



# Parent Handbook

Proverbs 22:6 ~ Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

**Updated September 2020**



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### **Mission Statement Policy No. 1**

At St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, we now kids. From our experienced, caring staff and St Paul's Lutheran Church to our clean, safe facility, we are in a class of our own. You will notice the difference from the moment you walk in the door. Our concepts put the attention solely on the kids. When they are here, it is all about them. Our goal is to nurture the child as a whole: to promote physical, cognitive, emotional, and spiritual growth. Families are encouraged to become involved in their children's activities as well as activities that the church has to offer. A strong happy family has strong happy children. The words of Proverbs define our philosophy of care here at The Learning Garden. We believe that we are to assist children in coming to know Jesus Christ.

### **Welcome Policy No. 2**

The Learning Garden has been in operation since October of 2013. The goal was to open and operate a child care center that exceeds state and national standards and move early education into a new era. Our philosophy is simple. Provide developmentally appropriate activities, prepare children to exceed in public education and give children the skills needed to self-regulate when the world does not go their way. All while allowing the child to be a child and to learn through play.

The School Director at our school is responsible for the daily management of the facility. In the absence of the School Director, the Assistant Director is the designated person in charge. A designated individual may also be in charge in the absence of the Leadership Team mentioned above.

Throughout this Parent Handbook, the Assistant Director will take the place of the School Director when the School Director is not available.

### **Philosophy Policy No. 3**

We believe that positive, early childhood experiences affect children's successes and perspectives throughout their lives. As caregivers, we strive to support and encourage our children to learn and grow in a fun and educational setting. We



will work together with our parents to ensure that our children feel safe and cared for while they are here. The following principles shall serve as the foundation for our program here at The Learning Garden.

- Young children need consistency between home and child care.
- Family is what is most meaningful to a child. Learning begins in a family, continues in early care and education settings, and depends on parent involvement and caregiver guidance. A child's home language and culture can play a significant role in the child's cognitive and linguistic development.
- Children develop knowledge of their world through active interactions with caregivers, peers, materials, and events.
- Without a safe environment, children are not free to explore and learn. Supervision is the primary means of ensuring the safety of children.
- Outdoor experiences provide many opportunities for learning that an indoor environment cannot.
- Children naturally mimic familiar situations and places in their everyday lives. Guidance and redirection foster socialization and strengthen a child's sense of security by providing children with boundaries and choices.
- Music and movement activities provide opportunities for large and small motor development and can be a wonderful sensory experience.

### **Licensing Information Policy No. 4**

#### **4.1 State Licensing Authority**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(21)*

Texas Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Licensing.

A full printed copy of the licensing regulations/standards can be found at the front desk. Parents may also find the licensing regulations on the internet at the following link

[https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child\\_Care/Child\\_Care\\_Standards\\_and\\_Regulations/default.asp](https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Child_Care/Child_Care_Standards_and_Regulations/default.asp)

Parents may also review a copy of the child-care centers most recent licensing inspection report posted on the Parent Communication board in the front entry of on the licensing website listed above. Parents may reach child care licensing by using the website above or calling the local office at 361-574-7416.

These regulations/standards are included as part of this Parent Handbook as if they were written herein and it is the responsibility of every parent to read, understand and follow these regulations.



Employees are required uphold the regulations and standards issued by The Texas Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Minimum Standards at all times.

Employees are required to immediately notify the School Director of any violations of licensing regulations by any person in the organization.

#### **4.2 National Accreditation**

Currently we are not nationally accredited however, will be working on it in the future.

#### **4.3 Texas Rising Star**

A full printed copy of the Texas Rising Star standards can be found at the front desk. These standards are included as part of this Parent Handbook as if they were written herein.

Employees are required to uphold the standards and guidelines published by Texas Rising Star at all times.

Employees are required to immediately notify the School Director of any violations of the Texas Rising Star standards by any person in the organization.

#### **4.4 St. Paul Lutheran Church**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden follows the policies of St. Paul Lutheran Church.

### **Enrollment Policy No. 5**

Enrollment at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is open to children from six weeks to thirteen years. Enrollment shall be granted without regard to a child's race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, or disability, and without regard to a parent or guardian's race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, gender, pregnancy or disability. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care is not a licensed special needs center.

Parents can apply for enrollment of their child at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden by completing the Enrollment Form and paying the \$125.00 Enrollment Fee. The Enrollment Fee is non-refundable.



Initial enrollment is contingent upon receipt of the completed Enrollment Form, Physicians Statement, Tuition Express Application, Income Eligibility Form, Emergency Release Form, Food Program Enrollment Form, signed Tuition Agreement, registration fee, immunization records and signed Parent Handbook receipt.

The Enrollment Form and Tuition Agreements are not meant to serve as contracts guaranteeing service for any duration.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden reserves the right to dismiss any parent or child at any time with or without cause.

Continued enrollment at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is contingent upon the parent's, emergency contact persons' and child's adherence to the policies and procedures of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden as outlined in this handbook including, but not limited to, timely payment of all fees and tuition.

Parents are required to notify St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden immediately, should any of the information collected at the time of enrollment or any time thereafter change. Failure to do so may result in the child(ren) being dis-enrolled from the program and forfeiture of any registration fee and/or tuition.

## **Tuition Policy No. 6**

All custodial parents and/or legal guardians are required to sign a Tuition Agreement prior to enrollment of their child in St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. Parents are required to indicate to whom all billing information and correspondence are to be addressed.

### **6.1 Payment**

Payment for my child's program is due on Friday's for the next week as specified in the current rate schedule. Tuition is payable according to the tuition schedule whether or not the child attends.

### **6.2 Late Fees**

A \$10 per day late fee will be added for all non-payments. If tuition and/or late fees are not paid by Friday, then the child cannot return to care the following Monday until paid.





There is no credit given for vacations less than 5 consecutive days, scheduled school holidays, child illness, or for closings due to emergency situations, inclement weather or acts of God.

Non-payment of tuition is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program. Timely payments are essential for continued enrollment at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, however, if you anticipate difficulty with paying on time, please discuss the matter with the Center Director immediately. If alternative arrangements for payment are approved, you will be notified by the Center Director.

### **6.3 Subsidized Care**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does accept childcare subsidies.

Parents of a subsidized child must complete all required paperwork on time to continue enrollment at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. Parents of subsidized children are also required to sign a Tuition Agreement, agreeing to be personally responsible for the payment of tuition, in the event they become ineligible to receive childcare subsidies.

### **6.4 Multiple Child Discounts**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden offers a multiple child discount for one or more siblings enrolled during the same school year. The youngest sibling pays the full tuition rate and each additional child's tuition are discounted 10% per child. Discounts are only applicable when tuition payments are made on time. The full tuition rate, plus any additional late fees will be charged when tuition payments are late as per the late tuition policy stated above.

### **6.5 Vacation Credit**

After 1 year attending St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden your family will receive a vacation credit for five consecutive days. You may request this vacation credit equal to one week of weekly tuition. **Parents must request the vacation credit in writing by email prior to the absence.**

### **6.6 Parent Referrals**

We greatly appreciate your business and know that you will be so pleased with our service that you will tell all your friends and acquaintances about us! If one of those families decides to enroll their child(ren), we will credit your account the amount of half a week's tuition after that family has been with us for 90 days. The referred family must mention the referral at the time of the initial visit to our program.



### **Confidentiality Policy No. 7**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, confidential and sensitive information will only be shared with employees of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden who have a “need to know” in order to most appropriately and safely care for your child. Confidential and sensitive information about faculty, other parents and/or children will not be shared with parents, as St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden strives to protect everyone’s right of privacy. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to: names, addresses, phone numbers, disability information, or other health related information of anyone associated with St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden.

Outside of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, confidential and sensitive information about a child will only be shared when the parent of the child has given express written consent, except where otherwise provided for by law. Parents will be provided with a document detailing the information that is to be shared outside of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, persons with whom the information will be shared, and the reason(s) for sharing the information.

Any parent who violates the Confidentiality policy will not be permitted on school property thereafter. Refer to the policy regarding Parents Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of a child when a parent is prohibited from accessing school property.

You may not observe children at our center who are disabled or who exhibit behavior that may appear inappropriate (i.e. biting, hitting, and spitting). You may be curious or concerned about the other child. Our Confidentiality Policy protects every child’s privacy. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you.

### **Mandated Reporting of Suspected Child Abuse and/or Neglect Policy No. 8**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(25)*

Under the Child Protective Services Act, mandated reporters are required to report any **suspicion** of abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities. The employees of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden are considered mandated reporters, under this law. The employees of St. Paul



Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden are not required to discuss their suspicions with parents prior to reporting the matter to the appropriate authorities, nor are they required to investigate the cause of any suspicious marks, behavior or condition prior to making a report. Under the Act, mandated reporters can be held criminally responsible if they fail to report suspected abuse or neglect. We at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden take this responsibility very seriously and will make all warranted reports to the appropriate authorities. The Child Protective Services Act is designed to protect the welfare and best interest of all children.

As mandated reporters, the staff of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden cannot be held liable for reports made to Child Protective Services which are determined to be unfounded, provided the report was made in “good faith.”

Causes for reporting suspected child abuse or neglect include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Unusual bruising, marks, or cuts on the child’s body
- ◆ Severe verbal reprimands
- ◆ Improper clothing relating to size, cleanliness, season
- ◆ Transporting a child without appropriate child restraints (e.g. car seats, seat belts, etc.)
- ◆ Dropping off or picking up a child while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol
- ◆ Not providing appropriate meals including a drink for your child
- ◆ Leaving a child unattended for any amount of time
- ◆ Failure to attend to the special needs of a disabled child
- ◆ Sending a sick child to school over medicated to hide symptoms, which would typically require the child to be kept at home until symptoms subside.
- ◆ Children who exhibit behavior consistent with an abusive situation

If parents feel they need assistance with possible child abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse, we encourage you to get help. Please call the National Parent Hotline at 1-855-427-2736 or visit [www.helpandhope.org/find-help.html](http://www.helpandhope.org/find-help.html)

The statewide Abuse & Neglect phone number is 1-800-252-5400, if you would like to report any suspected abuse or neglect.



## Parent Code of Conduct Policy No. 9

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden requires the parents of enrolled children at all times, to behave in a manner consistent with decency, courtesy, and respect. One of the goals of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is to provide the most appropriate environment in which a child can grow, learn and develop. Achieving this ideal environment is not only the responsibility of the employees of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden but, is the responsibility of each and every parent or adult who enters the center. Parents are required to behave in a manner that fosters this ideal environment.

**Parents who violate the Parent Code of Conduct will not be permitted on school property thereafter.** Please refer to the Policy on Parent's Right to Immediate Access for additional information regarding dis-enrollment of the child when a parent is prohibited from accessing school property.

### **9.1 SWEARING/CURSING:**

No parent or adult is permitted to curse or use other inappropriate language on church property at any time, whether in the presence of a child or not. Such language is considered offensive by many people and will not be tolerated. If a parent or adult feels frustrated or angry, it is more appropriate to verbally express the frustration or anger using non-offensive language. At NO time shall inappropriate language be directed toward members of the staff.

### **9.2 THREATENING OF EMPLOYEES, CHILDREN OTHER PARENTS OR ADULTS ASSOCIATED WITH ST. PAUL LUTHERAN YKT CHILD CARE CENTER/THE LEARNING GARDEN:**

Threats of any kind will not be tolerated. In today's society St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden cannot afford to sit by idly while threats are made. In addition, all threats will be reported to the appropriate authorities and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. While apologies for such behavior are appreciated, the school will not assume the risk of a second chance. **PARENTS MUST BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AND IN CONTROL OF THEIR BEHAVIOR AT ALL TIMES.**

### **9.3 PHYSICAL/VERBAL PUNISHMENT OF YOUR CHILD OR OTHER CHILDREN AT ST. PAUL LUTHERAN YKT CHILD CARE CENTER/THE LEARNING GARDEN:**

While St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not necessarily support nor condone corporal punishment of children, such acts are not permitted in the childcare facility. While verbal reprimands may be appropriate it is not appropriate for parents to verbally abuse their child.



Doing so may cause undue embarrassment or emotional distress. Parents are always welcome to discuss a behavior issue with the teacher and to seek advice and guidance regarding appropriate and effective disciplinary procedures. Parents are prohibited from addressing, for the purpose of correction or discipline, a child that is not their own. Of course, no parent or other adult may physically punish another parent's child. If a parent should witness another parent's child behaving in an inappropriate manner or is concerned about behavior reported to them by their own child, it is most appropriate for the parent to direct their concern to the classroom teacher and/or Center Director.

Furthermore, it is wholly inappropriate for one parent to seek out another parent to discuss their child's inappropriate behavior. All behavior concerns should be brought to the classroom teacher or director's attention. At that point, the teacher and/or director will address the issue with the other parent. Although you may be curious as to the outcome of such a discussion, teachers and/or the Center Director are strictly prohibited from discussing anything about another child with you. All children enrolled in our school have privacy rights and are further protected by our Confidentiality Policy. You may be assured that we will not discuss anything about your child with another parent or adult visiting the center.

#### **9.4 SMOKING:**

For the health of all St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden employees, children and associates, smoking is prohibited anywhere on school property. Parents are prohibited from smoking in the building, on the grounds, and in the parking lot of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. Parents who are smoking in their cars must dispose of the cigarette prior to entering the parking lot.

#### **9.5 VIOLATIONS OF THE SAFETY POLICY:**

Parents are required to follow all safety procedures at all times. These procedures are designed not as mere inconveniences, but to protect the welfare and best interest of the employees, children and associates of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. Please be particularly mindful of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden entrance procedures. We all like to be polite. However, we need to be careful to not allow unauthorized individuals into the center. Holding the door open for the person following you may, in fact, be polite, however that person may not be authorized to enter the premises. Security procedures are only as strong as the weakest person in our organizational chain. Be alert and mindful. Immediately report any breaches to the Center Director.



## **9.6 CONFRONTATIONAL INTERACTIONS WITH EMPLOYEES, OTHER PARENTS OR ASSOCIATES OF ST. PAUL LUTHERAN YKT CHILD CARE CENTER/THE LEARNING GARDEN:**

While it is understood that parents will not always agree with the employees of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden or the parents of the other children, it is expected that all disagreements be handled in a calm and respectful manner. Confrontational interactions are not an appropriate means by which to communicate a point and are strictly prohibited.

## **9.7 VIOLATIONS OF THE CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY:**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden takes very seriously the responsibility of maintaining the confidentiality of all persons associated with the school. Parents must understand the implications of this responsibility. Parents need to recognize that the Confidentiality Policy not only applies to their child or family, but all children, families and employees associated with St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. Any parent who shares any information considered to be confidential, pressures employees or other parents for information, which is not necessary for them to know, will be considered to be in violation of the Confidentiality Policy.

## **9.8 Cell Phone Usage**

Proper parent communication is imperative when working with young children. It is difficult to communicate when cell phones are in use. Effective December 1, 2010, the Texas Department of Health and Human Services passed new regulations prohibiting the personal use of cell phones in classrooms. Please end all calls prior to entering the building so that our St Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff can properly communicate with you.

## **9.9 Questions or Concerns**

Minimum Standards 746.501(19)

If parents have questions or concerns about our program, we encourage you to have open communication with your child's teacher and the School Director. Through open communication, we can ensure that all parties are well informed and working as partners in the child's education. From time to time, the center director may complete a "Parent Concern Form". Parents will receive a copy of this form with the appropriate outcome.



**Parent's Right to Immediate Access  
Policy No. 10**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(b)(1)*

Parents of a child in our care are entitled to immediate access, without prior notice, to their child whenever they are in care at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, as provided by law.

In cases where the child is the subject of a court order (e.g., Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden must be provided with a **Certified Copy** of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

**In the absence of a court order** on file with St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, **both** parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden cannot, without a court order, limit the access of a one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued, since our rights to retain your child are secondary to the other parent's right to immediate access. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff will contact the local police should a conflict arise.

Visitors are asked to schedule appointments with the School Director and are allowed in the childcare facility only at the discretion of the School Director. An employee of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will accompany visitors at all times, throughout the center.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will dismiss any child whose parent is prohibited from entering upon school property. Due to the parents' right to immediate access policy, as well as state and federal regulations, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden cannot have a child at the school when the child's parent is prohibited access. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will not agree to any request to maintain a child's enrollment even if the parent agrees to stay out of the school. Such an agreement is a violation of the law and will not be entertained.



### **Dismissal Policy No. 11**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden reserves the right to dismiss any child at any time, with or without cause.

Parents will be refunded any unused tuition within two weeks of the dismissal. An school check will be mailed to the address indicated in the child's file. Any past due balances must be paid within 30 days of the dismissal. An invoice detailing the past due balance will be forwarded to the address indicated in the child's file within one week of the dismissal. Any balances remaining after the 30-day period will be referred to the school's legal counsel for collection.

The School Director or designee will assist the parent in gathering their child's belongings at the time of dismissal and parents are required to leave school property in a calm and respectful manner, immediately. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will request assistance from local police should any parent become disruptive and/or uncooperative while gathering their child's belongings upon dismissal.

A dismissed child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the School Director if they wish to return to school property following a dismissal. Appointments are made at the discretion of the School Director and are not a right of the dismissed child or parent.

Following a dismissal, any parent or child who harasses, threatens or in any manner causes harm to anyone affiliated with the school by calling, writing, or any other means, will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law, by St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden.

### **Withdraw Policy No. 12**

A 2 weeks written notice is required when withdrawing a child for any reason. If the proper notice is given, any unused tuition will be refunded within thirty days of the withdrawal. If the required notice is not given, parents will be refunded any tuition that was paid in advance.

The parents and child, following their last day of enrollment, are not permitted to re-enter school property without prior permission of the School Director. A withdrawn child and his/her parents are required to call and request an appointment with the School Director if they wish to return to school property following the last day of enrollment at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care





Center/The Learning Garden. Appointments are made at the discretion of the School Director and are not a right of the withdrawn child or parent.

Parents who wish to change their child's days or times of enrollment at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, must submit a request to do so 7 days in advance of the proposed change.

### **Court Orders Effecting Enrolled Children Policy No. 13**

In cases where an enrolled child is the subject of a court order (ex... Custody Order, Restraining Order, or Protection from Abuse Order) St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden must be provided with a **Certified Copy** of the most recent order and all amendments thereto. The orders of the court will be strictly followed unless the custodial parent(s) requests a more liberal variation of the order in writing. In the case where both parents are afforded shared/joint custody by order of the court, both parents must sign the request for more liberal interpretation of the order.

**In the absence of a court order on file with St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden administration, both parents shall be afforded equal access to their child as stipulated by law.** St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden cannot, without a court order, limit the access of a one parent by request of the other parent, regardless of the reason. If a situation presents itself, where one parent does not want the other parent to have access to their child, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden suggests that the parent keep the child with them until a court order is issued.

If conflicting court orders are presented, the most recently dated court order will be followed.

Once presented with a Protection from Abuse Order or a Restraining Order, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is obligated to follow the order for the entire period it is in effect. Employees of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden cannot, at the request of anyone, except the issuing judge, allow a Protection from Abuse Order and/or a Restraining Order to be violated. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will report any violations of these orders to the court.



## Arrival Procedures Policy No. 14

Upon arrival at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center, the parents or the adult dropping the child off must sign the child into care on the sign-in sheet located in the child's classroom as well as signing the child in at the front desk with your fingerprint. Children are required to be escorted by their parent or the adult dropping them off, to their designated classroom. Children are required by law to be supervised at all times while in the childcare facility. Parents are required to help children put away their outerwear and get settled for the day.

In order for all enrolled children to benefit from the curriculum and activities planned, **all children must arrive by 9:00am**. Children will not be admitted into care after 9:00am. Children who are late due to a scheduled appointment with a health care professional must have prior permission from the school director to be allowed to arrive after 9:00am however, child is not allowed to arrive during naptime. If child arrives after 11am the child must be fed lunch before they arrive. Late arrival is a disruption to the classroom and other children and may break the established routine of the classroom.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden discourages parents from sneaking out of the center. Some children exhibit separation anxiety when it is time for their parent to leave. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden believes it is best for parents to tell the anxious child upon arrival that after all of the child's things are put away, the parent will kiss, hug and say goodbye to the child. This will prepare the child for their departure. The employee present in the classroom will comfort and assist the child through the anxious time. Parents are asked to leave after saying goodbye. The longer the parent of an anxious child drags out the departure, the more anxiety the child is likely to feel. The professional employees of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden are available to discuss other options if the child does not settle into the arrival routine after a reasonable period of time.

### **Health Checks**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(26)*

Parents are required to notify the child's teacher or School Director of any special instructions or needs for the child's day. The parent must present the special instructions in the form of a letter and verbally discuss them with either the classroom teacher or School Director. These special instructions include but are not limited to: Early Pick Up, Alternative Pick Up Person,



health issues over the previous night which need to be observed and/or any general issues of concern which the child care providers should be aware to best meet the needs of your child throughout the day.

Parents must drop off their child by 9:00am in order for the child to be served breakfast. Breakfast will not be available or saved for any child arriving after 9:00am.

#### **14.1 NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE**

Parents are required to inform the center by 9:00am if a child will not be at the center on a scheduled day. This will enable the center to more effectively maintain appropriate ratios and help the classroom teacher effectively plan for the day.

If your child is ill, we request that you notify the school director not only of the absence, but also of the nature of the illness. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with staff on a “need to know” basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the school Director, so that the parents of the children in the school maybe notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will take all measures necessary to protect your child’s confidentiality. Parents are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share, (or not) the reason for your child’s absence from school.

Parents who know in advance that a child will be late, are required to notify the center by 9:00am so as to maintain the appropriate number of employees to ensure ratios are met when the child arrives to school.

#### **14.2 SCHOOL’S RIGHT TO REFUSE ADMISSION**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden reserves the right to refuse admission to any child at any time with or without cause.

Possible reasons for the refusal of admission include but are not limited to:

1. The need to maintain compliance with Licensing Regulations.
2. We find that we can not meet the needs of your child due to health or physical problems.
3. Staff deems the child too ill to attend.
4. Domestic Situations that present a safety risk to the child, staff or other children enrolled at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden if the child were to be present at the center.



5. Parents failure to maintain accurate, up to date records.
6. Parents' failure to complete and return required documentation in a timely fashion.

Parents will not be reimbursed tuition for days when their child is refused admission to the program.

### **Pick Up Procedures**

#### **Policy No. 15**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(2)*

Parents or other authorized adult are required to sign their child out of care on the sign-out sheet located in the classroom and at the front desk with their fingerprint. Once a parent signs their child out, the parent is then solely responsible for supervising their child while on school premises. The parent may not allow a child to wander through the hallways, bathrooms, other classrooms and/or playground. Parents are required to handle all business issues prior to signing out their child and are required to directly exit the building once they have signed their child out of care.

Parents must take home all papers in the child's cubby or school bag each day.

Parents or persons designated to act "in lieu of parent" are required to sign any incident/accident reports from the day at pick-up. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you or other authorized adult at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the center during the course of the day.

#### **15.1 LATE PICK-UP:**

Our schools are licensed to care for children from 7:00am to 6:00 pm. Parents must pick up their children no later than 6:00pm. A parent is late picking up their child at 6:00pm. All measurements of time are to be according to the St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden clock located at the front desk.

A late fee of \$2 per minute per child will be charged for late pick-ups. Late fees must be paid at the time of pick up. The child will not be allowed to return to care until all late pick up fees are paid in full.



A child's services will be terminated should the child be picked-up late on three occasions in one school year regardless of the reasons for the late pick-up. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that someone (either a parent or Emergency/Alternate pick-up person) is available to pick up the child on time.

### **15.2 PERSONS APPEARING TO BE IMPAIRED BY DRUGS/ALCOHOL AT PICK-UP**

The staff of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will contact local police and/or the other custodial parent should a parent appear to the staff of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol. The parent's right to immediate access does not permit the school from denying a custodial parent access to their child even if the parent is or appears to be impaired. However, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff will delay the impaired parent as long as possible, while contacting the other parent, the local police and Child Protective Services.

Any other authorized person who attempts to pick-up a child and appears to the staff of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden to be under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will be denied access to the child. The staff of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center will contact the child's parents, local police and Child Protective Services to notify them of the situation.

### **15.3 EMERGENCY/ALTERNATE PICK-UP**

At enrollment, parents will be complete emergency/alternate pick-up information on the Enrollment Form. Parents are encouraged to include on this form any, and all persons who, in the course of events, may at one time be asked to pick-up their child from St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. In an emergency situation the child's parents will be called first. If they cannot be reached staff will call the persons listed on this form until someone can be reached.

Should the staff contact a parent, and the parent is unable to pick up the child, it is then the responsibility of the parent to arrange for their child to be picked up by someone on the emergency list. Failure of the parent to make such arrangements will result in dismissal from the program.



Parents do not need to be listed on the emergency contact list. The nature of the parental relationship affords the parents (in the absence of a court order indicating otherwise) the right to pick-up their child.

Parents will be asked to determine which persons (if any) on the emergency/alternate pick-up list have the right to act “In Lieu of Parents.” In Lieu of Parents status affords the pickup person the right to discuss confidential information about the child’s day including but not limited to, incident/accident reports, and behavior issues. In the absence of this designation the people on the emergency/alternate pick up list are only afforded the right to pick up the child. Staff is not permitted to discuss the child’s day with them.

The persons on the emergency/alternate pick-up list will be required to provide a Government issued photo ID prior to the school releasing the child. There will be no exceptions to this rule.

All changes and/or additions to the emergency/alternate pick-up list must be made in writing and be dated and signed. Only custodial parents have the right to make changes or additions to this form.

Employees of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden are prohibited from being listed on the emergency/alternate contact list.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden reserves the right to refuse/ban any person listed on the emergency/alternate contact list for any reason, including but not limited to violations of the policies/procedures contained herein. It is the responsibility of the enrolling parent(s) to inform each person on the emergency/alternate list of the policies/procedures contained herein.

**Transportation  
Policy No. 16**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(14)*

School-age children will be transported to and from public school by Yorktown ISD. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not transport children, except in emergency situations.

State law requires:

- Vehicles transporting children shall be in safe operating condition and drivers shall have a current Texas Driver’s License.
- Children shall be loaded and unloaded at the curbside of the vehicle, or in a protected parking area.



**School Calendar  
Policy No. 17**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(1)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is open from 7:00am-6:00pm, Monday-Friday, year-round.

We close to observe the following holidays: New Year's Day, Friday During Spring Break, Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday, Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Full tuition is due for holiday weeks.

We close on the following days for staff development days: New Year's Eve or the Friday before or Monday after if it falls on the weekend, Friday before Memorial Day, and Friday before Labor Day. Full tuition is due for staff development weeks.

NOTE: In some cases, if the holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden may close the day before or the day after the holiday. Parents will be updated on each year's holiday schedule as soon as we know the day we will be closed.

Every August a new School Calendar will be sent out to parents.

**Emergency Closings and Inclement Weather Information  
Policy No. 18**

In most cases, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is open during inclement weather. In the event that significant events accompany severe weather, such as a loss of power or water, the school will close.

In the event of an emergency closing and/or inclement weather, parents will be notified of the closing by Facebook, HiMama, and possibly by email.

Should the school need to close in the middle of the day, the school staff will attempt to reach the child's parents first to arrange for pick up. Should the staff be unable to reach the parents, the persons listed on the emergency contact form will be called until pick up arrangements can be made. Staff will notify the parents or emergency contact person at the time of the call, of the pickup location should the children need to be evacuated from the child care center. Parents or emergency contact persons should report directly to the alternate location if one is indicated.



Should the center need to close for any reason, tuition will not be refunded or reduced for closures of less than five school days. If the closure extends beyond five school days, parents will have their tuition refunded within 30 days of the closure.

## **Curriculum Information Policy No. 19**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden uses Frog Street Early Learners for our infants, toddlers and two's, and Frog Street Press for our pre-kindergarten classrooms. These curriculums believe that children learn best through actively engaging with people and things in their environment. Children are involved in hands-on experiences, real-life adventures, and assisted discovery as they explore concepts through play. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is a place where essential readiness skills are nurtured through play, investigation, and of course, fun! These programs provide developmentally and age-appropriate activities and materials for exciting and wonder filled environments.

To learn more about these programs and the wonderful things they offer, visit <http://www.frogstreet.com/>

### **19.1 Daily Schedule of Activities**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden classrooms follow a daily schedule designed specifically to meet the children's developmental, social, and emotional, and personal needs. All schedules are contingent on the needs of the children and may vary from day to day. Each classroom has their own daily schedule that they follow.

### **19.2 Class Assignments**

Classroom assignments are based on each individual child's chronological age, developmental age, emotional age, and physical age. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden typically will transition children to new classrooms one to two times a year, however from time to time we may request a transition sooner based on the individual child's needs.

### **19.3 Staff to Child Ratios**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden follows the staff to child ratios established by Texas Rising Star, which is lower than the state licensing ratios. From time to time, due to staffing shortages or other operational challenges, the school may default to state designated ratios. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will never run





higher ratios than established by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Licensing unless a significant event or emergency arises.

#### **19.4 Nap and Rest Time**

Supervised rest periods are provided for all children under five years of age who remain at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden for six or more hours a day, and for all other children who show a need for a rest time. Your child will be provided a mat to rest on for naptime. Please provide a clean blanket and mat cover for naptime and take them home Fridays for washing. You may also bring in a special blanket, pillow, or stuffed animal if desired, but they must be able to fit in your child's cubby. Nap and rest times are required by the Texas Department of Health and Human Services Child Care Licensing. Due to these regulations, parents cannot request that their child be exempt from nap or rest time.

#### **19.5 Personal Care Supplies Needed**

Preschool children must have a complete change of clothing, **clearly marked with the child's name**, left at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. Preschool children need to be dressed for the weather. Caps, mittens, and warm clothing must be worn during the cooler seasons for the daily outdoor playtime. Accidents can happen, even for the older preschoolers, or if they get wet on the playground. For safety reasons, boots, sandals and flip flops are prohibited.

Parents must supply all bottles, toddler training cups, diapers and wipes. Please label everything with your child's first and last name.

We use washable crayons, markers and paint during art time, but the children's clothing may get stained from just being kids! Please dress your children in play clothes since PLAY is what we do!!

Please leave all valuable items at home since St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden cannot be responsible for broken or lost items.

#### **19.6 Birthday and Holiday Celebrations**

Most children enjoy celebrating special events with their preschool friends (birthdays, new babies, and holidays). Parents may send a "store bought" treat to share with the class. Please make arrangements with the teacher three days in advance when planning a special occasion.



St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden believes in inclusion and celebrating each child's beliefs and important days.

In the event that a parent does not want their child to participate in a holiday celebration, they may choose to keep their child home for that day. No reduction in fees or tuition will be given.

### **19.7 Parent/Teacher Conferences/Communication**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(6)*

Open Communication with parents is very important to children's success. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care/The Learning Garden has multiple ways of communicating with parents. In some situations, parents may be asked to sign documents acknowledging that communication has taken place. Signing such documents is not an admission or agreement in any ways, yet acknowledgement that communication took place. Failure to sign documents is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program.

Listed below are ways that St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden may communicate with parents:

- Our electronic monitor located in the front lobby
- Through email notifications
- Written memos placed in your child's weekly folders
- Social media site such as Facebook
- Smart phone notifications through HiMama
- Verbal communication with the child's teachers and director

Parents will be offered a Parent/Teacher conference twice each year. This is a formal conference with your child's teacher to discuss academic and developmental progress in the classroom. Parents will be asked to sign up for a date and time for their conference. Parents will be required to sign acknowledging that they are unable to attend or do not wish to attend a Parent/Teacher conference.

### **Discipline Policy No. 20**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(7)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff members are trained to use a positive method of discipline and guidance that encourages self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction. Just a few examples used in this situation are: praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior; reminding a child of behavior expectations



daily by using clear, positive statements and redirecting behaviors. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not use "time out" as a form of managing behavior. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff will never use Corporal Punishment or negative discipline that may hurt or humiliate a child.

Research has shown that positive guidance teaches children skills which help them get along in their physical and social environment. This aim is to develop personal standards in self-discipline, not to enforce a set of inflexible rules. Giving children understandable guidelines and redirecting their behavior helps them to develop internal control of their actions and encourages acceptable behavior. Positive cooperation is required from the family when dealing with disruptive behavior. We feel that consistency from all parties involved is the best way to handle these issues. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden reserves the right to terminate care for the child for discipline problems at any time.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden employees are trained in Conscious Discipline. Conscious Discipline techniques and beliefs are used at all times in the classroom. These techniques and beliefs include:

- Our role is to teach behavior, not stop behavior.
- Adults seeing themselves as role models in the classroom. Adults are to behave in the same manner expected of the children.
- Using active calming techniques for both children and adults
- Understanding that all behavior is a form of communication. When children act out, it is an opportunity to teach, not punish.
- Meeting the needs of the children so that they can meet the needs of their peers.
- Allowing children to express their emotions while supporting and comforting children in distress.
- Understanding that all children can only see the world through their version of reality, and helping children see the world as a positive place to live.
- Being optimistic and positive about all children enrolled in our program.
- Greeting each child every morning in a positive and impactful way.

## **20.1 Suspension and Expulsion of Children**

Minimum Standards 746.501(8)

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is proud of our history of working with the individual needs of our children and will work with the parents whose children may need additional support. When applicable, we



will make referrals to outside support services including but limited to, early intervention, speech, occupations, and physical therapy and other types of services, and participate in IEP (Individual Education Plan) meetings where appropriate the best meet the needs of students.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/ The Learning Garden will make reasonable accommodations to their policies, practices and procedures as appropriate in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is not required by law to fundamentally alter or change the services provided for a child displaying dangerous/inappropriate behavior, developmental delays and/or disabilities as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will allow outside resources/therapists into the program to work with any child as needed, provided those services are communicated in advance, the provider of the services has the appropriate clearances to be in the building, the behavioral/therapeutic plan is shared with the administration and the resource/therapist works cooperatively with St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff to meet the needs of the child. Presence of the resource/therapist must mitigate any and all safety risks the child presents to themselves and to others and must be collaborative and complimentary to the program. Should the resource/therapist be disruptive to the program or not have authority or ability to mitigate, through appropriate therapeutic methods, the child's dangerous behaviors, the child may be excluded from the program.

Any child who is a safety threat to themselves or to others will be subject to suspension/exclusion and/or disenrollment from the program if the dangerous behavior cannot be eliminated through reasonable accommodations provided for under applicable federal and state laws and regulations. Temporary suspension from the school may be necessary for the safety of the child and others while any appropriate evaluations are completed and/or while securing the appropriate support services from the appropriate agency.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will at all times provide written documentation to the parents of any child that is subject to referral for outside support services for any behavior, developmental delay or disability. Further, through formal and informal conferences with the teachers and administrators, written incident and accident reports and letters, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will communicate with parents/guardians of children exhibiting behaviors that are dangerous to themselves or to others, the steps taken to accommodate the child and



notifications that the child will not be able to return to the program until support services are in place.

### **Toys from Home Policy No. 21**

Due to the risk of damage, sharing issues, and loss, children are not permitted to bring in toys from home, unless specifically requested by the classroom teacher for use as part of the curriculum. Parents are responsible for enforcing this policy with their child. Parents are encouraged to consult the classroom teacher should they find their child is having difficulty with this policy.

If the parents fail repeatedly to enforce this policy with their children, the staff will call the parents and require that they come to the school and remove the toy.

Children in classrooms with nap/rest time are permitted to include with their bedding supplies, one plush/non-musical toy with which to nap/rest. This toy is to be placed with the bedding supplies and use of it will only be allowed at nap/rest time.

All toys brought in for use as part of the curriculum, and/or for nap/rest time will be inspected by St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff for safety and appropriateness and may be prohibited at the sole discretion of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden.

### **Dress Code Policy No. 22**

#### **22.1 CHILDREN**

##### **Clothing:**

Children are engaged in various activities during the course of the day; some of these activities can be messy, and/or athletic in nature. Additionally, children are engaged in outdoor play daily, weather permitting. Due to these activities, children are required to be dressed in seasonably appropriate, comfortable, clothing.

Parents are prohibited from dressing children in overalls, or clothing with difficult closures. These types of clothing present particular challenges for children in relation to toileting.

Coats must be provided in the winter months.



Children are not permitted to wear open toed, and/or open backed shoes. The most appropriate type of shoes for participation in school activities are rubber-soled, sneakers/tennis shoes.

Children ages 3 through 5 are required to have one seasonably and size appropriate complete change of clothing at the center at all times. Children under 3 years of age are required to have two seasonably and size appropriate, complete changes of clothing at the center at all times. A complete change of clothing includes, shirt, pants, underwear, socks, and shoes. Teachers will post reminders for parents to update changes of clothing as the weather begins to change.

All clothing items must be clearly labeled with the child's first and last name. This includes, coats, hats, gloves, scarves, and boots. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is not responsible for lost or damaged items of clothing.

#### **Jewelry/Accessories:**

Children are not permitted to wear jewelry of any kind. It is a safety hazard for your child as well as the other children enrolled in the program. In addition, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will not to be responsible for lost or stolen valuables. It is the parents' responsibility to enforce this policy with their children. Should a child come to school wearing any jewelry, parents will be required to take it with them, or to return to the school to remove the jewelry if it discovered after the parent leaves. Repeated (more than 3 violations per school year) violations of this policy are considered to be violation of SAFETY POLICIES and will result in dismissal from the program.

Hair beads, barrettes, bobby pins, etc. are not to be worn by children. These accessories are considered to be safety hazards. When choosing accessories for your children be mindful of the potential safety issues they present not only for your child, but also for the older and younger children attending St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is not responsible for damage to or loss of and articles of clothing.



## **22.2 PARENTS**

### **Clothing:**

Parents are required to be dressed in appropriate clothing while at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden or involved in any St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden sponsored events. Inappropriate clothing would include, revealing, extremely short, ripped/torn (in inappropriate places), and/or see through articles of clothing. Anything with suggestive or vulgar language is prohibited.

Parents wearing high heels, work boots, or shoes with wet/dirty soles, will be required to remove their shoes prior to entering any classroom with children under 1 year of age. This will reduce the risk of injury to a child on the floor and will help to maintain a clean floor. Parents can simply leave their shoes outside the classroom door prior to entering the classroom. Parents with bare feet must wear booties when entering the classroom.

### **Field Trips Policy No. 23**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(16)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not currently go on field trips.

### **Parent Participation/Volunteers Policy No. 24**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(20)*

Parents are invited and encouraged to be involved in their child's school activities. There are many different ways in which parents can participate and volunteer at the childcare center. Parents may volunteer to attend trips, read in the classroom, assist teachers, and/or coordinate special events. Teachers will have posted in their classrooms any volunteer opportunities available. Parents not interested in volunteering directly in the classroom may donate items, do maintenance work, or assist in the front office. These volunteer opportunities are posted in the main office area on the parent bulletin board.

Any parent who volunteers in the classroom on a regular basis will be required to pay for and secure all criminal background checks, as required by our licensing regulations. Any person, including parents, with felony convictions, sex offender convictions and/or open investigations into any criminal activities will not be permitted to volunteer in the classroom, or on field trips.



Parents with court orders detailing custodial arrangements will only be permitted to volunteer on days in which they are afforded custody (joint/shared custody arrangement) as per the court order. For example, if a parent is afforded custody on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, that parent will only be able to volunteer on those days. Parents with visitation only (sole/exclusive custody arrangements), will only be permitted to volunteer with the express written permission of the custodial parent.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden reserves the right to make Volunteer assignments. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not guarantee the volunteering parents will be assigned to locations where their child(ren) is present.

### **Health and Safety Policy No. 25**

#### **25.1 PRE-ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(11,13)*

Each child is required to complete a pre-enrollment packet of information. This packet is to be returned to the center's office 3 business days prior to the child's first day of attendance. All children are required to have a complete up to date immunization record on file at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. This is per our licensing regulations. If you have chosen not to have your child immunized, please ask the school director for an immunization waiver form. Immunizations may be waived for certain reasons. Please discuss this with the school director to determine whether you have the right to be enrolled and not have your child immunized. Parents are required to have a wavier on file in place of an immunization record, so that the center can maintain compliance with licensing regulations.

All children are required to have a Physician's Statement form filled out by a licensed medical professional, in order to attend St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. The Physician's Statement Form, indicating the child's fitness to attend St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden, must be completed by a licensed healthcare professional and returned to the School Director 3 business days before enrollment.





## **25.2 CHILDREN WITH SEVERE ALLERGIES**

For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide a signed copy of the “Food Allergy Emergency Plan” form, detailing any allergies, food or otherwise, from which their child suffers, at the time of enrollment or when the allergy is discovered. This form must be completely filled out by the child’s physician and parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and must be updated every six months, or more frequently, as needed. This form can be obtained by request from the School Director.

Any medication required to treat an allergic reaction must be provided in accordance with the Medication Policy detailed herein.

## **25.3 COMMUNICABLE DISEASES /Illnesses**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(3)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden follows all health/communicable disease policies as outlined in the American Academy of Pediatrics Model Health Policies and Procedures Manual. A copy of this manual is on file with the School Director and is available upon request for review. Additionally, copies can be purchased, for a nominal fee, from the National Association for the Education of the Young Child (NAEYC).

Parents are required to pick up an ill child within 1 hour of notification by phone. If a parent is reached but cannot pick their child up within 1 hour, it becomes the parent’s responsibility to arrange for alternate pick up with someone listed on the child’s emergency contact form. The staff will not continue to call those listed on the emergency contact list once a parent is reached. If a parent cannot be reached, the staff will begin to call the people listed on the emergency contact form, until arrangements can be made for the child to be picked up.

Children will be excluded from participation in the program if they exhibit symptoms of any communicable disease. They will not be permitted to return to the program until they are no longer contagious. Guidelines for determining the contagious period for a specific illness are based on the recommendations by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Children must present a doctor’s note stating they are no longer contagious and can return to the program. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden reserves the right to refuse to allow a child to return if the center director or designee believes the child to be too ill to participate in the program.



Children excluded from the program due to a fever may not return to the program until they are fever free, without fever reducing medication, for 24 hours. If your child is sent home due to a fever, he/she is not permitted to return to the program the following day at a minimum. A fever is defined as a temperature reading on a thermometer of at least 100 degrees Fahrenheit or more as taken under the arm.

Children are required to be excluded from the program for loose bowels or diarrhea which occur 3 or more times in a 24 hours period of time. Children may return to the program when normal bowel movements resume.

If your child will be absent due to illness, we request that you notify the school director. This enables our faculty to keep track of any illnesses, which may occur at our school. This information will only be shared with faculty on a “need to know” basis. If your child has a communicable disease, we ask that you share the diagnosis with the school director, so that the parents of the children in the school maybe notified that a communicable disease is present. Once again, only the communicable disease information will be shared. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will take all measures necessary to protect your child’s confidentiality. You are not required to disclose this information by law, and your continued enrollment will not be based whatsoever on your decision to share, (or not) the reason for your child’s absence from school.

#### **25.4 BITING**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden recognizes that biting is a developmentally appropriate behavior for children in the infant through 2 ½ year old classrooms. Parents with children in these classrooms should expect that their children may be bit or will bite another child. The staff understands that parents are concerned and can be upset when their child is involved in a biting incident. We ask that you remember this is a developmentally appropriate behavior, and that the staff is working to identify situations which, provoke, or elicit this behavior so it can be prevented in the future. The staff will not punish, or harshly discipline children in the younger classrooms for biting behavior; they will simply redirect the children to different activities in separate areas of the classroom. Parents are expected to work with staff to identify methods and strategies to curb this behavior. Uncooperative parents will have their child’s services terminated.

Children older than 3 years of age, may occasionally be involved in a biting incident. For children in this age group who bite, the staff will use the discipline procedures outlined in the discipline section of this handbook, as



well as observe the child to determine what provokes or elicits this inappropriate behavior. Parents are expected to cooperate with staff to help their child control this behavior. Uncooperative parents will have their child's service terminated. Furthermore, children, in the older age groups, who bite 3 times in a school year will have their services terminated since, the safety of all the children in the program is of the utmost concern of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden.

Parents will be notified by incident/accident report that a biting incident occurred during the course of the day. The staff may not discuss with either parent the identity of the other child involved in the incident. This information is considered to be confidential and cannot be disclosed. The staff of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden cannot discuss the medical history of any child involved in a biting incident with the other party. It is recommended that any child involved in a biting incident be seen by their family physician if the parents are concerned about communicable diseases possibly resulting from the biting incident.

## **25.5 DISPENSING MEDICATION**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(4)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will only dispense over-the-counter and/or prescription medication that is in original, labeled containers, and is accompanied by a doctor's note with explicit dosage and administration instructions. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will only give medication to the child for whom the doctor's note is written and for whom the medication container is labeled. One doctor's note per course of treatment is required. If a child, for example, is to be given a course of antibiotics for 10 days, the doctor's note must identify the dates that the medication is to be given. **St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will only dispense prescription medication that is prescribed three or more times in a day. Medication prescribed once or twice a day must be given by the parent at home.**

Parents are required to complete a Medication Form each day that medication is to be dispensed. Medication Forms can be found at the front office. Medication Forms, doctor's notes and medication are to be turned into the School Director.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will dispense over-the-counter, fever reducing/pain medication (ex. Children's Tylenol, Children's Motrin) on an as needed basis, with a doctor's note detailing the recommended reasons for administration and appropriate dosage. Parents are



required to supply an unopened bottle of the fever reducing/pain medication clearly labeled with their child's name. (One note and bottle of fever reducing/pain medication is required per child.) Prior to administering fever reducing/pain medication, staff will contact a parent or person listed on emergency contact form, if a parent cannot be reached, to inform them of our need to administer the medication. Staff will also inform the parent or emergency contact person if it is necessary for the child to be picked up due to illness. Refer to the policy listed above regarding picking up ill children.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that all prescription medication is properly labeled by a pharmacist and replaced prior to the expiration date.

## **25.6 FIRE/EMERGENCY DRILLS**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(5)(23)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden conducts monthly fire and emergency/evacuation drills. Parents, staff and children will not be made aware of drill dates or times, as this is the most effective way to assess the effectiveness of fire and emergency/evacuation plans.

During a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation, parents may not sign children into or out of the program. Parents must wait until the drill is complete and children have returned to the building to sign their child into the program. Parents may feel free to wait with the child's class in the designated safe-zone outside of the building until the drill is complete.

In the event of a real fire/emergency situation, the director or designate will inform each classroom teacher that the school will be closing. At this time any parents waiting to sign their child in will have to leave the premises with their child. All other parents or emergency contact persons will be notified by telephone of the situation. As with the sick child pick up policy, children must be picked up within 1 hour of the telephone call.

Parents wishing to sign their child out of the program during a fire/emergency drill or real fire/emergency situation are expected to have patience with the staff as they are trying to maintain order during an often hectic and dangerous situation. If the school is in the midst of a fire/emergency drill, parents will be required to wait until the drill is completed and the staff and children are returned to the building to sign their child out of the program. If the school is having a real fire/emergency situation, parents will be asked to wait until the director or designee has accounted for all staff and children and gives the staff permission to release children. Once again, it is important for parents and staff to work together, remain calm, and cooperate with the fire/emergency



personnel and center administration during these important and critical situations.

Parents may review the complete St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden Emergency Preparedness Plan posted in every classroom and on the Parent Communication Board.

### **25.7 ALTERNATE SAFE LOCATION**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(23)*

Should the administration of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden or any emergency services personnel determine the building which houses the child care agency to be too dangerous to be occupied, the staff and children will be taken to an alternate location detailed in the St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden Emergency Preparedness Plan. Once the children are assembled here, the staff will begin contacting parents or emergency contact persons for pick up. As stated before, children must be picked up within 1 hour of the telephone call.

### **25.8 INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORTS**

Should your child be involved in an incident/accident during the course of the school day, a staff member will complete an Incident/Accident Report. The Incident/Accident Report will be provided to the parent by the classroom teacher.

Parents or persons designated to act “in loco parentis” are required to sign any incident/accident reports from the day at pick-up. The classroom teacher will be able to briefly discuss the matter with you at pick-up. However, should you feel it necessary to have an in depth discussion or meeting, it is most appropriate to schedule the meeting for a later date because the teacher is responsible for supervising the remaining children in the classroom. A telephone conference may be scheduled for later in the day or for the next day at nap/rest time if the parent(s) is unable to meet at the center during the course of the day.

Should a person other than the parent or one designated to act “in lieu of parents” pick-up the child, a parent or person designated to act “in lieu of parents” must sign the Incident/Accident Report and return a copy to the school director within 24 hours. Failure to sign and return an Incident/Accident in this time period will result in your child’s exclusion from the program until such time as the Report is returned signed.



## **25.9 FOODS**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(10)*

### **All age groups:**

For the safety of your child, parents are required to provide notification, in the form of a doctor's note, of any allergies (food or otherwise), with instruction for treatment should a child have an allergic reaction. Please refer to the Health and Safety Policies contained herein for further information.

Parents are required to provide written notification of any food/dietary restrictions. (i.e. lactose intolerance, vegetarian diets, wheat free/gluten free diets)

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden never uses food as a punishment. Children will never be denied participation in lunch or snack time for behavior reasons.

### **Infant through 2 ½ year old age groups:**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden provides formula for the children enrolled in our programs. If a parent wishes to provide an alternate formula, they may do so at their expense. There is no reduction in fees or tuition for parents who provide their own formula or food.

Parents are required to complete a feeding schedule for their child on a monthly basis, or as the child's feeding requirements change. Staff will complete a daily chart for each child detailing for the parent what the child ate, when, and how much.

### **Breastfeeding**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(24)*

Breastfeeding mothers are welcome to come to the center during the day to feed their child. Appropriate, private feeding locations will be made available. Please discuss your desire to come to the center to breastfeed your child with the classroom teacher.

### **3 year and older classrooms:**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden offers children a morning breakfast at approximately 8:30 a.m., a half-hour lunch at approximately 11:30 a.m. and an afternoon snack at approximately 2:30 p.m.



All meals are family style, with the children sitting at tables, to promote good manners, eating habits and socialization skills. Staff will encourage children to eat their main entrée first, followed by healthy snacks.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not allow candy bars, sodas, or candy treats such as Skittles, Starbursts or gum, as part of a child's lunch or snack. If you wish for these foods to be a part of your child's diet, please give them to your child at home.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden prohibits any food item in glass containers (except Baby food in the infant classrooms), as well as aluminum cans. These can be safety hazards for the children and staff.

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will provide a healthy morning and afternoon snack for all children in 3 years of age and older age groups, including water, fruit juice and/or milk. A list of the daily snacks available to the children will be posted in the classroom on a monthly basis.

## **25.10 NUT FREE CENTER**

Due to the extreme nature of allergic reactions to nuts and products containing nuts in some children, St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden prohibits nuts and/or foods containing nut products on St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden property, and/or at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden sponsored events. These nut allergies can be so severe that exposure to nuts can result in an anaphylactic reaction. An allergic child can have a reaction from simply smelling nuts on someone's breath or touching nut oil residue left on a countertop, not only from consuming nuts or nut products. This includes, but not limited to, milk made with nuts such as almond milk.

Due to the possibility of cross-contamination, (this occurs when one food is prepared with items previously used to prepare foods with nuts, or nut products), St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not allow homemade snacks at the center. While St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden understands that parents enjoy providing homemade snacks for birthdays and holidays, we must be mindful of the safety of all children enrolled at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center.



Since St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is a nut free environment, parents can purchase the items to make homemade snacks and make arrangements with the classroom teacher to make the snacks as part of a classroom lesson. Only St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden utensils, bowls, and bakeware may be used to prepare these foods.

### **25.11 FIREARMS AND WEAPONS**

At no time is any person permitted to carry any type of Firearm, Ammunitions and/or Weapon on agency property for any reason. Violation of this policy will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

### **25.12 Infant Sleep Safety**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(9)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden follows the Infant Sleep Safety Guidelines as listed in the Child Care Minimum Standards and as outlined by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. All infants will be placed on their backs to sleep. To avoid suffocation, nothing is allowed in the crib but the infant, including blankets and stuffed animals. Sleep positioning devices are prohibited unless instructed by the child's health care professional. An "Infant Sleep Exception" form must be completed by the health care professional. All cribs at St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden meet the CPSC safety guidelines. Crib compliance documents are on file in the front office. Pacifiers are allowed, however straps that attached to the child's clothing and pacifiers with stuffed animals attached are prohibited.

### **25.13 Hearing and Vision Screening**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(12)*

Hearing and Vision Screening for possible vision and hearing problems is required by the Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health & Safety Code, Chapter 36, for children who are 4-years old. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will schedule annual screenings at our school. Parents may also bring in screening proof from their local pediatrician.





**25.14 Water Activities**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(15)*

Parents will be notified in advance of other water play activities. Splash/Sprinkler Play is offered during the summer months. Parents are asked to send a swim suit, swim diaper (if applicable), water shoes and a towel on their child's assigned splash day. Children wearing regular diapers will not be allowed to participate in Splash Day.

**25.15 Animals**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(17)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden does not allow pets at the center.

**25.16 Insect Repellant and Sunscreen**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(18)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will apply sunscreen and/or bug repellant as needed. Sunscreen and bug repellant must be provided by the parent, must be in the original container, and must not have expired. A "Sunscreen/Bug Repellant Permission Slip" must be completed by the parent before these items can be applied.

**25.17 Health Checks**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(26)*

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff will do a visual check of the children upon arrival each morning. If a staff member notices anything unusual, they are required to point this out to the parent at that time. If your child has an accident overnight, please notify staff members when dropping off so that we can assist in watching the child for side effects. A St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff member may complete a "Incident Report" to document these situations.

**25.17 Vaccine-Preventable Diseases**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(27)*

All St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden employees are encouraged to receive an annual flu shot and are required to be current on their Pertussis vaccine to help protect children from illnesses.



**25.18 Gang-Free Zone**

*Minimum Standards 746.501(b)(2)*

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

**25.19 Outdoor Play**

Outdoor play is a regular part of the daily routine. Children should be prepared to play outside some part of every day. Please do not request that your child stay indoors. Per the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, children too sick to go outside should not be at school. Children may not wear flip flops due to the danger these shoes may cause on the playground.

**Staff Employment by Client's Policy  
Policy No. 26**

The staff of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden is prohibited from being employed by any client (current or former). Parents are prohibited from soliciting any staff member for the purpose of employment. Parents who employ St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden staff will have their services terminated and any tuition or registration fees will be forfeited. Staff who become employed by current or former clients of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will have their employment with St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden terminated.

Employment refers to any relationship outside of the school's services which involves an employee of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden to interact with a current or former clients of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. Such relationships include but are not limited to, baby-sitting, house-sitting, mother's helper, nanny services, and carpooling regardless of whether or not those services are voluntary or paid.

Employees of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden are prohibited from participating in social networking relationships with clients of St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden. This includes, but not limited to, accepting or requesting friend request on media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat or Instagram.



## **Cameras and Photographs Policy No. 27**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden has closed circuit cameras in all classrooms. Due to privacy laws recorded camera footage is for St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden reviewing only. Parents may not request to view previous footage from the School Director. St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden will cooperate with local law enforcement. Available camera footage will be release to local authorities with a court order. The privacy of the children is very important to us. For this reason, the cameras are not available over the internet.

### **27.1 Photographs**

St. Paul Lutheran YKT Child Care Center/The Learning Garden believes in the benefit of using real life pictures in our educational program. Photos taken of the children will be done with a school owned camera and will only be used in our program. If parents choose to take pictures of events held at our program, they may only photograph their child, unless written permission is given by the other parent. Please note: during certain parent events, such as Pre-K graduation, Christmas programs, and Carnivals, photographs may be taken. If you wish for your child to not be photographed, you may want to remove them from these events.

## **School Contact Information Policy No. 28**

*Minimum Standards 746.501 (1)*

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