$250.00 for Kindergarten) yearly registration fee per child upon enrollment. This fee is required to secure your child's place on the class list. There are no discounts offered off the registration fee. In an attempt to help reduce the cost of purchasing school supplies and lessen the burden to parents as you prepare your child for our program, ECM has included the supply fee in the annual registration fee for each child and will purchase supplies in bulk.

Vacation Leave

Full-time students (children enrolled for 8 or more hours/day), that have been enrolled in the program for one full year (12 months) are eligible for a one-week vacation leave. This amount will be deducted from the monthly tuition. Vacation leave may not be transferred between siblings.

Withdrawal or Change Notification

Tuition fees must be paid for the two weeks following the receipt of the written notification of withdrawal or change of enrollment from the parent or legal guardian, even if the child is no longer enrolled in the program.

Meal Time Fees

For those students who purchase hot lunch, a lunch card will be sent home on the second Tuesday of each month and should be returned no later than the third Tuesday of the month. In order to prepare for the following month, there will be no lunch cards accepted after the last day of the current month. The charge for a hot lunch is \$3.50 per day. Emergency lunches will be available for students as needed for an additional fee.

Late Pick-up Fee

Parents who pick-up their children after the scheduled pick-up time (12:05, 12:50, 2:35, 3:05 and 5:35) will be charged a late pick-up fee of \$1.00 per minute. Payment is made to ECM in the office at the time of pick-up.

Late Payment of Fees

Monthly tuition payments received five days after the close of the statement date are considered late. A fee of \$5.00 will be charged for late payment. If the tuition fee is more than 2 weeks late, the administration will contact the parents asking them come to the school office to make arrangements to pay the bill. If the bill is still outstanding after one month and no special arrangements have been made, the delinquent account will be presented to the Early Childhood Ministries Committee for possible removal of the child from the program.

Returned Check Fee

If a check is returned for any reason, a \$25.00 penalty per check will be charged. The check will be held until the amount of said check and all penalty fees are paid. If two checks, by one family, are returned within a 1-year period the family will be required to pay tuition with cash, certified check and/or money order only.

Refunds

If there is an overpayment on your account a refund will be issued, but only after the balance on your account is zero, and there are no outstanding claims.

Gloria Dei Early Childhood Ministries Federal Tax ID Number

74-1589358

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to share their talents with the program. This will enhance the program and in turn, benefit all students. There are a wide variety of opportunities to support the program either in the classroom or through different committees

Parents and faculty are encouraged to exchange daily feedback concerning the children's day both in the program and at home.

Open Door Policy

The Early Childhood Ministries has an Open Door Policy. Parents are welcome to visit the program at any time during the ECM hours of operation to observe their child, the program's operation, and program activities, without having to secure prior approval. Parents are asked to be sympathetic to any transitions a child may be experiencing and to delay a visit if it may be more upsetting to the child.

Community Service Projects

The Early Childhood Ministries believes in teaching children to be good stewards of the community at an early age. Parents and children will have the opportunity at various times throughout the year to share God's blessings with those that are struggling or not as fortunate.

Whatever you did for the least of my brothers, you did for me (Matthew 25:31-46).

Dress Code

Use good judgment in dressing your child for class activities. Children should come to school comfortably dressed in washable play clothes. Please send your child to school in closed-toe, rubber-soled shoes (i.e. tennis shoes). Through long experience with hundreds of children, we have found tennis shoes to be the safest shoes for your child. Cowboy boots and "flip-flops" are safety hazards and are not permitted.

Please label all outer wear (coats, hats, mittens, etc.) Take into consideration the current weather conditions when assisting your child in dressing for the school day. We also require that you keep an extra change of clothes for your child in his/her backpack at all times. This is helpful in case an accident should occur where your child's clothes get extremely wet or dirty.

Animals

Various fish, frogs, turtles, lizards, snakes, hermit crabs, gerbils, hamsters, rats, guinea pigs, rabbits or chinchillas may reside in your child's classroom. All animals are kept in a safe and sanitary environment. Any animal larger than a small rodent must be vaccinated as required by the Texas Health and Safety Code. Faculty and children must use good hygiene and hand washing after handling or coming in contact with an animal and/or items used by an animal. Parents prohibiting their child to come in contact with an animal must do so in writing to the ECM Office.

Field Trips

Children in the PK-4 through Kindergarten (only) may participate in ECM sponsored field trips. Students are required to wear their program T-shirts (provided by the program) on all field trips. The Director must approve all field trips. Written notice will be given to parents through notes sent home and posted on the bulletin board outside the classroom. Parents must complete and sign a permission form to acknowledge the field trip date, location, any associated fees or any other requirements prior to the date of departure.

Non-academic events will be restricted in scope and location, and must comply with ECM policies to be considered a school-sanctioned field trip. Events that are not school-sanctioned are considered a private party and are required to occur outside of the school hours.

Gloria Dei follows the Texas Transportation Code. Section 545.412 in the code requires, "Children over a year old and between 20 and 40 pounds are required to be restrained in a forward facing car seat with harness. Children between 4 and 8 years of age, over 40 pounds and under 4'9" tall are required to be restrained in a belt-positioning booster seat." Children traveling on ECM sponsored trips are required to provide ECM with an approved car seat. Children may only ride in the back seat(s) of any vehicle. Please check www.txdps.state.tx.us/director_staff/public_information/carseat.htm for more information.

IT'S THE LAW!!

Children that do not meet these terms as stated will not be allowed to participate on the field trip.

Texas Family Code

Texas state law requires the faculty of the Gloria Dei Early Childhood Ministries to report any suspected abuse or neglect of a child to the Texas Department of Human Services or a law enforcement agency.

Texas Department of Family and Protective Services

A copy of the minimum standards and the programs most recent licensing inspection report is available for review upon request in the Director's Office. Parents may contact the local Licensing office at (713) 940-3009 / 2221 West Loop South, PO Box 16017, Houston, TX 77027-6017, the PRS Child Abuse Hotline at 1(800) 252-5400 and the PRS website at www.dfps.state.tx.us.

Safety and Security

The safety of the children and our faculty is our highest priority. To ensure the safety of your children, the following measures have been implemented:

1. ECM personnel will be with your children at all times until they are released to the parents, legal guardian or authorized person(s) identified on release portion of the enrollment forms.
 2. ECM faculty will monitor individuals entering and exiting the facility.
 3. For the safety of the children while outside of the building, parents are encouraged to pick up their children from the classroom prior to or after playground or Life Center activities. Children are expected to remain with their class while at the playground or attending activities in the Life Center.
 4. All doors accessible to the early childhood facility remain locked with the exception of the main ECM entrance.
 5. **DO NOT** prop doors open that offer accessibility to the ECM facility or hold any door open for individuals you do not recognize (as a parent of an ECM child) and compromise the safety and security of the children.
 6. Please be aware of your surroundings **AT ALL TIMES** and report anything suspicious you may witness to the Office or the Nassau Bay Police Department immediately.
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Traffic Flow and Parking Lot

The following traffic patterns have been deliberately designed to provide the safest conditions for our children. It is the responsibility of each and every parent to maintain a safe environment for the children by adhering to the following traffic regulations:

1. The speed limit in the parking lot is **10 MPH** at **ALL** times.
 2. Traffic on the North side of the building (ECM side) is **ONE direction only**. Vehicles that unlawfully enter an **EXIT only** driveway could create a disastrous situation.
 3. Do not park along the **RED** curb zone. This is for emergency vehicles only.
 4. The **YELLOW** curb zone is for short-term (5 minute) parking only.
 5. Proceed **SLOWLY** and constantly watch for children darting into the parking lot.
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Weather Guidelines

Please dress your child according to the weather. The children will remain inside during inclement weather such as sleet, hail, thunderstorms, severe heat/cold, or other such conditions. ECM will adhere to the following:

1. **Cold Temperatures / Wind Chills** – As the outdoor temperature dips, outdoor activities may continue provided the children have adequate cold weather clothing. This includes a warm coat, hat and long pants. When children do not have adequate clothing, their parents will be notified to bring the items to the ECM. When temperatures are 24 F or below, including the wind chill factors, outdoor activities will be discontinued.
2. **Hot Temperatures / Heat Index** – In temperatures ranging from 94 F to 104 F, including the heat index, outdoor activities may be limited to a >15 minute period of time and the total amount of outdoor time for the day will not exceed one hour. Children will be kept in shaded areas and out of the midday heat as much as possible. Water will be offered prior to, during and after outdoor play. Sunscreen will be applied prior to

outdoor play (if parents complete an Authorization Form). In the event temperatures reach or exceed 105 F, including the heat index; children will be kept indoors.

3. **Ultraviolet Radiation (UV) and Air Quality (Ozone) Indexes** – ECM monitors the index values from the National Weather Service www.nws.noaa.gov to assure a healthy environment for the children during outdoor play.

School Closings due to weather

The ECM will be closed for weather related problems if the Gloria Dei facilities or the route to ECM is closed, if the City of Nassau Bay is affected, if the Clear Creek Independent School District is closed, or if “Galveston County” is making storm preparations. Notice of closing will be posted on the Gloria Dei web site, www.gdlc.org, 740 AM KTRH Radio, TV Channel 13, TV Channel 11, FOX TV News Network and/or may be confirmed with the Director or Assistant Director.

Building Evacuation

The following is the evacuation plan in case of a fire, chemical spill, or explosion: If the ECM building becomes damaged, children will be taken to the Student Center at Gloria Dei or St. John Hospital in Nassau Bay. If evacuation of the area is required, the children will be taken to the Ed White Youth Center in Seabrook, or to Hope Lutheran Church in Friendswood. Parents will be notified of the relocation within a reasonable time period. Children will be cared for until a parent or designated adult arrives.

Lock Down

During a lock-down, parents trying to enter the ECM facility will only be allowed entry if it does not threaten the safety of the children; and persons already in the ECM facility will only be allowed to exit if it does not threaten the safety of the children or until an all-clear is issued, signifying that the lock-down is over.

Shelter-In-Place

A shelter-in-place requires a lock-down of the entire Gloria Dei facility to protect the children from threats usually associated with, but not limited to, chemical or environmental disasters. A shelter-in-place is designed to maintain a safe environment within the building by preventing outside air from entering the facility. The shelter-in-place requires the Gloria Dei staff and ECM faculty to allow no one, including parents, visitors and personnel, to enter or leave the building until further instructions are received from emergency personnel, law enforcement and/or civil authorities.

Follow Up Once the Situation is Contained

The highest priority of ECM is the safety of the children. Once the environment is secure and through the lead of law enforcement and/or civil authorities, ECM will contact parents/legal guardians. Law enforcement and/or civil authorities will coordinate a written statement with the Executive Director of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church and/or the Director of the Early Childhood Ministries.

MATERIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN

Infant Program

- a. Two complete changes of labeled clothes
- b. Box of disposable diapers with child’s name labeled on outside of box
- c. Diapering supplies (diaper wipes, ointment, powder, etc., labeled with child’s name)
- d. Bottles and formula, cereal, and all food labeled with child’s name (will be prepared, refrigerated and warmed up as necessary)

Toddler Program

- a. Two complete changes of labeled clothes
- b. Box of disposable diapers with child's name labeled on outside of box
- c. Diapering supplies (diaper wipes, ointment, powder, etc., labeled with child's name)
- d. King size pillow case, blanket and special toy to sleep with (if needed)
- e. If child is being potty trained, supply of pull-ups or diapers for naptime

Preschool, Pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten Programs

- a. One complete change of labeled clothes
- b. Backpack or tote bag for carrying home class work and program information
- c. PS-2 children still in diapers:
 - Box of disposable diapers with child's name labeled on outside of box
 - Diapering supplies (diaper wipes, ointment, powder, etc., labeled with child's name)
 - Additional changes of labeled clothes

Extended Care Program

- a. King size pillow case, blanket, and "small" pillow (if needed)
- b. Plastic, zippered bag to store bedding
- c. Small stuffed animal to sleep with, if desired

Meal Time

- Breakfast is available for children in the Infant and Toddler classrooms (only) who arrive at the center prior to 8:00 a.m. A mid-morning snack, hot lunch and mid-afternoon snack is provided to all Toddler children, which is included in their tuition.
- Parents should make sure that their child eats breakfast prior to coming to school, as we do not have our snack until mid-morning.
- Children have the option to stay for lunch. Lunches from home should be in a lunch kit, labeled with child's name, and include a thermos or boxed drink and a napkin. Lunches served by ECM will be catered once per week by local eating establishments in our community.
- Lunch will be served between 11:00 AM and 12:00 Noon.

Parents may choose to provide the child's meals and/or snacks from home. Parents understand that ECM is not responsible for the nutritional value or meeting the child's daily food needs for any food provided by the parent.

Parents are encouraged to include a variety of foods from the four major food groups: cereal or bread, dairy, fruit or vegetable, and meats. Please **DO NOT** send soft drinks, gum, hard candy or an abundance of sugared treats.

Parents will be allowed to remove their child from the Program for lunch purposes during their room's scheduled lunch period. If you wish to eat lunch with your child in the building please be considerate of other meetings or happenings in the church. Nursing mothers are welcome to come to ECM and may nurse their child anytime.

Food Allergies

ECM will work with children that have a food allergy. Please notify the Director **immediately** if your child has been diagnosed with any food disorders, sensitivities and/or allergies. Notification of allergies will be posted in the classroom.

Children with food allergies are at risk when they eat foods which have not been prepared or served by their own parent or an ECM employee who has knowledge of the food ingredients and individual children's needs. Food provided by a parent and shared with other children **MUST** meet the needs of children who require special diets.

HEALTH POLICIES

Immunization Requirements

The Early Childhood Ministries follows immunization requirements as specified by the Texas Department of Health. To obtain a list of current requirements, please stop by the ECM Office or you may access the Texas Department of Health Internet website at www.tdh.state.tx.us/immunize.

Vision and Hearing Screenings

Vision and Hearing Screenings are required for all children in Pre-Kindergarten and older in the State of Texas. The ECM provides screening to the children in the PK-4, PK-5 and Kindergarten classes and to any child we feel early screening may be necessary. Children not passing the screening are required to seek further testing from a medical professional. If a child is absent or selects not to be tested, proof of testing by an alternative medical professional will be required by ECM.

Illnesses and Accidents

To prevent and control the spread of communicable illness among children and faculty, strict health policies must be followed. Cooperation between faculty and parents is essential to assure a safe and healthy environment for all program participants.

All children will be visually screened by faculty upon arrival for obvious symptoms of illness. Children displaying symptoms of contagious illness and children who are not well enough to participate in the daily activities will not be admitted. Parents are required to inform faculty members about any symptoms of illness that the child has been exhibiting at home and to inform the faculty if the child received any medication before arrival.

Illness Criteria or Denial of Service

Children may be denied admission based on the following symptoms:

1. Temperature of 100.4 degrees or greater
2. Vomiting
3. Diarrhea more than twice
4. Mucus or pus draining from eyes
5. Persistent wheezing or coughing
6. Breathing difficulty
7. Lethargy that interferes with regular classroom activities

Children who become ill while in our program will be removed from the classroom activities to rest until a parent or designee arrives. When notified, the parent or designee is expected to pick up the child **within one hour**. If we cannot reach you on your emergency numbers, we will obtain emergency care through a clinic, hospital, or private doctor as directed by you on the Emergency Authorization Form.

- Children must remain home for 24 hours after fever has broken.
- Children must remain at home for 24 hour after vomiting or diarrhea has ceased, unless clearance has been given by the child's physician.

Communicable Illness or Denial of Service

Children are required to stay at home until no longer contagious.

1. Chicken pox
2. Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
3. Flu
4. Head lice
5. Pinworms
6. Strep throat
7. Viral diseases (including colds)

Parents are required to notify the ECM Faculty if their child has been exposed to a communicable illness. This will allow the faculty to take appropriate precautions to prevent the spread of the illness. If we find that your child has been or may have been exposed to a communicable illness we will notify you.

Re-Admission Following Illness

Children excluded from the program for a communicable disease may be re-admitted only when they are absent for the amounts of time specified by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and/or the Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services (HCPHES) www.hcphe.org. This is to ensure that their presence will not endanger the health of the other children and that they are well enough to participate in all regularly scheduled activities.

A note from a physician or local health authority may be required upon re-admission regardless of the reason of the absence verifying that the child is no longer contagious.

Administration of Medicine

The parent shall provide all medicine and procedure for administration. Medications should be administered by the parent prior to bringing the child to the facility. Designated faculty members will administer prescription and over-the-counter medication in accordance with written instructions from the parents and/or the child's physician. Written authorizations from physician and parents must be updated regularly.

Gloria Dei will not give medication to children who are in our program less than 4 hours except in the event of an emergency. Medications not following the guidelines will not be administered.

Prescription medicine must be in the original container and include:

1. Child's name
2. Type of medicine
3. Dosage and administration requirements
4. Physician's name
5. Purpose of medicine
6. Prescription number and date

Documentation of dosage and time medication was administered will be kept in the ECM Office.

Storage of Medication

All medication must be current and stored in the original container labeled with the child's name. Medication will not be stored for more than 30 days without usage.

Emergency Medical Treatment

The Early Childhood Ministries will not admit any child whose parents have not completed the Medical Emergency Authorization Form authorizing administration of emergency medical care to the child in an emergency situation where the child's health condition represents a serious or imminent threat to life, health, or well-being. Reasonable efforts will be made to notify a parent prior to such action. The ECM is required to notify the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services of all medical emergencies. Serious injuries requiring emergency first aid will be reported to the parents immediately. The parent will be notified of the injury details and summoned

to the ECM Office, or summoned to meet the faculty member and injured child at the designated emergency medical facility.

Conditions that require immediate medical care include but are not limited to:

1. Concussions
 2. Difficulty breathing
 3. Unconsciousness
 4. Laceration, either significant in size or bleeding
 5. Injury to an extremity with obvious deformity
 6. Head trauma associated with vomiting or altered consciousness
 7. Severe allergic reaction
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Minor Health Problems

Minor injuries such as small scratches, cuts, scrapes, bruises or discolorations of the skin will be reported to the parents at the end of the day. If an injury is more significant (i.e. a bite that breaks the skin or head injury) the faculty will notify the parent by telephone. All injuries occurring at the facility will be documented by the Director of Early Childhood Ministries or other faculty and filed in the child's permanent file. Parents are required to sign a copy of the incident report.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES

Behavior and Guidance Procedure

Each child enrolled in our Early Childhood Ministries is loved by God and valued by our faculty. Faculty members are genuinely concerned that the most positive environment possible be maintained at all times. A Christ-centered atmosphere of love and acceptance of individual personalities prevails.

The goals of the disciplinary techniques will be:

1. To ensure that the classroom is a safe, secure environment for all of the children
 2. To teach the children that our society has acceptable and unacceptable social behaviors
 3. To teach self-respect and respect for others
 4. To teach children self-control and inner discipline
 5. To teach the children to take responsibility for their actions and the consequences of their actions
 6. To strengthen the children's self-esteem and feelings of self-worth
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Techniques of Child Guidance

Faculty member will use positive techniques of guidance including redirecting the child to participate in another activity, anticipating and eliminating potential problems; providing positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviors; talking and providing reflective listening with the child; temporarily removing the child from a stressful situation; and limiting the child's participation in some activities until the child is able to cooperate and follow the rules associated with that particular activity. All techniques used will be age appropriate for the child and will be accompanied by a rational explanation of expectation on the child's level of understanding.

In order to provide a safely structured environment, general class rules are established for each classroom. The rules are frequently reviewed with the children so they will learn expected behaviors.

Management of Problem Behaviors

When negative behavior is exhibited on a recurring basis, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The faculty will discuss the situation with the child's parents and agree upon a strategy to help the child resolve the problem. The faculty will need the cooperation and participation of the parents in following through with the chosen methods at home to provide consistency in the solution strategy.

2. If after 1 week, improvement in the child's behavior is not achieved, the Director of the Early Childhood Ministries will hold a conference with the teacher and parents to explore additional options, strategies and plan a course of action. Referrals to special service providers such as a child psychologist, family therapist, social worker, or special education consultant may be part of the action plan.
 3. If after a second week, there is no improvement or progress in the child's behavior and/or the child's behavior endangers the safety or significantly disrupts the educational curriculum of the other children, the child may be withdrawn from the program.
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Withdrawal of a Child for Problem Behaviors

If a child does not change negative behavior, or if parents choose not to assist, the following procedure will be carried out:

1. Follow-up conference with parents, teacher and/or Director of Early Childhood Ministries after previous meetings to discuss progress.
 2. If the child is not responding to disciplinary measures, the child will be dismissed from the program. Gloria Dei will make every attempt to assist with a more suitable placement if at all possible.
 3. Parents have the right to submit a written appeal to the Early Childhood Ministries Committee within 10 days.
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Grievance Procedures

Parents are encouraged to first discuss questions or concerns with their child's teacher. If further discussion is needed, parents are welcome to contact the Director of Early Childhood Ministries at (281) 333-3323. If parents are unsatisfied after conferring with the Director, they should express their concerns to the Executive Director of Ministry Operations.

The EARLY CHILDHOOD MINISTRIES COMMITTEE

The responsibility of the Early Childhood Ministries (ECM) committee is to support the ECM by ensuring that the school's philosophy and function are in harmony with the congregation of Gloria Dei's vision of this ministry. Members of the committee also support the Director of Early Childhood Ministries in the efficient management and operation of the ECM.

Responsibilities of the Committee

1. Ensure that the school's purpose is in accord with the congregation's Strategic Ministry and Mission Plan.
2. Work with, support and/or provide consultation to the Director of Early Childhood Ministries, who is the school's chief administrator and is responsible for the daily management of all aspects of the school's operation.
3. Provide input on program policies and elements consistent with the ECM Philosophy.
4. Periodically review the financial operation of the school. This includes an annual review and committee recommendations made to the Director of the Early Childhood Ministries during the development phase of the budget cycle.
5. Periodically review tuition rates and policies as may be recommended by the Director of the Early Childhood Ministries, including comparisons to other area early childhood programs.
6. Assist in the resolution of employment-related issues according to the grievance procedures specified in the ECM Faculty Handbook, and advise the Director of the Early Childhood Ministries as requested on employment challenges.
7. Provide feedback to the Director of the Early Childhood Ministries on program performance.
8. Serve as an advocate for the program.
9. Carry out other functions consistent with the program philosophy and purpose of the committee as may be reasonably requested by the Gloria Dei Board of Directors, pastoral leadership, Executive Director of Ministry Operations, or the Director of the Early Childhood Ministries.
10. Maintain confidentiality of the committee discussion.
11. Function as a decision-making group only while committee is in session and support the decisions of the committee outside of its meetings without regard to personal opinion.

Organization of the Committee

1.	The committee shall consist of a minimum of seven voting members appointed by the Director of the Early Childhood Ministries, in consultation with the Executive Director of Ministry Operations. A minimum of five of the seven voting members shall be active members of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. The Director of the Early Childhood Ministries and the Executive Director of Ministry Operations shall be non-voting members of the committee. The Executive Director of Ministry Operations shall vote only in case of a tie. Four of the seven voting members present shall constitute a quorum.
2.	A member's term shall consist of two years, beginning August 1 of year 1 and ending July 31 of year 2. In order to ensure continuity, not more than 4 voting members' terms shall expire simultaneously. Member vacancies will be filled in the manner outlined above.
3.	It is understood that ECM Committee membership shall to all extent possible represent a variety of constituencies of the ECM, as well as possess the variety of administrative skills needed to fulfill roles of the committee outlined in this charter.
4.	The committee shall meet at least six times a year. The committee chairperson or the Director of the Early Childhood Ministries may request additional meetings or changes in format of meeting to assure the needs of the Director of the Early Childhood Ministries or ECM are met, and that the committee fulfills its obligations under this charter. Exceptions to the normal schedule are to be reported to the Executive Director of Ministry Operations. Minutes of the monthly meeting are forwarded to the Executive Director of Ministry Operations by the second Monday of each month for inclusion in the Board of Directors Agenda Attachments.
5.	The Committee will elect a chairperson, vice chairperson, and a secretary. Terms of office are for one year.

Revised 07/01/10

Emergency Information and Contacts

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

18220 Upper Bay Road, Nassau Bay 77058
(281) 333-4535

Early Childhood Ministries (281) 333-3323

www.gdlc.org

Student Center (281) 333 4535

www.gdlc.org

Christus St. John Hospital

18300 St. John Drive, Nassau Bay
(281) 333-5503

Hope Lutheran Church

1804 S. Friendswood Dr., Friendswood
(281) 482-7943

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