

LITTLE SAINTS LEARNING CENTER HANDBOOK



Little Saints Learning Center
St. Mary's Catholic School • Brownsville, Texas

LITTLE SAINTS LEARNING CENTER

IN CONJUNCTION WITH
ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL
1300 Las Ebanas Blvd.
Brownsville, TX 78520
956.546.1805

(revised 8/19/2014)

St. Mary's Catholic School

Mission Statement

St. Mary's Catholic School strives to develop and inspire strong Christian values and foster academic excellence in each child by providing quality education in a safe, nurturing and multicultural environment.

Approved by St. Mary's School Council:
May 22, 1996

Introduction

This handbook was devised to assist parents in their understanding of their child's education at Little Saints Learning Center.

Little Saints Learning Center is a daycare facility that is affiliated with St. Mary's Catholic School and licensed by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. Little Saints is a Montessori inspired learning environment which emphasizes the potential of the young child.

A copy of *Minimum Standards for Licensed Child-Care Centers*, the newest licensing reports, policies and procedures are available for parent review at any time. Please contact the director with any questions or concerns that you may have.

Child Care licensing may be contacted at 547-7202

Website: www.txchildcaresearch.org

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AGES

Little Saints Learning Center offers: Toddler Program - (18 months to 3 years old)

ARRIVALS AND DISMISSALS:

It is extremely important that the children arrive on time for their school day. Early morning activities are very important. Each child not potty trained should be wearing a clean diaper upon arrival. If for any reason, your child's diaper needs changing please do so before drop-off.

It is well established that regular attendance and arriving and departing on time are important for the child's progress and development. Please work to have your child here by 8:10 am so that they may receive the full benefits of our program. If the child is absent, parents are asked to inform the school office by calling (956) 542-1805.

The classroom personnel will greet the children at their cars. You will be asked to sign in your child at this time. **Please do not get out of your car while in line.**

A child will be allowed to leave school only with his or her parents or with an authorized adult. The name of the person picking up the child must be on the Emergency Card. The person picking up must be ready to show a form of picture ID. The parent must notify the center in writing of any change in arrangements for pick-up of the child. The parent or authorized adult must sign out the child before leaving. The child will be dismissed from the pavilion.

EXTENDED CARE

Little Saints Learning Center offers daily extended care until 5:30 p.m. on full and some half days. The day before a holiday extended care will not be offered. The schedule for holidays will be the same as the one followed by St. Mary's Catholic School.

BIRTHDAYS

A birthday is a "Celebration of Life" shared by the entire class. In the learning center, we have a unique method of recognizing birthdays. The birthday child holds a globe and walks around the circle one time for each year of his/her life. A light is placed in the center of the circle to symbolize the sun and the earth's revolution. The parent may bring a nutritious snack to share with the class. **Sugary cakes and sweets are not appropriate.** Parents are always welcome to join the class for these celebrations. The caregiver will contact the parent to arrange a suitable date.

CLASSROOM: THE PREPARED ENVIRONMENT

Little Saints Learning Center is modeled on the Montessori Method. Many of the materials and strategies we use are found in St. Mary's School Montessori Program. The environment prepared for your child is designed to appeal to the young child, making available a wide range of materials (both Montessori and traditional) which are accessible, self-correcting, and aesthetically pleasing. The work your child does is to enhance his/her development, not just academically but physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Practical Life

Practical life enhances the development of task organization and cognitive order through care of self, care of environment, exercises of grace and courtesy, and coordination of physical movement. This area provides the basis for all other activities in the Montessori classroom. By perfecting buttoning, tying, pouring, scrubbing, or learning grace and courtesy, the child gains confidence and mastery over the environment.

Sensorial Area

This area is for the education of the senses.

Language

This area exposes the child to many materials and activities that will enable him/her to develop and enrich his/her oral language, creative dramatics, and children's literature.

Mathematics

The math area makes use of manipulative materials to enable the child to internalize concepts of numbers and symbols.

Art and Music

Various media are available such as: crayons, painting, etc. Students participate in singing, dancing, and creative movement.

DAILY SCHEDULE

Schedules are posted in the classroom and available for review.

A copy of minimum standards, the newest licensing reports, policies and procedures are available for parent review at any time. Please contact the director with any questions or concerns that you may have.

Discipline

One of the aims of the Montessori Method is to develop each child's self-discipline. The child learns self-discipline through spontaneous activity in the prepared environment. The child becomes able, through habit, practice and guidance, to manage his/her own behavior. Please refer to the Discipline and Guidance Policy from TDFPS *Minimum Standard Rules* for specific guidelines that we follow.

If a child consistently displays unacceptable behavior, a conference will be requested. If the problem cannot be resolved, the child may be withdrawn from the center.

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

A child is eligible for admission to the learning center if he/she has reached the age of 18 months on or before September 1st.

The following documentation is needed for registration:

- Completed application

- Up to date health forms and immunization records

- Certificate of birth

- Baptismal certificate (Catholics only)

- Signed Discipline form

- Signed Handbook acknowledgment form

- Note from a licensed physician within the past year stating that the child is physically able to participate in school activities.

Please check monthly newsletters, memos, and school website, www.stmarys-cs.org, for current information, news and any changes in policy.

Little Saints Learning Center does not provide water activities, field trips, or access to animals. No employee of Little Saints Learning Center may transport children.

It is the policy of St. Mary's Catholic School that applicants for enrollment and/or employment shall be afforded equal opportunity without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, political affiliation, disability, sex or age.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

A grievance is a complaint based on any alleged violation or inequitable application of policy or a dispute over the meaning or interpretation of the terms contained in this handbook.

This procedure is intended to resolve a grievance informally at the lowest possible administrative level in a Christian atmosphere. Persons with concerns regarding application or interpretation of a policy should first attempt to address the concern with the caregiver. Only after such attempts have failed should administrators be contacted.

The following levels of submitting and resolving a grievance are:

Informal Action – Resolution/conciliation Level

- Level One: Presentation to the Caregiver

- Level Two: Presentation to the Director

Formal Action

If a satisfactory resolution is not reached at the resolution/conciliation level, the complainant shall state his or her complaint in writing (on a form provided by the principal), setting forth the nature of the complaint, all relevant details and the remedy sought. This form should be submitted to the pastor within ten (10) working days following the meeting with the principal.

Level Three: Presentation to the Pastor

Level Four: Presentation to the Superintendent

GROUND RULES

There is one basic rule we follow in class. We respect others, the materials, and ourselves. This rule covers most circumstances, but we also have other simple rules, which we follow, called ground rules. Some examples are:

1. We do not touch other people's work.
2. We walk around rugs.
3. We walk in the class and in the hallways.
4. We use quiet voices in the classroom.

ILLNESS AND ACCIDENTS

Children should be kept at home if they have a fever during the previous 24 hour period, for the first 24 hours of taking an antibiotic, has a cold, has a constant runny nose or thick or heavy nasal discharge, has a constant cough, has vomiting or diarrhea in the last 12 hours, has allergies that are not under a doctor's treatment, or has the symptoms of a possible communicable disease. (These are usually sniffles, watery or reddened eyes, sore throat, headache, and or abdominal pain, or rashes.) Please notify the school at once if your child exhibits any of these symptoms. *If your child is absent due to (fever, vomiting, diarrhea, cold or allergies, etc.) illness the parent will be required to provide a written doctor's excuse when the child returns to school.*

Parents will be called to pick up their child if their child exhibits a fever or other symptoms of a possible communicable disease.

Medications are not distributed at the Learning Center. Special arrangements can be made for children suffering from asthma. The parent must provide doctor's instructions and a prescription with the medication/breathing device. It is the parent's responsibility to update the medications and device.

The Learning Center staff receives annual training in CPR and First Aid. The children are supervised at all times, but accidents do happen. When an accident happens, the school secretary will complete a *Notification of Injury Form* and call the parent. If the child has a minor injury, the office staff will care for the child. If the child is bleeding, has a more serious injury or a head injury, the parent will be notified. For emergency medical care, the staff will contact EMS or take the child to the nearest emergency room.

LUNCH AND SNACKS

Lunch and snacks will be provided for the Learning Center students. A monthly menu will be sent home. If you do not wish your child to eat what is provided, please furnish a well-balanced nutritious meal. Do not send candy, soda, or meals purchased from fast-food restaurants. Lunch boxes, like all personal property, should be clearly labeled with your child's name.

Please note that if you choose to send your child's meal and/or snacks from home, Little Saints Learning Center is not responsible for its nutritional value or for meeting your child's daily food needs.

Please do not send sippie cups to school with your child. Children will be drinking from disposable cups.

Please let us know if your child suffers from any food allergies.

NAPTIME

Children staying all day will nap daily. Please bring a small blanket and pillow for your child to use while napping; please label your child's belongings. These items will be sent home at the end of each week.

No bottles or pacifiers are allowed at the center.

POTTY TRAINING/CHANGE OF CLOTHES

If your child is not potty trained, please bring disposable diapers or pull-ups with Velcro (do not send pull ups without Velcro; they tend to be hard to change and messy). All children enrolled in our preschool are encouraged to be as independent as possible. For this reason, two piece outfits are best during potty training. "Onesies," tops with snaps at the crotch, are not allowed. Pants with belt buckles are appropriate for older children, but too difficult for the two and three year olds. We recommend pant or shorts with elastic. All children need a change of clothes in case of an accident. Be sure all clothing is labeled with the child's name and stored in a Ziplock bag.

Crocks or sandals can be used during potty training.

PHONE NUMBERS (Numbers are subject to change)

Director: 546.1805
Fax: St. Mary's School 546.0787
TDPS: 547-7279/ www.txchildcaresearch.org
Child Abuse Hotline: 1.800.252.5400

In the event of school closings, St. Mary's Catholic School follows BISD emergency closing. This information can be obtained from the local radio and television stations.

TOYS

We take pride in providing a stimulating and attractive learning environment for your child. Please do not send toys or other items to school. If your child has something he/she wishes to share for show and tell, please contact the teacher first.

UNIFORM

One of the child's most important activities of the day is play, so please dress your child appropriately. We strongly recommend tennis shoes with Velcro rather than sandals, dress shoes, or boots. No crocks or shoes with lights. No jewelry, polished nails, or visible tattoos.

Boys Uniform

Blue pants or shorts
White shirt with Little Saints Logo

Girls Uniform

Blue pants, shorts or culottes
White shirt with Little Saints Logo

Little Saints white shirt and blue spirit shirt with logo can be purchased at the school business office.

VOLUNTEERS AND VISITORS

Visitors are to report directly to the school office. Please do not go to any classroom without notifying someone in the office. If you are visiting the classroom, please limit your stay to 15 minutes. Parents are welcomed to visit the classroom. Please report to the office first for a Visitor's Pass.

I agree to abide by the policies of Little Saints Learning Center and St. Mary's Catholic School. I understand it is our responsibility to read and become familiar with the policies contained within this handbook and to abide by them.

Please return the signed form to your child's teacher.

Student's Name	Signature of Parent/Guardian	Date
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