



Parent Handbook

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College Station, Texas 77845
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SWLCCS@Gmail.com

Updated Summer 2019

Dear Parents:

Welcome to Southwood Learning Center! We appreciate this opportunity to work with you and your child and we hope to build a lasting relationship of confidence and trust.

We strive to provide a nurturing environment that allows children to develop the skills needed to be successful in life. Our goal is to help your child develop socially, mentally, physically, and emotionally. Responsibility, independence, and respect are integrated into our daily program. We encourage children to accept and appreciate their individual differences and cultural family traditions.

We invite you to observe your child in their classroom setting and become a part of our Southwood Learning Center Family.

Your suggestions and comments are always welcome and deeply appreciated. Once again, thank you for allowing your child to be a part of our lives.

Sincerely,

The Southwood Learning Center Family

Contents

Parent Handbook	- 1 -
Contents	- 3 -
MISSION STATEMENT	- 5 -
POLICY	- 5 -
ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS	- 5 -
CURRICULUM	- 6 -
CLASSROOMS	- 6 -
The Montessori and Discovery Rooms (3-6 year olds)	- 6 -
The Pre-Montessori Room (older 2's-3 year olds)	- 7 -
The Seedling (18 months-2 years old) and Stepping Stones Rooms (2 years-early 3's).....	- 7 -
OUTDOOR PLAY	- 7 -
TECHNOLOGY TIME	- 7 -
BILLING & TUITION	- 8 -
Registration Fee	- 8 -
Supply Fee	- 8 -
Tuition	- 8 -
Billing.....	- 8 -
OUR STAFF	- 8 -
HOURS OF OPERATION	- 9 -
Late Fees (effective 8/1/2019).....	- 9 -
Drop Off /Pick Up.....	- 9 -
Sign In / Sign Out	- 9 -
Attendance and Absenteeism	- 10 -
School Holidays.....	- 10 -
Special Events.....	- 10 -
CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT	- 11 -
ILLNESS/MEDICATIONS	- 11 -
Medication.....	- 12 -
EMERGENCIES	- 12 -
In the Event of an Evacuation	- 12 -
Minor Incidents.....	- 13 -
SCHOOL SUPPLIES	- 14 -
School Clothing	- 14 -
Lost or Damaged Items	- 14 -
NUTRITION	- 14 -
DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES	- 15 -
Biting Behaviors	- 16 -

Gang-Free Zone	- 16 -
Smoking	- 16 -
PARENT COMMUNICATIONS	- 16 -
Daily Logs	- 16 -
Parent Conferences	- 17 -
Classroom Meetings.....	- 17 -
Family Engagement	- 17 -
Visits to SWLC.....	- 17 -
Changes in a Child’s Life.....	- 18 -
Custody Issues	- 18 -
PICTURES.....	- 18 -
THE TEXAS RISING STAR PROGRAM	- 18 -
FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES.....	- 18 -
Our Partnership.....	- 19 -
Drop-Offs	- 19 -
Parking	- 19 -
Email Communication	- 19 -
Parent Questions and Concerns	- 19 -
Helping Your Child Make the Most of their Experience.....	- 20 -
MINIMUM STANDARDS.....	- 20 -
APPENDIX I.....	- 21 -
APPENDIX B	- 22 -
Parent Sign Off Page	- 23 -

MISSION STATEMENT

To empower and nurture each child's individuality by building a partnership with families to promote physical, cognitive, emotional and social growth.

POLICY

Southwood Learning Center is a private school open to all children regardless of religion, race, nationality, or creed. Our facility is licensed for children 18 months through kindergarten.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

In order to enroll at SWLC, your child must have officially turned 18 months. We ask that you please review and complete all the information that is present in our enrollment packet which includes the following:

1. A completed enrollment form (no areas may be left blank) and an immunization record* that is compliant with Texas Department of State Health Services (requirement chart available upon request or visit <https://dshs.texas.gov/immunize/schedule/>)
2. Physician's statement allowing your child to attend school. Parents have up to 12 months to provide this. We recommend that you provide this at the time of enrollment.
3. Discipline and Guidance form, receipt of Operational Policy (Parent Handbook) and the "Gang Free Zone" form.
4. Emergency cards and permission for photos, sunscreen and insect repellent.
5. Child Assessment Form
6. Tuition rate form
7. All children are required to have a vision and hearing test by their fourth birthday according to state licensing regulations.

If there is any missing information or expired vaccinations etc., parents will be notified and given a two-week period in which to provide us with updated information. Failure to provide this information may lead to your child being unable to attend school.

Parents will be required to complete an updated form every fall. Please notify us in writing (either email or hard copy) immediately if you move or change your phone numbers, including work and emergency numbers.

***If you choose not to have your child immunized, you must bring an official signed affidavit stating which vaccines your child will not be receiving. In case of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease, you may be asked to keep your child at home until the facility no longer has any cases. This is in order to protect your child. If there is a child at our facility who is immunocompromised, you may be required to have your child vaccinated in order to protect all our children.**

Please note, at this time, SWLC does not mandate any required immunizations for staff.

CURRICULUM

We offer two compatible programs; Montessori and the Discovery curriculum, both of which incorporate STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) lesson plans. Both curricula are based on self-paced learning and creative thinking. The Montessori Method emphasizes individual tasks and encourages each child to work in specific interest areas including: Language, mathematics, science, sensorials, practical life, geography, and art. The Discovery curriculum is an interest center-based program, promoting group interaction and social development. Children choose from a variety of independent and group activities which include: Blocks, small manipulatives, puzzles, dramatic play, science, literacy, art, music and technology.

CLASSROOMS

Children are assigned to classrooms based on their age and development readiness. Each class has a primary lead teacher. Our program is based on each child's social, emotional, and physical developmental needs. We believe that children are happy and secure when they have plenty of opportunities to challenge themselves as well as succeed each day, thereby promoting positive self-esteem and self-confidence. Children are transitioned into new classrooms throughout their time with SWLC. Families are given verbal notice and are encouraged to discuss the move with their child. Children will have the opportunity to the new classroom and meet the new teacher before their final move

The Montessori and Discovery Rooms (3-6 year olds)

Montessori (pronounced MON-tuh-SORE-ee) education was founded in 1907 by Dr. Maria Montessori, the first woman in Italy to become a physician. She based her educational methods on scientific observation of children's learning processes. Guided by her discovery that children teach themselves, Dr. Montessori designed a "prepared environment" in which children could freely choose from a number of developmentally appropriate activities. Now, nearly a century after Maria Montessori's first 'casa dei bambini' (children's house) in Rome, Montessori education is found all over the world, spanning ages from birth to adolescence.

Montessori emphasizes learning through all five senses, not just through listening, watching, or reading. Children in Montessori classes learn at their own, individual pace and according to their own choice of activities from hundreds of possibilities. Learning is an exciting process of discovery, leading to concentration, motivation, self-discipline, and a love of learning.

The Montessori Method uses materials specifically designed to stimulate the child's interest and foster an appreciation for learning. Teachers encourage social interaction, cooperation, respect and personal responsibility, thereby creating an environment which promotes growth and harmony.

The Discovery curriculum offers a compatible approach to the Montessori Method, using a center-based program that facilitates creative thinking. Children experience the joy of discovery by using their imagination to explore and understand the world through a number of class projects. The centers enhance the areas studied in Montessori and offer additional development in literacy, music appreciation, research, dramatic play, and technology.

In addition to these two curricula, we believe that cultural appreciation is an important part of development, especially in today's diverse world. To meet this need, a cultural enrichment program is offered in the afternoons for our Montessori and Discovery classes. Children have an opportunity to learn fine arts and explore the world's varying cultures. Our goal is to encourage children to take pride in their heritage, as well as appreciate the differences in the world around us.

The Pre-Montessori Room (older 2's-3 year olds)

This transitional classroom combines a basic introduction to Montessori principles with the Discovery curriculum. Children's senses are stimulated through various activities designed to foster language development, numerical knowledge, art, music, and creative exploration.

In addition to enhancing the child's educational experience, our goal is to nurture the child's whole spirit. Teachers foster the development of respect for self, others, and the environment through interactions with peers and teachers.

Children are required to be potty trained before entering Pre-Montessori

The Seedling (18 months-2 years old) and Stepping Stones Rooms (2 years-early 3's)

The toddler classroom is often a child's first experience in a classroom setting. As the child transitions from the routines of home to school, a period of adjustment is natural. Patience, tenderness and warmth are especially important at this age. Our teachers are committed to providing a nurturing environment while working to enhance motor skill development, sharing, communication, independence and potty training (when you and your child are developmentally ready).

These classes are designed to appeal to the toddler's natural physical, emotional, and sensorial needs. The daily schedule allows children to enjoy many new experiences, without becoming overwhelmed. At SWLC, we embrace the Montessori philosophy throughout our classrooms by recognizing that each child develops at their own pace. Our responsibility is to allow each child to flourish at her/his own pace throughout our classrooms.

**If you are still nursing your toddler, please let us know so we can make comfortable accommodations for you and your child.*

OUTDOOR PLAY

Physical play is essential for maximum learning. Each class schedule includes outdoor play time for approximately 30 minutes in the morning and 30 minutes in the afternoon. We have two age appropriate playgrounds where children have the opportunity to engage in physical activities such as climbing, jumping, digging, crawling through tunnels, playing with balls, trike riding, water table play, painting and running. Along with free play opportunities, our teachers have planned activities to encourage movement such as "catching bubbles", chase games, Red Light/Green Light, parachute play, Duck Duck Goose, Dancing and catch. We also have a garden that the children are responsible for planting, weeding, and taking care of. Children's outdoor times may change due to weather concerns and heat. An alternate physical activity such as dancing to the music, exercise, and stretching will replace outdoor play time in case of inclement weather. As well as the scheduled outdoor playtimes, children have the opportunity to play prior to evening pick-up, weather permitting. Please check your child's class schedule for timings.

TECHNOLOGY TIME

Technology has allowed for a variety of new lessons to be available to children, however, we believe that allowing children to have hands on exploration, face to face interactions and play, teaches skills that are most valuable. We periodically use tablets to reinforce particular topics, music and movement lessons and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math). Children do not have access to televisions, however the children may watch occasional children's videos (maximum of 30 minutes not to exceed four times a month). SWLC will also have periodic special, "Movie Days" which parents

will be notified of prior to presentation, where a suitable children's movie will be played. As per licensing requirements, children under two may not watch movies or have computer time.

BILLING & TUITION

Registration Fee

A one-time non-refundable fee of \$80 is payable upon the receipt of acceptance of your child into our program. The registration fee will ensure your child's spot in our program for the first 60 days that your child is eligible to attend our program (based on child's age and availability of space). **If you choose to delay enrollment after the first 60 days of eligibility, a new registration fee will be assessed.**

Supply Fee

A supply fee of \$90.00 will be collected in September and in February which will provide for annual supplies, and a school t-shirt. Supply fees are prorated for those children who start later in the year.

Tuition

Tuition is due on a monthly basis in twelve equal payments. A complete tuition rate chart is available in your enrollment folder or upon request. We ask that tuition be paid by the first of every month. Payments received after the fifth will be subject to a late fee of \$10 per day. We do offer a bi-monthly option (payments are due by the 5th and 15th of each month). A \$25 fee will be assessed for all returned checks. Please see the Sandbox section of this guide for further information.

Billing

Our Sandbox software will allow parents to view and pay their bill online. You may view an itemized receipt for all payments, and print tax receipts for the year. Parents will still have the option to pay with a paper check, money order or cash, but may now also pay with Automated Clearing House (ACH), or e-checks. ACH/e-checks are simply methods of electronic money transfers. Simply select the day you would like the money to come out of your account, provide the routing and account number from your bank, and your payment will be processed just like a regular check. We encourage you to utilize the ACH option for the most convenient tuition payment option. Your account will be billed through Sandbox after the 25th of each month for the following month's tuition.

A five percent discount is offered if you choose to pay a year's tuition up front, and as a sibling discount.

If for any reason you decide to withdraw your child from our facility, we require a two-week written notice for consideration of prorating your tuition.

In appreciation of referrals to our program, we offer a \$100 credit for referrals in attendance for ninety days.

OUR STAFF

Caring for your children is a privilege for us; however, a love of children is not enough to ensure that we are able to provide the best quality care for our students. Members of our staff are carefully selected, trained, and evaluated to ensure that they conform to the SWLC philosophy of childcare. Each teacher must have the skills to meet the early education needs of children. Our staff goes through an extensive training before teaching in a class room.

After passing a criminal background check and national FBI fingerprint check, staff receives school orientation, First Aid/CPR training and training on identifying allergic reactions as well as how to use an Epi-Pen if needed. Staff will also complete training on Minimum Standards and complete a Pre-Service training that addresses: Child Supervision, Shaken Baby Syndrome, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, Abuse & Neglect, Child Development, Vehicle, Safety & Emergencies, Discipline & Guidance, Lesson Plans, Class Management, & Professional Development. Along with this, we have teachers train in the classrooms with a mentor teacher. All of our staff is required to complete a minimum of 30 hours annually in continuing education, including Discipline and Guidance.

In order to maintain confidentiality and professionalism, it is our policy to not recommend any of our staff for private babysitting. We kindly request that you do not ask our staff to babysit your child in their off hours. **SWLC staff is strictly prohibited from transporting any child to and/or from the facility even with parent's permission.**

HOURS OF OPERATION

Southwood Learning Center is open year round, five days a week, except for the specific holidays listed in the, "holiday schedule." We open at 7am and close at 6 pm. Please have your child to school by 9am to ensure maximum participation.

Late Fees (effective 8/1/2019)

A late-pick up fee will be assessed if children are not picked up by closing time. If you know that you are going to be detained, please inform the school immediately. Late fees will be determined by the checkout time according to SANDBOX SOFTWARE.

6:00-6:15	\$25 flat rate
6:15-onwards	\$2 for each additional minute

You will be notified of any late fees. Late fee charges will be added to tuition for the following month.

Drop Off /Pick Up

Please use the front entrance when dropping off your child. **PLEASE DO NOT PICK UP YOUR CHILD FROM THE OUTSIDE GATE.** We have a secured keypad entry for the front door. We will notify you of the code upon enrollment, we ask that you not share the code with anyone who is not authorized for pick-up. We discourage you from sharing the code with your children, they may inadvertently share the code with a non-authorized individual.

Sign In / Sign Out

Parents and guardians are required to sign their child in and out using the Sandbox time clock system. Parents will be required to create their own four-digit pin. To sign your child in/out, enter your four-digit pin, enter YOUR initials (not your child's), select the name(s) of your student(s) and then click 'finish.' *Please note that SWLC office administrators will have access to the 4 digit pin you select to pick up and drop off your child.*

Only those persons listed on the enrollment form and emergency cards will be allowed to pick up your child. If someone who is not listed as an emergency contact is picking up your child, please let us know in writing. When contacts pick up, they must enter the parent's four-digit pin, but *their own* initials to record who picked up that day. We still highly encourage parents to message the front office when someone other than the parent/guardian will be picking up, and we require notice when a new person is

added to the pickup list; identification will be required from all persons picking up your child. In cases of divorce, legal separation, or custody concerns, we require legal verification.

Attendance and Absenteeism

Regular attendance is crucial in order for your child to receive the maxim benefit from our program. We recommend you have your child at school between 8:30 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. We ask that you notify the school if your child is unable to attend class. You can notify the school through your Sandbox portal on the attendance calendar. *Absenteeism will have no effect on tuition.*

At SWLC, we understand that families may need to take some time off from regular attendance due to a variety of reasons. For those families who wish to have a temporary withdrawal from SWLC for a minimum of 30 days we offer two options, both options require written notification of last day of attendance and first day back to school. Full tuition is owed for absenteeism of less than one month.

For withdrawals of one month only:

SWLC will guarantee your child may return to his/her spot on the date of your choosing for an \$85 holding fee due on or prior to your child's last day of attendance.

For withdrawals exceeding one month:

SWLC will guarantee your child may return to his/her spot on the date of your choosing for an \$85 holding fee for the first month and one-half month's tuition for each additional month's absence. The \$85 holding fee is due on or prior to your child's last day of attendance. The additional one-half month tuition is due by the fifth of each month that your child is absent, e.g. if you wish to keep your child home for June, July, and August you will pay \$85 for June and half of July and August tuition in order for SWLC to hold your child's spot. If you wish to keep your child home for June and July and half of August, you will pay \$85 for June, one half of July tuition and FULL August tuition.

For families who wish not to utilize either of these options, you can withdraw and re-enroll your child with a new \$80 registration fee. This option places your child back on our waiting list and allows for your child to return to our school based upon first available opening. This option does not guarantee admission on the date of your choosing.

School Holidays

Our school will be closed for Martin Luther King Day, part of spring-break (see holiday calendar), Good Friday, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (see holiday calendar), and part of the Christmas/New Year holidays. Holidays are scheduled according to the College Station ISD schedule, except for the Good Friday holiday. *Holidays/Vacations have no effect on tuition.*

In the event of severe weather, we will follow CSISD with regard to closures, and we will inform KBTX-TV.

Special Events-We encourage you to join in the fun!

- ❖ Parties- Fall Festival, Thanksgiving Celebration, Holidays Around the World, Spring Scavenger Hunt Mother's and Father's Day. Throughout the year, we will have a number of parties for special occasions. Parents can help by providing food, prizes, and/or volunteering during the event. All assistance will be greatly appreciated.

- ❖ Splash Days-During the summer months the children participate in “Splash Days” (water sprinkler play). We ask that you please send a bathing suit, water shoes, and a towel. If for some reason you or your child does not wish to participate, please inform us.
- ❖ Guest Speakers-We will bring in special guest speakers/presenters to share skills and experiences with the children throughout the year. All presentations will be under staff supervision. If you would like to share an item or an experience with us, please let us know.
- ❖ School Lunch Days-Throughout the year, we will offer special opportunities for the children to purchase lunches. Suggestions for meal ideas are welcome. Participation is not required.
- ❖ Birthdays-We will celebrate birthdays during afternoon snack time. Families are welcome to attend their child’s celebration. We prefer that you send healthy birthday treats, such as muffins, pudding, veggie/cheese tray, or fruit kabobs. Additionally, we ask that you not send birthday invitations or favors to school, unless you are sending them for the whole class. If you wish, you may make a book donation to our school for your child’s birthday.
- ❖ Show and Tell Days-Wednesdays will be show and tell days. If your child has a special item that is educationally enhancing and/or has relevance to the topics being discussed, please encourage them to bring it to school on Wednesdays. There will be special group time in the afternoons where children will have the opportunity to discuss their show and tell item. The last Wednesday of each month is reserved for toys. *Toys, money, cosmetics, children’s purses, gum and candy are to be left at home.*
- ❖ Field Trips-We will host a number of on-site ‘field trips’ for the Montessori/Discovery classes that will give the children an opportunity to experience and participate in community activities. Families are welcome to help chaperone and join the fun.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Our classrooms and staff are held to the highest standards. Each room is cleaned daily. Toys, tables, bathrooms, etc. are sanitized at naptime and the end of each day.

The lessons, books, and equipment in each class are selected based on their appropriateness to the specific age group and to provide the maximum enrichment for your child. Lessons and books are rotated on a regular basis to provide a sense of challenge and newness

ILLNESS/MEDICATIONS

Please do not send your child to school with a temperature that exceeds 101.0 orally or 100.0 underarm. **Children must be fever free without fever reducing medication for 24 hours before returning to school even with a physician’s note.**

Children with rashes, blisters, and/or eye infections/discharge will not be allowed to attend without a doctor’s release. If your child has been diagnosed by a health care professional with a communicable disease, you must bring a physician’s note stating that your child is no longer contagious. For certain illnesses, our policy is to follow the recommendations of the CDC and/or the Brazos County Health Department. Licensing requires notification of certain illness to the health department. (Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B and C, Legionellosis, Measles, Meningococcal meningitis, Novel

coronavirus, Novel/variant influenza, Pertussis, Rubella and Tuberculosis. Please go to www.dshs.state.tx.us for further information.

Parents of children affected in those classes will also be notified via email of those same illnesses.

Children who have uncontrolled diarrhea or two or more vomiting episodes in 24 hours **may not attend** until they are **symptom free for 24 hours**.

Texas Minimum Standards requires that children who have any illness that prevents them from participating comfortably in daily activities including outdoor play or children that require greater supervision than the center provides, should not attend school until a time that they can participate in all school activities comfortably.

If your child develops any symptoms of illness, including the ones mentioned above, we will notify you and ask that you pick him/her up as soon as possible. **Your child may not return to school until they have been symptom free without fever reduction medication for 24 hours**

If a child is found to have lice, parents will be notified and the child may not return for 24 hours after treatment. The particular class affected will be notified.

Medication

We ask that all medications, including over the counter medication, be properly marked with the child's name and date. Written permission is required to dispense the medication and it will be administered according to label directions or as amended by a physician and only at the times indicated on the medication log. The medication log will be located at the front office window, please fill it out each day that medicine is to be administered. Medication must be handed to a staff member and not left in bags, lunch boxes etc.

We can only administer OTC medication if it is approved for your child's age, unless you have a physician's release. SWLC staff also receive training on CPR and basic First Aid as well as use of an Epi-Pen. SWLC staff are not trained for any further medical assistance. If there is a need for any further medical observations and/or interventions, please let us know and based on your child's needs and our training, we will determine whether we can assist or not. Each decision will be made on a case to case basis.

EMERGENCIES

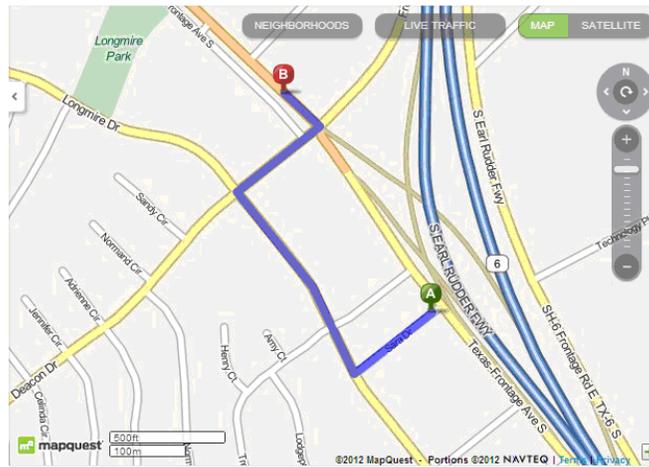
In case of accidental injury or sudden illness, proper care will be given and an **immediate attempt to contact a parent** will be made. If a parent cannot be contacted, we will notify an emergency contact. If there is no emergency contact listed and parents are not able to pick up their child, local authorities will be contacted. Should it be deemed necessary, an ambulance or other emergency personnel will be notified. The Director or another staff member will be in charge and make all decisions regarding the care of your child until the arrival of the parent or the emergency aid. It is imperative that we are kept current of all health concerns and phone/emergency numbers. Any expenses incurred during an emergency will be the responsibility of the parent.

In the Event of an Evacuation

Driving Directions from **1814 Sara Drive, College Station, Texas 77845 to 3400 South Texas Avenue, College Station, TX 77845:**

1. Start out going southwest on **Sara Drive** toward **Longmire Drive** (0.1 mi)
2. Turn right onto **Longmire Drive** (0.3 mi)
3. Take the second right onto **Deacon Drive** (0.1mi)

4. Turn left onto **Texas Avenue S/ TX-6-BR.** (0.06mi)



- In case of emergency, parents will be notified immediately by email and/or by phone.
- In case of evacuation of building, parents, Child Care Licensing, and emergency services will be notified. The emergency phone number on file with Child Care Licensing is Nazneen Askari's cell phone number. Children will be escorted from the facility to Texas Avenue Baptist Church on 3400 South Texas Avenue, College Station, TX 77845 (about 1.5 blocks North). Children will walk with the assistance of the teachers, who will have their classroom attendance sheet of children in care at the time of the emergency, to the church and wait in a safe and calm place until parents/guardians arrive.

In case of an emergency that does not allow for children to walk (e.g. severe weather, gas leak) children will be placed in emergency vehicles and/or staff vehicles and driven to the above location. **Note: SWLC does not have the appropriate number of car seats that are required by law to transport the children and is not responsible for providing car seats or for any injury, accident, or other unforeseen issue that may occur while children are being relocated for their safety. However, the Director, or person in charge will be responsible for making the decision to evacuate in cars if the risk of staying on property grounds outweighs the risk of walking.** The person responsible at the front office will have in their possession emergency data cards of each child that contain emergency contact numbers, and authorization for emergency medical care. Children will be reassured that they are safe and parents are on their way to pick them up. Please see above directions for how to arrive to the location.

- The whole school participates in the following drills:
- Fire drill every month.
 - Severe weather drill every four months.
 - Lockdown drill every six months.

Minor Incidents

At Southwood Learning Center, we have a policy to inform parents of any small incidents (boo boos) that may occur including bumps, small scrapes, bites, and scratches through our Sandbox parent portal. If you wish to be contacted immediately for these things, please let us know.

Minor injuries to the neck or above will receive an immediate call home, and also a note in the Daily Log. In the event of a more significant injury (something that requires a doctor's visit or hospitalization), will result in usual emergency procedure, and a paper Incident Report from Texas State Licensing. All documentation from the incident will be uploaded to Sandbox for records purposes.

In the event of a more significant injury (something that requires a doctor's visit or hospitalization), we will follow appropriate emergency procedure, and a paper Incident Report will be completed and require parent signature. All documentation from the incident will be uploaded to Sandbox for records purpose.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

All children should be provided with: a complete change of clothes, a lunch box/bag, a nap mat and blanket (travel sized pillow optional). Blankets and pillows should be taken home on Fridays to be cleaned. *We highly recommend you label all items your child brings to school with their name.*

Children in the Montessori classrooms should also bring a labeled water bottle. Children in the Seedling Stepping Stones and Pre-Montessori classroom should bring either a labeled sippy cup or water bottle. All water cups/bottles should be taken home daily for washing. *No bottles please.*

For children who are not potty-trained, please send diapers/pull-ups and wipes.

School Clothing

It is recommended that children's clothes be comfortable and allow for freedom of movement. As part of developing their independence, we suggest that you dress your child in clothes that are easy for them to handle.

Though our children will be wearing smocks during various art projects, accidental spills may occur. Please keep this in mind when dressing your child for the day.

Dressing in layers is suggested, especially during the cooler seasons. Parents are responsible for providing sweaters, coats, hats, and gloves.

Comfortable shoes are required. We ask that flip-flops and cowboy boots not be worn to school for safety reasons.

Lost or Damaged Items

Southwood Learning Center is not responsible for any lost or damaged personal items.

NUTRITION

A healthy day begins with a healthy breakfast. Please ensure that your child eats a proper breakfast before coming to school, as we do not serve it here.

Healthy minds develop with healthy bodies and we incorporate nutrition and physical activity as part of our curriculum. We encourage you to partner with us by sending a nutritious lunch consisting of a protein, fruits and/or vegetables, and grains with your child daily. We ask that you refrain from sending high sugar and high fat foods such as candy, cokes, chips, cakes, and cookies. For more detailed healthy food intake, please visit <https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/dietary-recommendations-for-healthy-children>. A hardcopy of these recommendations is available upon request.

All our classrooms have microwaves and we can heat up foods if needed, foods and/or liquids that reach temperatures above 110 degrees Fahrenheit will be kept out of reach until they have cooled to below that temperature. See Appendix A for lunch suggestions.

Food allergy lists and allergy plans are posted in classrooms that have children with specific allergies. We encourage you as a parent to also familiarize yourself with the most common food allergens (See Appendix B) a hardcopy is available upon request. All staff are educated on food allergies and they take precautions to ensure that children are protected. Additionally, teachers are trained to ensure that children with specified allergies are prevented from consuming their allergen as well as in recognizing signs of an allergic reaction.

There will be special opportunities for your child to purchase lunch throughout the year. These lunches will be commercially prepared or prepared in a kitchen that is inspected by local health officials. During these meal events, all children, including those who bring their lunches from home will be offered milk, fresh fruit and/or vegetables.

Healthy snacks including fresh fruits and vegetables are provided twice daily for the children; once in the morning and once in the afternoon. We have several rotating seasonal menus. Menus are posted on our parent board and will be emailed to parents as they change.

DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES

The full extent of our discipline includes verbal communication with the child in order to redirect and/or isolation from an activity. Staff is required to receive annual training on Discipline and Guidance as specified by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services.

Discipline and Guidance Policy for _____

Name of Operation

- ◆ Discipline must be:
 - (1) Individualized and consistent for each child;
 - (2) Appropriate to the child's level of understanding; and
 - (3) Directed toward teaching the child acceptable behavior and self-control.
- ◆ A caregiver may only use positive methods of discipline and guidance that encourage self-esteem, self-control, and self-direction, which include at least the following:
 - (1) Using praise and encouragement of good behavior instead of focusing only upon unacceptable behavior;
 - (2) Reminding a child of behavior expectations daily by using clear, positive statements;
 - (3) Redirecting behavior using positive statements; and
 - (4) Using brief supervised separation or time out from the group, when appropriate for the child's age and development, which is limited to no more than one minute per year of the child's age.
- ◆ There must be no harsh, cruel, or unusual treatment of any child. The following types of discipline and guidance are prohibited:
 - (1) Corporal punishment or threats of corporal punishment;
 - (2) Punishment associated with food, naps, or toilet training;
 - (3) Pinching, shaking, or biting a child;
 - (4) Hitting a child with a hand or instrument;
 - (5) Putting anything in or on a child's mouth;
 - (6) Humiliating, ridiculing, rejecting, or yelling at a child;
 - (7) Subjecting a child to harsh, abusive, or profane language;
 - (8) Placing a child in a locked or dark room, bathroom, or closet with the door closed;
 and
 - (9) Requiring a child to remain silent or inactive for inappropriately long periods of time for the child's age.

Texas Administrative Code, Title 40, Chapters 746 and 747, Subchapters L, Discipline and Guidance

My signature verifies I have read and received a copy of this discipline and guidance policy.	
_____ Signature	_____ Date
Check one please:	
<input type="checkbox"/> parent <input type="checkbox"/> employee/caregiver <input type="checkbox"/> household member of child-care home	

Our goal is to work with every family to ensure that each child is healthy and safe. If there are any concerns that we may have regarding the well-being of your child or vice-versa, we will make every attempt to partner with you as the primary care-giver to help your child be as successful as possible

including providing information for community resources such as ECI, school district outreach programs and counseling sources.

We are required by law to report any abuse or neglect to appropriate authorities.

Brazos County office of TDPRS (979)776-3637
Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline 1(800)252-5400

In addition, anytime a child engages in behavior, which results in another child being hurt, we will inform parents via the Daily Log through Sandbox. If a child continues to be disruptive and a distraction to the class, parents will be contacted for discussion of the unacceptable behavior and will be told of the action taken thus far. We will then work together to find solutions to help the child. However, ongoing disruptive behavior may result in suspension and /or dismissal from the school.

Biting Behaviors

Toddlers will sometimes engage in biting until they are better able to communicate. While we understand that this is a developmental stage that some toddlers go through, we also have to meet the needs of the whole group. We believe the best approach to end this behavior is to work very closely with the child and the parents to find solutions to help the child. Our policy for this behavior requires that a child who bites three times in one day must go home for the remainder of the day. Children who continue to bite and put the safety of the other children (as determined by administration) may be suspended or expelled.

Gang-Free Zone

As part of our licensing requirements, we would like to notify you that Southwood Learning Center is a gang-free zone this means that according to Texas Childcare Minimum Standards “under the Texas Penal Code any area within 1000 feet of a child-care center is a gang-free zone, where criminal offenses related to organized criminal activity are subject to a harsher penalty” The complete Gang-Free Zone requirements information is included in the SWLC enrollment packet.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in the building or on the grounds of SWLC.

PARENT COMMUNICATIONS

We believe that open communication between parents and teachers is an essential part of providing a healthy environment for our students. We are committed to having an integrated relationship with our families through open communication and opportunities for you to be a part of our school life. SWLC uses Sandbox Software as means of conducting the majority of our daily operations and communication. It is important that you as a parent monitor Sandbox often, as this is going to be the primary method of communication between SWLC and parents. *Please note that Sandbox Software is a third party site utilizing cloud based storage.*

Daily Logs

Daily Logs are specific to each child and can only be viewed by the guardians who have accounts associated with the child. Daily Logs are created by the teachers and will be sent home each day by 5:30pm, regardless of when the child is picked up.

Things that will be included in the Daily Logs are: Potty Charts, Snack logs, Nap logs, Supply requests, Boo Boo Notes, Behavior Reports, Sick Notes, and general comments/notes home. Please note that

Potty Charts, Snack Logs and nap logs are for the Seedling and Stepping Stones 1 class only, and will be blank on the older classroom Daily Logs.

Communication also occurs through email, phone and in person communication to keep you up to date.. Lesson plans are emailed monthly, as well as reminders of special events. Anytime there are specific concerns or questions, please speak directly to your child's teacher.

Drop off and pick up times can be hectic and we want to work with you to have smooth daily transitions. If you have special detailed instructions for your child's teacher, it is most helpful if you can email them to us if possible. If you are unable to do so, please verbally notify your child's teacher and/or the front office. In order to maintain all our children's privacy, detailed reports of the day will not be given to parents during these times, they will be communicated via our Sandbox portal or email. Our staff is committed to making a connection with each parent that walks in through our doors; we kindly ask that you refrain from using cell phones during pick up and drop off times.

Parent Conferences

During the month of October and May, parents will have the option for signing up for in person or phone parent conferences to review your child's beginning of the year assessment and end of the year progress as well as address any concerns.

Parents are also welcome to set up appointments with your child's teacher throughout the year if you have any questions or concerns.

Classroom Meetings

Each class will have a general parent meeting in the fall and spring semester where you can meet the teacher and see how your child spends his/her day. If you wish to address specific concerns, we are happy to schedule an appointment with your child's teacher.

Family Engagement

As part of our integrative relationship with families, we encourage you to participate in at least 2-3 school activities yearly. We recognize that this requires a time commitment that is often difficult for our families and so our participation opportunities are scheduled at different times of the day throughout the year. Some activities are already scheduled and on the calendar, some will be added as the year progresses. All event reminders are sent through email and posted on the door.

Some of the activities currently on our calendar are, Fall Festival, Picture Days, Work with Me Days, Thanksgiving Celebration, Holiday's Around the World Party, Valentine's Party, St. Jude's Trike a thon, Spring Scavenger Hunt, Bike Days, Splash Days, Mother's Day, and Father's Day. We are also always looking for special speakers that can share their special talents or about their professions. Parents/families are welcome and encouraged to volunteer at any time throughout the school year and your time is greatly appreciated. Those who wish to volunteer on a set schedule, will be asked to go through a brief volunteer orientation and complete corresponding paperwork.

Visits to SWLC

At SWLC we have an open-door policy which means that you are welcome to visit and observe our school at any time during hours of operation without prior notification. We request that upon arrival you inform the office that you are visiting the facility.

Changes in a Child's Life

It is important that you keep the staff of SWLC informed about any situation that becomes stressful or causes stress for your child. Stressful situations may include death of a family member or pet, divorce, loss of a job as well as a myriad of others. It is important for all members of your child's team (parents, teachers, siblings, grandparents etc) to be aware of any changes that may occur within your child. Your child may vent frustrations by exhibiting behavior problems with teachers or other children in school or at home. Your child may also become quiet or withdraw from activities. If you will let SWLC know in advance, we can work together to help the child. Any information that is shared with the staff will be kept confidential.

Custody Issues

If parents are going through any kind of a family dispute it will often have a profound effect on a child's behavior. Please inform management and your child's teacher if this happens. Please understand we do not have the authority to withhold a child from any parent having custody or joint custody. To deny a parent the right to pick up a child, we must have a current court order signed by a judge that specifically addresses that issue.

During these times it is important that the child's childcare center environment is as stable and as consistent as possible for the sake of the child. *Unless there is proof of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse we cannot become involved in custody disputes; we cannot mediate or keep track of which parent can pick up on which days.*

PICTURES

Individual pictures are taken in both the fall and spring semesters. Group pictures will be taken in the spring only. Parents are under no obligation to purchase these pictures. We will be taking snap shots of the children throughout the year.

We reserve the right to use the photos for parent meetings and school advertisements

THE TEXAS RISING STAR PROGRAM

The Texas Rising Star program is "a voluntary, quality-based child care rating system of child care providers participating in the Texas Workforce Commission's subsidized child care program." TRS Certification is available to Licensed Center and Licensed and Registered Child Care Home providers who meet the certification criteria. The TRS Provider certification system offers three levels of certification (Two-Star, Three-Star, and Four-Star) to encourage providers to attain progressively higher certification requirements leading to a Four-Star level.

Those providers that voluntarily achieve TRS provider certification, offering quality care that **exceeds the State's Minimum Child Care Licensing Standards for director and staff qualifications, caregiver-child interactions, age-appropriate curricula and activities, nutrition and indoor/outdoor activities, and parent involvement and education, are in a better position to contribute to the early development of children.** As we progress through the levels of TRS provider certification, we contribute progressively more to the development of the children we serve on a daily basis. By holding ourselves to higher standards of care, we aim to partner with families in establishing a healthy foundation for our children.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Our Partnership

SWLC is excited to partner with you in helping your child reach his/her maximum potential. We recognize that you are the expert on your child and the immense responsibility we have to provide the best in care for each of our little ones. You as a parent/guardian are the most important role model for your child and we are honored to partner with you. This partnership works by us doing our part to keep your child safe, nurtured, and thriving. It also relies on you to provide consistent structure, communication of needs, and **an adherence to our policies and procedures as outlined in this handbook.** As partners, we know that our mutual goal is the well-being of your child.

Drop-Offs

Sometimes children experience separation anxiety at drop-off. While this is not an unusual situation, it can be stressful to both the parent and the child. Our goal is to help make that transition as easy as possible. We will take your lead in how you would like us to handle separation anxiety. Please inform the teacher of how you would like your child to be greeted (taken from your arms, allowed to have his/her “space” etc.). Some parents prefer to drop their child and quickly exit the room, while others like to sit and allow a gradual transition into daily activities. Your comfort and the comfort of your child is of utmost importance to us. If you wish for further suggestions, please let us know and we can partner on finding ways to help this transition.

Parking

When dropping off and picking up your child, please limit your time in the driveway to 15 minutes. If you need to be inside the building for a longer period of time, we ask that you park in our parking lot or on the side of the road.

Email Communication

Most of our communication is through email and/or Sandbox, we ask you to please check your email regularly for messages regarding special events, notices, changes etc.

Parent Questions and Concerns

We look forward to a long relationship with you and we are always interested in learning about better ways to serve you and the children you have entrusted to our care. As part of our commitment to a partnership, we ask that if you have any concerns, no matter how large or small please let us know. We cannot solve a problem if we are not made aware of it. Feel free to visit with any of the management team or office staff any time you have a question or suggestion or share your thoughts with us through one of the periodic surveys we will be distributing. Our goal is to educate each child to the best of our ability so they have a love for learning and respect for others

We encourage you to discuss any classroom issue with your child’s teacher. If you have concerns which you feel are not being adequately addressed by talking to the teacher, please let us know **immediately** and we will set up an appointment with either the Director or Business Manager. We welcome your input and will make every effort to resolve concerns. However, we ask that concerns always be communicated in a professional and courteous manner, and that all our staff be treated with the respect

they deserve as partners with you in caring for your children. For concerns that require lengthy conversations, please schedule a conference with the teacher and the Director.

Healthy communication involves openness, trust and respect. We commit to abiding by these principles and we ask that you do the same. Failure to communicate in this manner may result in you being asked to leave and/or a required withdrawal of your child.

SWLC will email annual surveys to receive feedback from you. There is also a suggestion box by the sign in tablet. Constructive suggestions are always welcome.

PLEASE TAKE A FEW MINUTES DAILY TO CHECK EMAIL FROM SWLC.

Helping Your Child Make the Most of their Experience

1. In the morning, leave your child at school with a positive attitude and a SMILE!
2. Encourage your child to tell you about their day, on the way home is a great time.
3. Discuss concerns and questions with your child's teacher.
4. Participate in school activities.
5. Allow your child to complete their activity and clean up their work area when you pick them up.
6. Attend parent meetings and conferences.
7. Review your child's work with them at home.
8. Read to your child regularly.

MINIMUM STANDARDS

The Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (TDPRS) requires all preschools to adhere to a set of, "Minimum Standard Rules" in order to be compliant and operate a preschool facility. Our goal at SWLC is to reach beyond the "minimums" and provide the highest quality care for your child. However, we do use the Minimum Standard Rules as a guideline to assist with providing the best preschool environment for your child. If you wish to review the standards, a copy is available in the office upon request. A copy of the most current Licensing Review is posted on the front bulletin board.

Local Texas Department Protective and Regulatory Services Information

Brazos County office of TDPRS (979)776-3637
Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline 1(800) 252-5400

TDPRS Website www.tdprs.state.tx.us

APPENDIX I

Many of our parents prefer to send left-overs and we encourage parents to send meals that you would eat at home including international cuisines. If there are special instructions on how a particular meal should be served, please be sure and inform our staff.

Healthy Meal Suggestions:

Grains:

Whole grains, brown rice, quinoa, oatmeal,

Proteins:

Lean meats, beans, lentils, edamame, kale, spinach

Dairy:

Cheeses, low-sugar yogurt, milk,

We encourage you to send fresh fruit and/or veggies daily

Sample Menus:

Turkey and cheddar roll-up, fresh berries, pretzels, and yogurt

Hummus, pita bread, cherry tomatoes, cucumber slices, and milk

Whole grain pasta (or Lo Mein noodles) with chicken bites, broccoli, carrots, and cheese and orange slices

Lentils with rice or quinoa, snow peas, orange slices and milk

Bean and cheese or meat and cheese tortilla roll, avocado and tomato salad and apple slices

Chicken and rice soup, cauliflower bites, low sugar yogurt, and bananas

Chicken or Tuna salad, cheese slices, crackers, jicama sticks, and watermelon

*Please include ice-packs in lunches.

APPENDIX B

What Are the Most Common Food Allergens?

A child could be allergic to any food, but these eight common allergens account for 90% of all reactions in kids:

- Milk, eggs, peanuts, soy, wheat, tree nuts (such as walnuts and cashews), fish, shellfish (such as shrimp)

In general, most kids with food allergies outgrow them. Of those who are allergic to milk, about 80% will eventually outgrow the allergy. About two-thirds with allergies to eggs and about 80% with a wheat or soy allergy will outgrow those by the time they're 5 years old. Other food allergies may be harder to outgrow.

Symptoms can include:

- Wheezing, trouble breathing, coughing, hoarseness, throat tightness, belly pain, vomiting, diarrhea, itchy, watery, or swollen eyes, hives, red spots, swelling, a drop in blood pressure, causing lightheadedness or loss of consciousness (passing out)

People often confuse food allergies with food intolerance because of similar symptoms. The symptoms of food intolerance can include burping, indigestion, gas, loose stools, headaches, nervousness, or a feeling of being "flushed." But food intolerance:

- doesn't involve the immune system
- can happen because a person can't digest a substance, such as lactose
- can be unpleasant but is rarely dangerous

Parent Sign Off Page

Parent or Guardian's Name: _____

Child's Name: _____

_____ I have read the Southwood Learning Center Parent Handbook including Discipline and Guidance and notification of the Gang Free Zone. I agree to follow the policies of the school. A copy of this page will be kept on file.

_____ I allow/do not allow (circle one) SWLC to take my child's picture for school purposes, advertising and/or social media. I understand that my child's name will not be used and that there will be no compensation for these pictures.

Parent or Guardian's email: _____

Would you like to be included in the parent directory of email contacts?

_____ Yes _____ No

Signature: _____

Date: _____

The handbook is available online at southwoodlearning.com under the Resources Tab. If you would like us to email you a copy or provide a print out of our handbook, please let us know and we will be happy to do so.

Thank you for choosing SWLC!