

# Westminster Weekday Schools Parent Handbook

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## *Introduction*

### **Statement of Mission and Philosophy**

It is the mission of Westminster Weekday Schools to provide a program for our students that allows them to be active learners and unique individuals. We believe in providing a developmentally appropriate learning environment that supports children's initiatives to explore, investigate, observe, and experiment while allowing for appropriate risk taking within safe boundaries. In doing so, we strive to foster and create in our students a life-long love of learning.

Westminster Weekday Schools welcomes and serves children of all races, nationalities, and religious creeds, infants through pre-kindergarten age.

### **Goals and Objectives**

The main objective of Westminster Weekday Schools is to provide a healthy, positive, loving, and fun learning environment that will encourage our students to be life-long learners. Program goals for each class are written and distributed to parents at orientation. The areas addressed in these goals include: cognitive reasoning, creative expression, emotional maturity, language learning, physical development, self-esteem, and spirituality.

It is also a goal of Westminster Weekday Schools to hire and maintain teachers and staff who reflect our beliefs in developing the whole child through developmentally appropriate practices.

### **Organizational Structure**

#### **Relationship with the Church**

Westminster Weekday Schools are an integral part of Westminster United Methodist Church. Westminster Weekday Schools are financially independent through tuition and registration fees and share joint use of the facilities. The Director of Westminster Weekday Schools is a church staff member and reports to the Minister and the Westminster Weekday Schools Advisory Board.

#### **Facilities**

Westminster United Methodist Church provides all facilities for Westminster Weekday Schools. Each room is designed to stimulate the child's senses and is equipped with special learning centers, including dramatic play, science/sensory play, music, reading, manipulatives, art, and blocks/transportation.

Westminster Weekday Schools continues to make improvements to our facilities and playgrounds through our yearly fundraising events. In developing comfortable and well-designed areas, Westminster Weekday Schools are committed to creating an atmosphere that is creative, flexible, and fun.

## **Westminster Weekday Schools Advisory Board**

The Advisory Board consists of a combination of church and school staff, church members, and school parents. These members are familiar with the program and the staff of Westminster Weekday Schools and participate in appropriate activities during the school year. The Advisory Board is responsible for setting general operating policies, standards, budgets, and calendars for the school. Concerns or grievances should be brought to the attention of the Director. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, then concerns will be addressed by the Senior Pastor and/or the Advisory Board.

## **Staff**

The teaching staff is highly qualified, with at least two teachers per class. Team teaching is required, with each teacher being responsible for developmentally appropriate lesson plans and daily schedules.

All new staff are required to attend 24 hours of training before beginning service in the classroom, unless they have 2 or more years of experience in a regulated child-care center. This is in accordance with the Texas Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) standards. Every teacher receives training and certification every 2 years in First Aid and Infant/Child CPR. Also required by DHHS, each teacher attends 24 hours of continuing education in early childhood training every year. Teachers attend curriculum planning meetings every month. Additional early childhood training is offered to our teachers through the Houston Area Association for the Education of Young Children (HAAEYC), and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and through the Early Childhood Methodist Conference (ECMC).

## **Licensing Authority**

Westminster Weekday Schools is licensed by the Texas DHHS with the Texas Child-Care Regulating office. The schools operate under the Minimum Standards for Child-Care Centers. Once a year, Child Care Licensing inspects the school. A copy of their report may be viewed in the school office or on the DHHS (Department of Health and Human Services) website. The Minimum Standards book is also available for any parent to review in the school office or on the DHHS website.

The contact information for the Local Licensing office is 713-940-3009, the DHHS child abuse hotline is 1-800-252-5400, and the DHHS website is [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us).

## **Gang Free Zone**

The Texas Penal Code states that 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.

## *School Policies and Procedures*

### **Admissions Process/Registration Procedures**

#### **Admissions/Registration**

Beginning each January, Priority Registration is open first to children currently enrolled, their siblings, church members, and sibling legacies. Parents are encouraged to tour the school before enrolling to become familiar with the school and individual classrooms.

The Registration and Supply Fee must accompany the application form to enroll a child. This fee is non-refundable and non-transferrable. Parents wishing to withdraw their child from Westminster Weekday Schools should notify the school office in writing, immediately. This will enable us to release the space to the next child on the waiting list.

**REMINDER:** All children enrolled in the Red Ladybugs, Green Gators and Pre-K classes, MUST be potty-trained. Parents will be notified in writing if there are any changes in this procedure.

#### **Change of Address Notification**

Please promptly inform the Westminster Weekday Schools office of any changes of address and phone numbers. Parents are also responsible for updating this information on their BrightWheel account. This is required by the Texas DHHS under the Minimum Standards of Operation.

#### **Withdrawals**

Students are enrolled for the full school year. Should early withdrawal become necessary, written notification must be sent to the Director at least thirty (30) days before the date of withdrawal. If a 30 day notice is not given, you will be billed for one month after the drop is reported. Upon any withdrawal, the application fee, registration and supply fee, and the prepaid May tuition will be forfeited. The prepaid May tuition cannot be applied to any other month's tuition and is non-transferable.

Westminster Weekday Schools reserves the right to dismiss any student who does not comply with the School's standards and policies. This decision will be made at the discretion of the Advisory Board.

#### **Confidentiality**

It is Westminster Weekday Schools' policy not to release information or records concerning your child to other schools, non-educational organizations, or other individuals, without the written consent of the child's parents or legal guardians. Children's school records are only accessible to the child's teachers, school administrators, authorized employees of the Texas DHHS, and the child's parents or legal guardians. Please also see the section on Assessment.

## **Medical Forms**

Your child's confidential file will contain the medical forms signed and filled out by his or her physician. Prior to enrollment, all students must be up to date with immunizations in accordance with the Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Child-Care Facilities. Westminster Weekday Schools will not permit exceptions. Your child's medical report and information sheet may need to be updated during the school year. Please keep the school office informed of new immunizations or current health information by having your doctor's office fax the updated record to the school (Fax Number 713/977-0340) or submitting the updated record to the school office. If your child is out of compliance with immunizations, evidence of an upcoming appointment will be required before they are allowed to attend school.

## **Classes (Teacher/Student Ratio)**

Class sizes are small and age appropriate. Children are placed in classes based on their date of birth, or by specific needs. Children remain with their assigned teachers and class grouping for the entire school year and for the duration of each day.

In order to provide the utmost in personal attention and instruction, our teacher/child ratios are as follows:

9 to 1	Pre-K Class, Turning 4's
7 to 1	3's Class, Turning 3's
6 to 1	2's Class
5 to 1	Toddlers
4 to 1	Infants/Toddlers

## **Communication**

### **School News, Updates & Reminders**

The administrative staff sends weekly e-mail updates to parents regarding upcoming school and church events, school policy reminders, and any other information deemed important or helpful to include. Other important information, including school policy changes, will also be sent to school families via e-mail as well as BrightWheel.

Teachers may be contacted via the BrightWheel messaging app, and/or an email sent to the Director. Teachers are not permitted to communicate with families via personal email addresses or text messages. Teachers may only reply to BrightWheel messages before school and during naptime. If you need to reach a teacher during the morning hours, please call the school office.

### **Classroom Calendars and Newsletters**

All Westminster Weekday School classes have a monthly parent calendar and newsletter. Please read these carefully, as this is an important link between parent and teacher and keeps you informed of your child's daily activities at school. Communication is vital to your child's school experience and verbal and written communication is stressed. School information, memos, and changes are sent home as needed. All communications from the school are available in Spanish.

## **Daily/Weekly Communications**

All Children's Day Out (CDO) classes – Teddy Bears, Turtles, Angels, Honeybees, Bunnies and Ponies – will send home a daily note for each child through BrightWheel. These notes will include information regarding class activities that day, as well as specific information about your child, including such things as eating, napping and toileting.

All Day School classes – Orange Fish, Red Ladybugs, Green Gators, and Stars – will send home weekly notes on the last day of your child's school week through BrightWheel. These notes will include information regarding class activities that week, upcoming class reminders, as well as a specific note about your child with regards to their mood, developmental progress, favorite activities, or any other information the teachers think is important to share with parents.

## **Student Assessments**

Assessments are done using a Portfolio Assessment Program. The ongoing assessment process guides classroom teaching/lesson planning and is consistent with Westminster Weekday Schools' curriculum goals and philosophy. The curriculum goals and objectives align with the assessment of each individual child's progress.

Resources for a child's development are discussed with the parents by the teacher, Child Development Coordinator, and the Director. Informal and formal evaluations in the areas of language development, social adjustment, motor coordination, and cognitive growth are carried out by the classroom teachers and Child Development Coordinator in all classes throughout the year.

Assessments, as well as the results of any other evaluations, are available to parents through written reports and parent conferences. Parental input and home information is a valuable part of this process and includes: completing information for special care needs on the IEP and developmental history forms, communicating with teachers during parent/teacher conferences, and informal communication such as phone calls and emails with the teachers and/or Director.

All assessments are confidential and will be shared only with the child's parents and legal guardians. Children's assessment results will be released to other agencies only if the parent or legal guardian gives written permission to do so.

Agencies and professionals who conduct standardized and norm-referenced tests must contact the classroom teachers to complete checklists, rating scales, and/or observations, only with written permission from the parents or legal guardian. If agencies and professionals wish to observe the child in the classroom, written permission from the parents or legal guardian is required.



## *Assessment Plan*

Assessment is an ongoing process whereby teachers find out how children, individually and collectively, are developing in relation to the curriculum goals and developmental goals.

The purpose of an assessment plan is to:

- Identify children's interests and needs.
- Describe the developmental progress and learning of children.
- Track children's learning and development.
- Improve curriculum and adapt teaching practices and environment.
- Assist with planning program improvements.
- Communicate with families.
- Arrange for developmental screening and referral for diagnostic assessment when indicated.

A portfolio on each child is kept by the classroom teaching team which assesses each child's development in the following areas:

- Physical development.
- Social/Emotional development.
- Cognitive development (early literacy, mathematics, science, creative expression, social studies, creative thinking/problem solving, self-help skills, language, spiritual).

The portfolio may also include:

- Program goals
- Parent questionnaires and interviews
- Developmental checklists and assessments
- Samples of child's work
- Photographs
- Anecdotal records of children's interests/accomplishments

## *Assessment Timeline*

### **August**

Teachers review: child developmental history, medical forms, and special needs/IEP forms.

### **September**

Begin student portfolios: samples of child's work, anecdotal records and photographs.

### **October**

1. Review and begin preparing Child Progress Assessment.
2. Fall Conference Parent Questionnaire (provided by office) is sent home with each child.
3. Parent/Teacher conferences. Following conferences, set goals for each child based on parent input.
4. Continue to collect work samples, anecdotal records, and photographs.

### **November**

1. Hearing, Vision, Language and Speech Screenings are conducted on all children in Red Ladybugs, Gators and Stars. Review results.
2. Continue to include: work samples, anecdotal records, and photographs in child's portfolio.

### **December**

Continue to collect work samples, photographs, and anecdotal records.

### **January**

1. Teachers review Program Goals for their class to determine each child's progress and the effectiveness of the curriculum.
2. Continue to collect work samples, photographs, and anecdotal records.

### **February**

1. Review and begin preparing Child Progress Assessments. The assessment should be completed and ready to review with parents in March.
2. Continue to collect anecdotal records and work samples.

### **March**

1. Parent/Teacher Conferences. Parents receive a copy of the assessment.
2. Continue to gather work samples, photographs, and anecdotal records.

### **April**

Continue to collect work samples, photographs, and anecdotal records.

### **May**

1. Teachers review Program Goals for their class to determine each child's progress and the effectiveness of the curriculum.
2. Update Child Progress Assessments.
3. Children's portfolio work is sent home.

## Parent Conferences / Reports

Verbal communication is vital to the school and is encouraged. Formal Parent Conferences are scheduled for all children twice a year, in all classes. However, you may request a conference anytime the need arises. The Director's door is always open to anyone, at any time.

### Scheduled Conference Dates

**October:** School will be closed for parent/teacher conferences.

**March:** School will be closed for parent/teacher conferences.

**May:** Final written evaluation of child's progress is available for all CDO and Day School classes. Assessment programs are continued from one year to the next. (All children leaving Westminster's program receive their assessment at the time of their withdrawal.)

Parents are welcome to visit and observe in their child's classroom. All visitors must check in at the school office upon arrival and parents wishing to observe their child will be escorted to their child's classroom. Parents are always welcome to discuss any special problems with the classroom teacher and are encouraged to advise the teacher of any situation which may affect their child's classroom behavior and learning experience. If you would like to speak to a teacher about a concern, please contact them and arrange a time that is convenient for everyone. **Please avoid speaking with the teachers about conference concerns during carpool and at the classroom door during pick-up.** This is a time of transition and the teachers' attention must be directed toward the children.

All progress reports, evaluations, and personal information in a student's file are always available to the child's parent. This information is confidential and will only be shared with the child's teacher and regulatory authorities upon request. No information is shared with any outside agencies without the parent's written permission. All student records are kept in a locked file in the school office.

Westminster Weekday Schools has a Child Development Coordinator on staff. She observes classrooms throughout the school year and provides feedback and guidance to teaching staff on classroom management techniques and strategies. She is also available for parent/teacher conferences and to address specific concerns of either party. (See **Child Development Coordinator** on page 13.)

The school office can provide families with information about child development services including: physical health, mental health, developmental assessments, and educational services for their children. The office staff can also assist families in locating, contacting, and using these community resources to support their family. The office staff encourages families to be advocates for their children, because early intervention is the key to success.

## Curriculum

### **Classroom Environments**

Westminster Weekday Schools' faculty organizes its curriculum around topics which reflect the interests and developmental needs of the children. The curriculum promotes learning and development in these areas: social-emotional, physical, language, early literacy, early mathematics, science, creative expression, appreciation for the arts, health and safety, and social studies. Our curriculum is integrated using NAEYC's developmentally appropriate guidelines, and can be modified for differences in age and ability, developmental stage, family's needs and other such factors. Each class uses supplemental age appropriate enrichment resources, such as "Math Their Way", "Rice Literacy", and "Handwriting Without Tears" to enhance the learning experiences of each child.

Traditional and non-traditional holiday celebrations and activities which are representative of more than one culture and/or religion are also included in each classroom curriculum.

Classrooms use "center-based learning" such as dramatic play, science/sensory experiences, music, reading, manipulatives, art, and blocks and transportation to enrich the child's language development, social interaction, independence, and physical development. The activities are all age-appropriate and are designed to enhance the development of the whole child.

Creative activities are offered to give each child opportunities for self-expression and for good social relationships. Among these may be:

- Process art activities
- Music appreciation, singing, rhythm activities, and creative movement
- Enjoyment of stories and books
- Finger plays and dramatizations
- Indoor and outdoor play
- On-site field trips
- Cooking in the classroom
- Fine motor and gross motor development
- Science experiments and hands-on activities
- Activities in perception and discrimination
- Games with numbers and letters
- Block building activities
- Language development

## Ancillary Classes

### Chapel

Students participate in a short Chapel lesson weekly. Chapel enriches children's understanding of Jesus' love, sharing, giving thanks, family love and God's world. Once a month, the Day School classes also participate in an "All-School Chapel Service" in the sanctuary. Parents are invited to attend these services.

### Motor

Gross motor co-ordination and development, body image, and auditory and visual perception are stressed in motor activities. Our special outdoor playgrounds also enhance the children's motor development with supervised, free, and imaginative play.

### Music

Music is taught weekly to all students by our music teacher. The children enjoy a happy learning experience singing songs, playing instruments, and learning rhythms. The teachers reinforce music in their daily activities with their classes by having the children participate in creative movement, singing, listening, and music appreciation.

### Library

The school has a wonderfully vibrant and inviting library that is available to students and parents during school hours. Day School classes are visited weekly by the library cart where students are given the opportunity to check out books to be taken home for a week and then returned. Our library also offers a great selection of pertinent books on child development, discipline, growth, motor activities, and age-appropriate storybooks for use by parents and teachers. Parents are also welcome to check these out at any time from the school library.

### Field Trips

For the safety of our students, Westminster Weekday Schools does not take off-site field trips. Instead, the school offers multiple, educational, in-house field trips. These are enrichment programs that come to our campus. They have included such things as puppet shows, musical programs, petting zoo, snow day, children's plays, and community helpers such as firemen, police, and dentists.

## Extra-Curricular Opportunities

Several after school enrichment opportunities are available to our Day School students ages 3 – Pre-K. All fees for these classes are made directly to the programs offering them. Additional information will be provided at Orientation and is always available in the Parent Information center outside the school office.

- Mondays:** Gymnastics and Tumbling with Brown's Gymnastics
- Tuesdays:** Soccer Shots
- Thursdays:** Tippi Toes
- Thurs/Fri:** PreKeys with Ms. Jennie Nevil

## **Discipline and Behavior Management**

### **School Discipline Policy**

The following Discipline Policy is required to be signed by the parents and filed in the child's file. (This form is part of your child's enrollment packet.)

### **Statement on Discipline**

It is our belief that the best discipline is self-discipline. To nurture the development of this critical skill in our students, we plan carefully for our discipline to be:

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

### **We do this by...**

- Planning curriculum and choosing equipment and materials developmentally appropriate for the children in each classroom.
- Having a few simple and understandable rules which each child is expected to follow.
- Respecting a child's need for privacy, identity and self-expression.
- Showing each child love and understanding after the example of Christ.
- Showing respect and care for all persons and property in the school.
- Redirecting behavior using positive statements.
- Refusing to spank, humiliate or embarrass a child.

THEREFORE, you can expect that we will always find alternatives to physical punishment and humiliation as techniques for discipline. However, your child will be expected and encouraged to follow school rules and develop self-discipline. School disciplinary policies shall apply only to situations arising at school.

### **Conflict Resolution & Classroom Techniques**

- Staff will encourage children's appropriate expressions of emotions, both positive and negative.
- Staff will support children's competent and self-reliant exploration and use of classroom materials.
- Staff will assist children in resolving conflicts by helping them identify feelings, describe problems, and try alternative solutions. Empower them with "words"!
- Staff will help children manage their behavior by guiding and supporting them when frustrated
- Staff will offer examples of cooperative play with other children by modeling language to communicate needs.
- Staff will model how to ask problem solving questions.
- Staff will facilitate positive peer interactions and intervene when children tease or reject others.
- Staff will actively teach children social, communication, and emotional regulation skills.

## **Discipline Guidelines**

- Teaching staff promote pro-social behavior by interacting in a respectful manner with all children and staff.
- Teaching staff anticipate and take steps to prevent potential behavior problems.
- Rather than focus solely on reducing the challenging behavior, teachers focus on teaching the child social, communication, and emotional regulation skills and use environmental activity modifications and other teaching strategies to support the child's appropriate behavior.
- When talking with children about their behavior, teaching staff will tell them what they should do, not what they shouldn't do.
- Classroom rules are simple and easily understood by the children, based on age appropriate behavior expectations.
- Classroom staff will be consistent when enforcing classroom rules and consequences.
- When talking with children about their behavior, the staff will be firm, calm, and talk quietly.
- Teaching staff will acknowledge good behavior with positive reinforcement.

## **Handling Inappropriate Behavior**

Inappropriate or challenging behavior is any behavior which (1) interferes with children's learning, development, and success at play, (2) is harmful to the child, other children or adults, and/or (3) puts a child at high risk for later social problems or school failure. Steps to be taken:

1. Redirection: Help the child find another, more appropriate activity.
2. Talk: Talk with the child about the behavior – ask him/her what needs to be changed.
3. Separation: Separation is not a punishment, but rather a time when the child may calm down, remember what behavior the teacher is asking for, and decide for him/herself when he or she is ready to rejoin the group with appropriate behavior.
4. Sometimes it is necessary to remove a child from the classroom for the safety and well-being of the child and for the other children in a classroom. A child that is out of control needs to be removed from the environment and be given an opportunity to regain his composure before discussing information on acceptable behavior.
5. If behavior problems persist, the parents will be asked to conference with the teachers, Director, and Child Development Coordinator, to determine a plan of action to assist the child in the classroom. This plan may include the need for a child to have a professional evaluation and intervention in order to continue in the program.

Excessively challenging, inappropriate, or harmful behavior could result in disciplinary action being taken by the school, such as, but not limited to: the Director counseling with parents; child being dismissed early; or dismissal from the program. We will make all accommodations we are capable of making. That being said, the school may, at its discretion, request the withdrawal of any child whose needs cannot be met in our program.

## **Biting Policy**

It is not age appropriate for a 3 – 4 year old to bite. Biting is serious at this age and will not be tolerated.

### **FIRST TIME:**

1. Isolate the biter.
2. Console the victim.
3. Inform the parents – both.

The biter will not be identified to anyone other than his/her parents as the school will not participate in labeling a child or breaking a rule of confidentiality.

If biting continues, the biter will be asked to remain at home for a period of time. Parents will be conferenced as to the appropriate time for the child to re-enter school on a trial basis. If the biting persists, the school may dismiss the child. **PARENTS, TEACHERS, AND THE DIRECTOR WILL WORK TOGETHER TO AID THE CHILD IN HIS OR HER BEHAVIOR.**

## **Child Development Coordinator**

Westminster Weekday Schools has a Child Development Coordinator on staff who will observe classrooms throughout the school year and provide feedback and guidance to teaching staff on classroom management techniques and strategies. The Child Development Coordinator is also available for parent/teacher conferences and to address specific concerns of either party.

## **Food Policies and Guidelines**

### **Snacks**

Children bring their own snack daily in a zip top bag labeled with the child's **name** and **date**. Nutritious snack ideas are distributed in the fall. Water is also served with snacks. Snacks provided by a parent must not be shared with other children unless 1) it is commercially prepared, 2) it is for a celebration or party, **and** 3) it meets the needs of children who require special diets.

### **Lunches**

Children bring their own lunch. The school does not provide meals for students, however you may choose to order hot lunches through the catering service Simply Fresh Kitchen. Parents provide meals from home and the school is not responsible for its nutritional value. Parents are asked to send children to school with a nutritious lunch and to limit high sugar items. Nutritious lunch ideas are distributed in the fall and menu suggestions are available in the school office. Children eat at classroom tables with classmates and grace is said daily before each meal. Meals provided by a parent must not be shared with other children unless 1) it is commercially prepared, 2) it is for a celebration or party, **and** 3) it meets the needs of children who require special diets.



### **Infant/Toddler Feeding Guidelines:**

- Only foods sent by the parents will be fed to infants. These foods should be based on the infants' individual nutritional needs and appropriate to their developmental stage.
- Formula or expressed human milk must be in a plastic bottle, with the child's name and date.
- Milk will be refrigerated until the child is fed and will be gently shaken prior to feeding.
- Milk will be discarded after one hour if not consumed when offered.
- Milk may be warmed in hot water. Milk or other liquids will not be warmed in a microwave oven.
- Cow's milk is not recommended for infants less than 12 months of age; whole milk is recommended for children ages 12-24 months.
- No solid foods in bottles will be served.
- Infants unable to sit will be held for a bottle feeding.
- Infants and toddler/twos do not have a bottle while in a crib or on a nap mat.
- Infants and toddler/twos do not carry bottles, sippy cups, or regular cups while walking or crawling.
- Teachers offer children fluids from a cup as soon as the families and teachers decide together that a child is developmentally ready to use a cup.
- Children using training cups while in care must have each cup labeled with the child's first name and last initial.

### **Provisions for Breastfeeding Mothers**

Westminster Weekday Schools supports the importance of breastfeeding and will provide a comfortable place for mothers to breastfeed their children, as needed.

### **Food Policies and Considerations:**

- Food should be cut into pieces no larger than ¼ inch square for infants and ½ square for toddlers and twos. Staff will cut food into proper size if food sent from home does not conform to these sizes.
- Only 100% juice is recommended, limited to 4oz per day. Parents should not send sweetened beverages.
- Foods brought from home to be shared with the class must be commercially packaged.
- Foods with expired dates will be discarded.
- Hot liquids and foods are kept out of reach of children.
- Do not send hot dogs cut in rounds, whole grapes, nuts, popcorn, hard pretzels, or chunks of carrots for children under 3 years of age. These foods are the main cause of choking in children under 3 and will not be served to your child if found in their snack or lunch.
- Water is offered at both snack and lunch and is available and encouraged throughout the day.
- All families are expected to comply with the allergy restrictions noted for their child(ren)'s classroom.

## Health

### **Medical and Emergency Release Forms**

Your child's confidential file will contain the medical form signed and filled out by his or her physician. This form must be in the office before the child may begin school. Your child's medical report and information sheet may need to be updated during the school year. Parents should keep the school office informed of new immunizations or current health information.

If there is a change in telephone number or address for home and/or office, or if other important data changes, it is necessary to report this to the school so your child's Emergency Release Form can be updated.

**THIS INFORMATION IS VITAL IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES.**

### **Immunization Requirements**

All students **MUST** be up to date with immunizations in accordance with the Texas Minimum State Vaccine Requirements for Child-Care Facilities. Westminster Weekday Schools will not permit exceptions. If your child is out of compliance with immunizations, evidence of an upcoming appointment to get caught up is required before your child may attend school.

### **Medication for Children**

Westminster Weekday Schools does not authorize school personnel to give medication of any kind, except in the event of a severe medical situation. Teachers cannot, under any circumstances, administer medicine to a child. In the event of a severe medical situation, however, a member of the school's administrative staff is permitted to administer limited medications. The administration of these limited medications will only be performed on those students who have a medical Action Plan prepared by the child's health care professional on file in the school office.

The following procedures must be followed:

- **For children with severe allergies**, the parent must obtain an Allergy Action Plan from their physician. The form must list each food the child is allergic to, possible symptoms if exposed to a food on the list, the steps to take if the child has an allergic reaction, and it must be signed by the parent and physician.
- **For children with other illnesses requiring emergency medications**, the parent must obtain a Medical Action Plan from their physician. The form must describe the illness, symptoms to be aware of at onset, the steps to take if the child develops those symptoms, and it must be signed by the parent and physician.
- The Action Plan and medication(s) must be turned in to the school office prior to the child's first day of school. (Note: If diaper creams, lotions or ointments are provided by the parents and labeled with the child's name, permission is implicit and authorization does not have to be obtained for each use.)
- Prescription medications must be in the original container, labeled with the child's name, a date, directions, and the physician's name.

- Over the counter medications must be in the original container and labeled with the child's name.
- Medications will not be administered once they have expired. It is the parent's responsibility to keep medications up to date in the school office.
- Medications will be kept in a locked box in the quarantine room.
- The staff member giving the medication must follow the five right practices of medication administration:
  - Verify that:
    1. the right child receives
    2. the right medication
    3. in the right dose
    4. at the right time
    5. by the right method.
  - After completing the above steps the staff member giving the medication must document the medication given on an incident report in the school office. A copy of this report is filed in the student record and a copy is given to the parent.
- DO NOT put medication in a lunch box or diaper bag and do not incorporate it into food or beverages.

### **Sunscreen Lotion/ Sun Protective Clothing/Insect Repellent**

Parents are encouraged to apply sun screen on their children before coming to school. NAEYC recommends that children playing in the sun wear sun-protective clothing and have a sun screen/sun block applied.

Please consult with your pediatrician to determine which insect repellent is appropriate for your child. Insect repellent must be applied before bringing your child to school. The school utilizes a non-toxic mosquito misting system, during the evening hours, to control mosquitos. For more information regarding this system or the product used, please see the school office.

### **Hand Washing**

Hand washing is an important self-help skill that is taught at school. Please follow through with these healthy habits at home.

Children must wash their hands on arrival, before eating, after playing in a water play table, after toileting or having a diaper changed, after handling body fluids (coughing, blowing or wiping nose, etc.), after outdoor activities, after playing in sand, after feeding or touching animals, and any other time that the teacher has reason to believe the child has come in contact with substances that could be harmful.

The proper hand washing procedure is: 1) Use liquid soap and running water, 2) Rub hands vigorously for at least 20 seconds including back of hands, wrist, between fingers, and under and around jewelry, and under fingernails, 3) Rinse well, 4) Dry hands with a paper towel, and 5) Avoid touching faucet with just washed hands by turning off the water using the paper towel.

To prevent the spread of germs when children are being diapered, all teachers must first wash

their hands, use disposable gloves, cover the diaper changing area with clean paper, and wash their hands and the infant's hands after each diaper change. Diapers are disposed into a covered container or kept in plastic bags until they can be disposed of outside. Ventilation and sanitation, rather than sprays, air fresheners, or deodorizers, are used to control odors. All teachers with open wounds and/or any injury that inhibits hand washing cannot change diapers. At all times, the staff should have a hand on the child when the child is being changed on an elevated surface.

### **Illnesses/Sick Child Policy**

Because we are concerned with the health and well-being of all the children, we must follow certain hygiene procedures. Precautions are taken at all times to safeguard the children's health. This includes refusing to admit sick children into school at the start of the day and isolating children who become ill during school hours.

Health checks will be done by the teachers daily to insure the health and safety of all children. If a child appears to have any symptoms that makes school attendance questionable, the child will be taken to the quarantine room for evaluation. If a temperature or symptoms are deemed severe enough, the child will be supervised in the quarantine room, and a parent will be called to pick up the child.

Children with fever, cough, a persistent runny nose, an undiagnosed rash, vomiting, diarrhea, and a child who generally "doesn't feel good" should not be brought to school. A child needs to be well enough to participate actively in all aspects of the school day to attend school.

A child must be free of fever, vomiting, and diarrhea for at least 24 hours, without medications, before returning to school. In the case of a positive COVID test, a student will be required to quarantine for 10 days. (See COVID Policy on Page 20)

**Any condition or problem (medical, physical or emotional) which affects your child should be discussed with the teacher.**

If your child has a temperature above normal **or** has any of the symptoms listed, he or she must stay home.

#### **Symptoms:**

- Fine blisters on the face, scalp or body indicating the possibility of chicken pox.
- Two or more bowel movements that are atypical for the child indicating the possibility of infectious diarrhea.
- Swollen glands at the back of the neck indicating the possibility of German Measles.
- A blotchy rash on the stomach and back or a fine red rash all over the body indicating the possibility of measles or scarlet fever.
- Swelling over the jaw or in the front of the ear indicating the possibility of mumps.
- Very sore throat as indicated by refusing food and drink suggesting the possibility of streptococcal infection.
- Discharge from the eye or crusted eyelids indicating the possibility of infectious pink eye.
- Listless, lethargic behavior, lack of appetite, refusal to eat or drink, extreme irritability,

excessive runny nose with thick discharge, or clearly unusual behavior for the child which persists over time indicating the likelihood of oncoming illness.

- Vomiting.
- **Any combination of the symptoms listed above.**

### *Contagious Diseases*

Parents should notify the school when children are ill with a communicable disease so that other parents and, in some cases, the Health Department may be notified. Children must have a doctor's note to return to school. (Regarding COVID, see COVID Policy below.)

When contagious illnesses are identified among children who attend Westminster, a notice will be emailed to parents indicating the type of illness, symptoms to look for, and other information that may be of interest to parents such as the incubation period for various diseases. This is done to give parents as much advance warning as possible to plan alternative care arrangements for ill children. Names of ill children are not made public. Only the type of disease and related information is shared with other parents.

### *COVID Policy (Updated July 2022)*

If a student tests positive for COVID, parents should notify the Director immediately. The child will be required to quarantine for 10 days and may return on day 11 if he/she has been symptom free for 24 hours.

If a student lives in a household with someone who has tested positive for COVID, parents should notify the Director immediately. The student may take a PCR test on Day 5 of their quarantine and return on Day 6 with a negative result if they are symptom free. If a parent prefers not to test their child in this situation, the student will quarantine for 10 days and may return on Day 11 if symptom free.

If a student in your child's classroom tests positive for COVID, the class will be notified, and parents will monitor their child(ren) for symptoms. Children who remain asymptomatic will be allowed to continue coming to school as the classroom will remain open. If a student develops symptoms at home after a classroom exposure, parents should contact the Director to develop a plan to return to school. A student who develops symptoms at school after a classroom exposure, will be sent home and a plan will be developed to return to school. WWDS may consider closing a classroom and requiring a negative test from all students to return should the number of COVID cases in an individual classroom exceed an acceptable number.

This policy will be reviewed by the WWDS Advisory Board regularly and parents will be notified of any updates.

## **Incident Reports**

Accidents are reported to the Director or Administrative Assistant. A report is filled out and parents are notified. If the injury requires a doctor's attention, the parent is called immediately to pick up the child. In case the parent or other emergency contacts cannot be reached, the child is taken to the doctor or hospital of the parent's choice by two staff persons.

If a child has an accident at school that requires first aid, the teacher will report the accident on an Incident Report form. A parent will be notified within 48 hours, but typically the same day. One copy of the Incident Report will be given to the parent and one will be placed in the student's file. The parent is required to sign the form that is to be filed. In case of doubt as to the need for a doctor's attention, the parent will be called to let them decide.

## **First Aid and Emergency Procedures**

### ***Minor First Aid Emergencies***

First Aid supplies are kept in all classrooms, on each playground, and in the school office. An incident report will be completed on any child that incurs an injury requiring any type of first aid. (See "Incident Reports" above for more information.)

### ***Major First Aid Emergencies (Severe Injury, Acute Illness, Choking, Child Not Breathing)***

1. The situation will be assessed calmly to determine what needs to be done. The other children will be told quietly what is being done and why.
2. Another teacher will be sent to the office to report injury, illness, etc.
3. First aid or CPR will be administered.
4. Parent or guardian will be contacted. If parent cannot be reached, the child's physician will be contacted.
5. If applicable, an ambulance will be called. The teacher or Director will accompany the child to the emergency room. The child's file from the school office will be taken to the hospital.
6. The child will be taken to the closest hospital unless otherwise noted by the family or recommended by EMS.

### ***First Aid for Dental Emergencies***

#### **Chipped or Broken Tooth**

1. Gently clean dirt from the injured area with warm water.
2. Protect the tooth from further exposure to air or cold liquid (cover with sterile gauze).
3. Place a cold compress over the face, in the area of the injured tooth, to decrease the swelling.
4. If an exposed nerve is obvious, parents will be advised to take the student to a dentist immediately.

### Knocked-Out Tooth:

1. Immediately attempt to locate the lost tooth. Handle the tooth by the top (crown), not the root portion. If the tooth cannot be found, look in the mouth area where the tooth should be to make sure it is not driven up into the soft tissue.
2. If the tooth can be located and is dirty, rinse it gently in running water. Do not scrub it or remove any attached tissue fragments. Place the tooth in a cup of milk. This is the preferred solution to keep it in. If milk is not available, place the tooth in a cup of cool water.

Parents will be advised of injury so that the dentist can be contacted immediately.

## **Hours of Operation**

### **School Hours**

Westminster Weekday Schools is open late August through mid-May each year, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and in June on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

### **Classroom Schedules**

The following class schedules apply:

Teddy Bears T/TH: 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Teddy Bears W/F: 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Turtles T/TH: 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Turtles W/F: 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Angels T/TH: 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Angels W/F: 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Honeybees T/TH: 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Bunnies T/W/TH: 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Ponies T/TH: 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Ponies W/F: 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Orange Fish M/T/TH: Mon. 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and T/TH 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Orange Fish M/W/F: Mon. 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and W/F 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Red Ladybugs M/T/TH: Mon. 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and T/TH 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Red Ladybugs M/W/F: Mon. 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and W/F 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Green Gators M-F: Mon. 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., and Tues.-Fri. - 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Pre- K Classes M-F: Mon. 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., and Tues. - Fri. - 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

### **School Closings**

In the event of inclement weather, Westminster Weekday Schools will consider the recommendations for school closures of both HISD and SBISD. Families will be notified of such closings by e-mail and/or a mass communication system.

## Naps and Rest Time

All children at Westminster are required to have a regular rest period following lunch that lasts at least one hour in length. The children must be on their mats, resting quietly or napping, for at least one hour. This is a minimum requirement as timing may vary depending on the age of the child. While we do not anticipate any issues with quiet time, if a child is disruptive on a regular basis, it may be necessary for them to be picked up early.

Children's rest needs vary, but the rule of thumb (assuming 10-12 hours of sleep at night) is 1-1/2 to 2 hours for 1 to 4 year olds, and an hour for 5 year olds. We encourage families to follow a regular nap schedule/routine at home and on weekends to help your child stay well rested and to facilitate their adjustment to school routines and expectations. Parents are always allowed to pick up their child before or after lunch if you would prefer for them to rest at home. Some children are not accustomed to resting at this time or their scheduled rest time is later or longer than the time frame for their classroom. In this case, let the teachers know in the morning so they can accommodate your wishes.

In our **Teddy Bear (infant) classroom**, the following policies apply to children under 13 months:

- Infants must be placed on their backs to sleep on a firm mattress.
- A written authorization is needed from the child's physician, if that child is to be placed in another position.
- No stuffed toys, soft items, pillows or quilts may be placed in the crib.
- The infants head must remain uncovered during sleep.
- An infant who falls asleep in a restrictive device (i.e. stroller) must be removed from the device and placed in a crib as soon as possible.

### **Early Pick-Up**

If you prefer to pick your child up prior to rest time, we ask that you arrive as follows so as not to disturb other children in the class.

12:00 Teddy Bears, Turtles, Angels, Honeybees, Bunnies, Ponies

12:30 Orange Fish, Red Ladybugs, Gators and Stars

## Payments and Fees

Westminster's program is intended to be a nine month commitment (September – May). The same tuition is due monthly, regardless of number of days missed due to illness, vacation, and holidays. Students are enrolled for the full school year. Should withdrawal become necessary, written notification must be sent to the Director at least thirty (30) days before the date of the withdrawal. If a 30 day notice is not given, you will be billed for one month after the drop is reported. The Registration and Supply Fee, as well as the pre-paid May tuition will be forfeited. The pre-paid May tuition cannot be applied to any other month's tuition and is non-transferable.



## **Tuition Payments**

Tuition may be paid in one of two ways:

### *Annually*

May tuition for the school year you are enrolling your child in is prepaid at time of enrollment. The remaining tuition is paid on or before the first day of school.

### *Monthly*

May tuition for the school year you are enrolling your child in is prepaid at time of enrollment. Your child's monthly tuition will be auto drafted from your designated account via BrightWheel. Payments will be posted on the 1<sup>st</sup> business day of each month and the bank will draft your account on the 2<sup>nd</sup> business day. You are responsible for setting up your billing account through BrightWheel and updating as needed throughout the school year. Parents are responsible for the ACH fee or credit card processing fee for your selected method of payment. Monthly and annual statements are available through your BrightWheel account and may be accessed at your convenience.

## **Registration & Supply Fee**

The Registration & Supply Fee is collected once a year. This fee is due with application forms and is non-refundable unless we are unable to place your child in our program. This fee covers processing costs and general classroom supplies, as well as, but not limited to:

*Liability Insurance:* An annual fee is paid to cover liability insurance for each child for one year. This insurance is for emergencies while your child is attending school and is a state licensing requirement.

*School Pictures:* Individual school photographs are taken in the fall. Group pictures of each class are taken in the spring. The cost of these pictures is covered by the Registration & Supply Fee.

*Class T-Shirts:* Westminster class t-shirts are provided for every child in the Day School program. These are handed out at the beginning of the school year and children are given several opportunities to wear their class shirts throughout the year.

*Speech, Hearing and Vision Testing:* The Texas Department of Health and Human Services requires all four year olds who are enrolled in child care to be screened for vision and hearing problems within 120 calendar days of enrollment. Westminster Weekday Schools arranges for this screening to take place in the fall of each school year. Although not required, a speech and language assessment may also be conducted during this evaluation.

Screening tests are conducted by licensed professionals. Results of these screenings are sent home to parents through written reports within four weeks of the screening date.

## **Late Pick-Up Fee**

Children are expected to be picked up on time. On the days that classes end at 12:00 noon, children should be picked up between 11:45 a.m. and 12:00 noon. On the days that classes end at 2:30 p.m., children should be picked up between 2:15 p.m. and 2:30 p.m.

A late fee will be assessed when a child is not picked up by 12:05 p.m. on short days and by 2:35 p.m. on long days. The fee is \$5.00 for every minute past the designated pick up time. Continuous tardiness in picking up a child may result in the child being withdrawn from the program.

## **Personal Items**

### **What to Bring to School**

Each child needs to bring the following items to school:

- A nutritious **snack and lunch** with juice or milk.
- A **complete change of clothing**, including shoes.
- Adequate number of disposable **diapers**, if needed. There is no place where soiled cloth diapers can be hygienically kept until dismissal time. For this reason, disposable diapers are required.
- A **light blanket** for rest time.
- A **fitted crib sheet to cover nap mat provided by the school. Personal nap mats will not be allowed.** Crib sheets will be sent home daily.
- **Comfort toys** – each child may bring one lovey/comfort item (to be used at nap time).

Be sure that **ALL ITEMS** are clearly labeled.

**Children in the Teddy Bear classroom should bring:** disposable diapers, change of clothes, baby food or finger foods, and an adequate number of bottles (plastic only).

**Children in the Turtle, Angel, Honeybee, Bunny, and Pony Rooms should bring:** disposable diapers, a complete change of clothes, a crib sheet, a small blanket, a snack, and a lunch.

***EVERYTHING your child brings to school should be labeled with your child's name. This is especially important for coats, sweaters, rain gear, lunch boxes, thermos tops, diaper bags, bottles, and sippy cups.***

### **What Not to Bring to School**

- Candy or chewing gum.
- Toys, unless it is a sleep partner, as previously noted.
- Expensive or sentimentally valuable jewelry.
- Silver spoons for feeding infants.
- Glass containers or glass baby food jars or bottles.

- Loose change/coins.
- Guns, war toys or other toys of destruction.

*The school is not responsible for lost or broken items brought to school.*

### **Lost and Found**

A lost and found box is in the school office. Please check it periodically for missing items. Unclaimed articles will be disposed of after a reasonable time.

## **Program Evaluation**

### **Parent Surveys**

During the school year and with the annual program evaluation, parents are asked to evaluate how well the school is meeting the needs of children and parents. As part of this process, parents are given evaluation forms to complete and return to the office within a stated time frame. This communication tool will help the school staff improve and enrich the program. This is an excellent opportunity for parents to give comments, suggestions and concerns that measure the progress of the programs' goals and objectives. We appreciate parental input and consideration.

### **Grievance Procedure**

Any grievance with the staff or program should be brought to the attention of the Director. Every effort will be made to resolve problems by discussing the problem and determining a solution. In the event of a lack of agreement between the Director and/or parent, the concern will be addressed by the Senior Pastor and/or the Advisory Board.

## **Safety**

### **Arrivals**

All children will arrive to school through the designated carpool lanes. Each car should display their carpool tag so that it can be easily read by our staff. For safety reasons, children should remain seated in the car at all times. A staff member will greet you at the car and will help your child from the vehicle with their backpack and essential items. Parents/Adults are asked to sign their child into school each day using the BrightWheel app. Carpool begins promptly at 9:00 a.m. and will end around 9:20 a.m. If you arrive after carpool has ended, park in the parking lot and bring your child to the door. Ring the bell and an office staff member will come and escort your child to class. It is important to remember that it may be difficult for children who arrive late to participate fully in some morning classroom activities.

We have found that children adjust more easily to the school routine when arriving through carpool. If your child is having a difficult time adjusting to school, be positive about the fun they will have at school and remind them that you will return after naptime. You may call the school office and we will be glad to check on your child's transition to classroom activities.

## **Dismissals & Release of Children**

Children will only be released to parents or other authorized adults. The parent must notify the school office by email if someone other than the parent or designated person is to pick up the child. The teacher will ask the person picking up for identification before releasing your child. The school will not release your child to anyone not known to the school without authorization from a parent or guardian.

## **Supervision of Children**

Teachers and caregivers will supervise children in their care at all times. This includes the ongoing activity of each child, appropriate visual and/or auditory awareness, physical proximity and knowledge of activity requirements and each child's needs. The caregiver must intervene when necessary to ensure children's safety. In deciding how closely to supervise children, individual differences and abilities, layout of the childcare center and neighborhood circumstances, hazards and risks must be taken into account. **Staff in infant and toddler/two classrooms must supervise children by sight and sound at all times, including nap time.** The use of mirrors and monitors may not be relied on in lieu of direct auditory and visual supervision. Staff in preschool classrooms must supervise primarily by sight. Supervision by sound is permitted if staff check frequently on those out of sight (in bathroom and napping). Staff must accompany all children in and out of the building for any reason and for ancillary classes.

Teachers and caregivers may not use personal electronic devices when in ratio, including, but not limited to: cell phones, smart watches, texting devices, and video games.

## **Parental Custody Matters**

It is the goal of Westminster Weekday Schools to work in partnerships with parents to implement our programs in a safe, nurturing environment. In order to accomplish the goal of partnership between school and parents, the following guidelines apply:

- Upon enrollment, a parent is to supply the Director with the divorce decree or court order establishing the rights of each parent. Any modifications to those orders shall be provided immediately upon issuance by the Court.
- Campus personnel will make their best efforts to interpret and comply with the terms of the orders affecting the parent/child relationship.
- Parents are welcome to attend school functions and volunteer in the classroom as long as their presence is in compliance with court orders and as long as their presence is not disruptive to their child or the class as a whole. The school determines if parents are a disruption.
- The school campus will not be used as a visitation site.
- The parent shall not ask the teacher or administration to inform them when the other parent visits the school, participates in school activities, asks the teacher for information, or requests information from the office.

- Students will be released consistent with the terms of the court order. The school’s enrollment form, release and emergency information, must be consistent with the court order. If the order allows for a parent to designate another competent adult to retrieve their child from school, such designation must be in writing and signed by the parent.
- If the school finds that it is impossible to work with the family due to the parents’ disagreement regarding the interpretation of court orders; or if either parent refuses to comply with the court orders and above stated policies, the school shall have the right to dismiss the family from the school.

### **Parking Lot Procedures**

Please observe all traffic markings in the parking lot, and all directions given by staff and security. Also PLEASE observe the 5 mile per hour speed limit, pay extra attention for children, and turn off cell phones so that you will not be distracted. For your security, do not leave purses or other valuables in your car. We have had incidences in the past where these things have been stolen – even when the car was locked.

**NEVER LEAVE CHILDREN UNATTENDED IN THE CAR FOR ANY PERIOD OF TIME! THIS IS AGAINST THE LAW AND AN EXTREMELY UNSAFE PRACTICE FOR YOUR “MOST VALUABLE” POSSESSIONS.**

### **Cell Phones**

For safety reasons, please turn off your cell phone when entering the parking lot. Our hope is for everyone to give 100% of their attention to safeguarding all the children.

### **Building Security and Access**

All exterior doors are locked after drop-off and unlocked prior to pick-up for security reasons. Doors are always open from inside the building to the exterior. If you need to enter the building to pick up a child when the doors are locked, there is a door bell at each entrance. Please ring the bell and a staff member will assist you.

### **Safety Emergency Procedures**

#### *Fire Codes and Fire Drills*

- Combustible Materials: No combustible liquids such as varnish, paint thinner, etc. will be stored in any schoolroom or cabinet.
- Corridors and Exit Routes: All corridors and exit routes will be kept clear of furniture, art work, lunch kits, nap pads, etc.
- Exits: Teachers will locate all exits from their room and all exits from the building. They will know which exit to use in case of fire or other emergency. They will also know which exit is the secondary exit in case the primary exit is obstructed.
- Fire Evacuation Plan: Fire evacuation plans are posted on all walls of the room at

all times. This plan marks the primary and secondary exit route.

- **Pull Stations:** Pull stations are located: in all classrooms with an exterior door, by the school office, by the laundry room, across from the Pony classroom by the exterior doors, in the large kitchen, two in Fellowship Hall near the exterior doors, by the coffee bar on the Nursery side, and across the hall from the Teddy Bear classroom by the exterior doors.
- **Fire Extinguishers:** Fire extinguishers are located: in each classroom, on the wall outside the Boys & Girls restrooms, across from the Pony classroom by the exterior doors, in the large kitchen, in the Fellowship Hall by the exit leading to the school office, just past the coffee bar on the Nursery side on the opposite wall, and on the wall across from the Teddy Bear classroom. Each of our fire extinguishers can be used on any type of fire. Each extinguisher has similar operating procedures. The basic operation of a fire extinguisher is as follows:
  1. Take fire extinguisher off of wall holder.
  2. Stand back from fire about 6-8 feet.
  3. Pull out ring pin.
  4. Hold fire extinguisher upright.
  5. Aim nozzle at the base of the fire.
  6. Squeeze handles.
  7. Spray, using a side-to-side motion.

The procedures are written on the outside of the fire extinguisher. Teachers will be familiar with these instructions.

### ***Fire Evacuation Procedures***

- The teachers will line children up at the appropriate exit with one teacher leading the line. The other teacher, at the end of the line, will get the sign-in sheet and emergency medical releases and will do a quick head count of all children. Teachers will be sure to check the bathroom to make sure no one is in there.
- Teachers with classes in ancillary will immediately report to those classrooms to help evacuate the children. The ancillary teacher is to assist in the infant-toddler area. If the classroom is on the playground, they will exit directly through the gate to the west parking lot.
- Classes will exit the classroom quickly and quietly. No hand holding or shoving.
- The teacher at the end of the line will turn off the lights and shut the classroom door. This is extremely important as it greatly retards the spread of fire.
- Classes will exit the building and go to the safety zone (parking lot area).
- While in the safety zone, teachers will recheck students using their sign-in sheet.
- Children will stay in line and teachers will stand between the children and the building.
- Everyone will stay out of the building until the all-clear signal is given.
- In the event there is an actual fire and the staff and children will have to leave the facility because the entire building has sustained damage, T.H. Rogers will be our evacuation facility for parent pick-up. If a secondary evacuation site is necessary,

we will evacuate to Memorial Lutheran School (on the corner of Bering and Westheimer).

**What to do if your particular exit is blocked:** Teachers and their children should STOP & TURN AROUND to find the secondary exit.

**Infants** will be placed in cribs and rolled out of the building.

**What to do at nap time when the alarm sounds:**

- One teacher will take those who are awake outside and place them under the direction of another teacher. The teacher in the room will attempt to awaken as many children as she can and line them up at the door.
- The teacher who was outside will return to the classroom for the remaining children and will escort them outside.
- Some children may have to be carried out.
- No child or children will be left unattended.
- Follow the other procedures as listed above.
- Teachers in the older classrooms may need to help the classrooms with younger children.

**WHEN THE ALARM SOUNDS, OUR MAIN GOAL IS TO GET ALL CHILDREN OUT AND AWAY FROM THE BUILDING AS QUICKLY AND ORDERLY AS POSSIBLE. WE WILL ALWAYS ASSUME IT IS THE REAL THING AND NOT JUST A PRACTICE.**

### *Other Emergency Procedures*

#### **Air Pollution**

If the Houston Health Department issues an air pollution alert advising schools to keep children indoors, the school will comply with the request and children will play in the gym on a modified schedule.

#### **Explosion**

- Follow the procedures used for fire drills.
- Use the exit that will take you furthest away from the explosion.
- If necessary, the children will be evacuated to the Church Sanctuary, Gym or Parlor.

#### **Intruder/Lock-Down Procedure**

- If a member of the church, school or security team sees suspicious or dangerous activity they will immediately contact all staff on walkie-talkies using our established code system.
- If necessary, 911 will be called to notify them of the situation and alert them that a school is on campus.
- The security team will ensure that all access points are secured.

- Teachers in each classroom will lock classroom doors, turn out the lights, close blinds and gather children in an area of the classroom away from doors and windows.
- School administration will check with each classroom to confirm they are secured.
- Teachers will interact with children quietly.
- No one will be allowed to leave the shelter during the emergency, until the “all clear” signal is given. Classes will then resume normal activity.
- Following the conclusion of an incident, parents will be notified and reunification instructions will be provided if necessary.

### **Toxic Fumes or Hazardous Material Release**

**If it is outdoors**, all doors will be shut tightly and classrooms will be prepared for “Shelter in Place”. All children outside will be instructed to go immediately inside. A damp towel, sheet, mat cover, etc. will be placed under the door or doors and cover the air conditioning vents. Duct tape will be used to seal doors and windows in severe cases. The office personnel will shut off the heating or cooling system in the buildings. No one will be allowed to leave the shelter during the emergency until the “All Clear” signal is given. The office will be in contact with the Police Department and the Fire Department for continuous information and instructions until the incident is under control.

**If it is indoors**, exit as quickly as possible keeping children far away from it. Follow the fire drill procedures. If it is necessary to close the school, the children will be taken to the Church Sanctuary, Gym or Parlor and dismissed to parents from these areas. If the situation warrants evacuation, we will first evacuate to TH Rogers at the corner of San Felipe and Bering. Our secondary evacuation site is Memorial Lutheran School at the corner of Bering and Westheimer.

If the office reports that the level of air pollution is at a high level, children’s exposure will be limited on the playground.

### **Tornado or Severe Weather**

- The office will monitor the radio when the weather looks ominous. If a tornado or severe weather alert is issued, all teachers will be notified.
- If a tornado is spotted or is eminent in the area, all classes will go calmly to their Storm Drill location in the building.
- The teachers will carry flashlights, sign-in sheets and Emergency Medical Release forms.
- The children will remain in this location until the office issues an “All Clear”.



## **Additional Safety Information**

- Flashlights are kept in each classroom to be used in the event of a power failure. Teachers will check batteries regularly and replace them as needed. In the case of an extended power failure, all students should be kept in their classrooms and parents will be notified to pick-up.
- All phones in the school have posted emergency phone numbers and our location information. 911 will be used for all emergencies.
- First aid supplies are kept in all classrooms, on each playground, and in the school office.
- Teachers always count heads during the day as they make transitions. If there is a lost or missing child, the office will be informed, and action will be taken immediately.

## **Child Abuse and Neglect**

All teachers and staff are required to complete one hour of training annually on the recognition of symptoms, prevention techniques and reporting procedures for all forms of child abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse.

If a teacher suspects a child has been abused or mistreated, they are required by law to report it to the Texas Department of Health and Human Services. The DHHS may be reached at 1-800-252-5400 or online at [www.dfps.state.tx.us](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us). Any parent who suspects their child is a victim of abuse or neglect, may also obtain assistance and intervention by reporting the suspected abuse or neglect using the above phone number or website.

A Child Abuse Notebook is available in the school office for any teacher or parent who would like more information on preventing and responding to abuse and neglect of children. This notebook contains: warning signs, factors indicating a child is at risk, prevention techniques, reporting procedures, and community organizations that work with families on this subject.

## **School Attire**

**Children need to wear durable, washable, comfortable play clothes with tennis shoes.** We go outside every day, weather permitting. Children should dress accordingly (no long dresses). Select shoes that will give support and will allow freedom of movement. Loose sandals, Crocs, cowboy boots (with the exception of Rodeo celebrations), and shoes which slip off easily inhibit activity and should not be worn. Tennis shoes are required for Day School students on Mondays for Motor Development and are recommended for all other days.

It is recommended that children wear layered clothing so they can remove clothing if they become too warm or add clothing if they become cold.

Children will also be given daily opportunities to participate in age-appropriate classroom activities that may sometimes get messy. Every effort will be made to protect the children's clothing but accidents still may happen. Please avoid sending your child to school in "special" clothing that may not tolerate messy accidents.

## **Special Events**

### **Birthday Celebrations**

Birthdays are “special” and may be celebrated at school during snack time. A special nutritious birthday snack may be brought to school. This snack should be purchased from a commercial bakery and individually wrapped rather than being prepared in a private kitchen. No favors or gifts, please. Schedule the day for the party with the child’s teacher. Summer birthdays may also be celebrated on a school day of your choice. Party invitations **may not** be passed out at school unless all children in the classroom are included.

### **School Parties**

All Westminster Weekday Schools classes have Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Valentine’s Day, Easter, and End of the Year parties. These parties are simple and fun snack or lunch celebrations. Party guidelines are distributed at the beginning of school. Please contact the school office if you have any questions.

Lunch served to students for classroom parties may not include beverages with added sugar. We ask that you provide small bottles of water or 100% fruit juice when planning your event.

### **Classroom Volunteer Opportunities**

Parents are always welcome at Westminster. A Volunteer Sign-up Sheet will be sent out in the fall with opportunities listed. Also, all parents are invited to be a part of your child’s classroom by volunteering to read, help with an art project, take home some materials that the teachers need help with, etc. Feel free to inquire with your child’s teacher to offer your time and talents. You will also have an opportunity Student Orientation in August to sign up to help with classroom parties during the school year.

### **Splash Day**

Westminster Weekday Schools sponsors a “Splash Day” twice per year, once during the regular school year and once during our summer program, for children enrolled in the program. This event allows children to experience water activities including sprinklers, water tables and toys, shaving cream and water painting in a safe and nurturing environment. The activities do not include large bodies of water.

On this special event day we ask that parents send their child dressed in a swimsuit with clothing over. We also require that you send a complete change of clothing (shoes, socks, underwear, and outer clothing) and a towel labeled with your child’s name.

Westminster Weekday Schools does not apply sunscreen. If you would like your child to wear sunscreen during this event or on any other occasion please apply this product at home before entering school.

## **Classroom Pets and Visiting Animals**

Always check with the classroom teacher before bringing any animal to school to visit a classroom. The teachers will let you know if a visit is possible or if there are any children in the classroom with pet allergies. Parents will be informed in writing when an animal will be visiting. Classroom pets or visiting animals need to appear to be in good health and have documentation that shows that the animals are fully immunized and the animal is suitable for contact with children. Hand washing will always be practiced after contact with any animal. Chickens, ducks, reptiles, and amphibians are not allowed as classroom pets or visiting animals.